MAKING IT WORK: A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF WORK-LIFE BALANCE OF AGRICULTURAL SCIENCE TEACHERS

A Dissertation

by

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine how agricultural science teachers in central Texas balance family and a successful career as a secondary agricultural science teacher. This study identified the supports that agricultural science teachers need in order to maintain a career and a family to remain teachers in the profession. Research questions that guided this study were as follows: How do you make it all work in terms of family and work balance? In terms of family, what are the social supports that you need to maintain your role? How do you define success and has that changed since you first started teaching?

This study utilized qualitative phenomenological analysis methodology to gain knowledge about the supports necessary to juggle a family and a career. Several themes emerged as data was coded for this study: involving your children in the program, organization, prioritizing time, importance of teaching partners, spousal support, family, and a supportive administration. Teachers were also asked to define their version of success. These individuals cited student success, survival, and creating a well-rounded program as their version of success.

Teachers suggested that educator preparation programs should focus on properly preparing future agriculture teachers and helping them understand this career. Many also recommended that administrator should learn more about agriculture programs as well as teachers need to educate these administrators by having open conversations. Recommendations for future studies were to compare male and female experiences in teaching agricultural science. Another possible study could look at how other similar professions also balance their career and families. A study could focus on how

administrators support their agricultural science teachers. Finally, it is suggested that a study be conducted on those who left the profession.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to all agriculture science teachers in Texas. Thank you to all of those who have served as mentors, friends, and participants in this study. My hope is to bring some of the many conversations alive we have had about work-life balance and generate more solutions about how to survive.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

What happens between eight and five does, indeed, influence the family, and by the same measure, what happens at home does affect productivity at work. Work and family are fully integrated for most professional adults (Sullivan, 1981). There is growing evidence to suggest work patterns, family lifestyles and corporate policy may simultaneously formulate models designed for more optimal integration of the demands and rewards of family and the workplace for both men and women (Sullivan, 1981). Although social norms may be changing regarding the extent to which spouses share household and parenting activities, women continue to provide a majority of child care and household work (Lee, Zvonkovic, & Crawford, 2014). In Hainline, Ulmer, Ritz, Burris, and Gibson's (2015) study, female agricultural teachers reported spending seven-and-one half more hours per week on family responsibilities, in comparison to their male counterparts. The imbalance of gender roles in the household implies that traditional gender roles are still evident in the agricultural educator's home life. Sorenesen, McKim and Velez (2016) suggest examining the work-family culture within agricultural education and how this culture influences shared between work and family roles, as well as the relationship work-family culture, WFB (work family balance) ability, and job satisfaction.

In a case study conducted by Lee, Zvonkovic, and Crawford (2014) many paths between perceptual factors and role balance were significant in the models. Most noteworthy were the connections between (a) spousal support and role balance (in the family sphere) and (b) job satisfaction and role balance (in the work sphere). When all corridors of education are combed, the major factors that contribute to attrition include;

salary, retirement, family or personal reasons, pursuit of another job, and dissatisfaction with working conditions (Tippens, Rickets, Morgan, Navarro, & Flanders, 2013). A family-friendly work culture must exist throughout schools coupled with professional development opportunities which encourage teachers with families to participate (Sorensen, McKim, & Velez, 2016).

Like workplace social support, family can offer both instrumental and emotional support (Russo, Shteigman, & Carmeli, 2016). As an example, Russo, Shteigman, and Carmeli (2016) provide that a partner can keep the moral up in the family domain when the focal actor is experiencing bad mood or illness and/or provide him or her encouragement and concrete aid in cultivating his/her personal life interests and passions.

Statement of the Problem

Many studies look at recruitment of teachers to the profession, but to address the teacher shortage in agricultural education, one must look at why teachers are leaving the profession (Tippens, Rickets, Morgan, Navarro, & Flanders, 2013). When seeking to understand the influence of gender on Texas agricultural science teacher's priorities in balancing home and work life domains, Hainline et al. (2015) found that teachers worked an average of 58.55 hours per week in their agricultural education programs. With the number of hours devoted to work by both genders, time for accomplishing family responsibilities may be limited. In addition, the association of long work hours with teacher stress and attrition might indicate this aspect of their work lives could negatively spill over into the home life (Hainline, Ulmer, Ritz, Burris, & Gibson, 2015). Many of the vacant positions in agricultural education are caused by teacher attrition-those who decide

to leave teaching for at least a one-year period (Tippens, Rickets, Morgan, Navarro, & Flanders, 2013). Interestingly, even those former teachers who have exited the profession indicate being satisfied with their job while an agriculture teacher (Lemons, Brashears, Burris, Meyers, & Price, 2015). What causes agriculture teachers to leave their teaching positions? What are the supports necessary for teachers to stay in the profession, while feeling successful in both their family and profession as a teacher?

Purpose of the Study

Agricultural sciences teachers were interviewed to determine the keys to work life balance in juggling roles as a teacher, parent, and spouse while maintaining professional success as a teacher. This study identified the supports that agricultural science teachers need in order to maintain a career and a family to remain teachers in the profession. The population for this study was agricultural educators who supervise an FFA chapter and have a family.

Research Questions

The following research questions were used for this study:

1. How do you make it all work in terms of family and work balance?
2. In terms of family, what are the social supports that you need to maintain your role?
3. How do you define success and has that changed since you first started teaching?

Significance of the Study

The findings of this study are significant to the education community at the secondary and post graduate level. Students will also be able to better prepare themselves for their future careers and determine the level of support that is needed to be successful as well as have a healthy work life balance. Finally, school administrators, and school districts will be able to determine the needs of their staff of teachers. Determining the factors that lead to teacher attrition in Texas will benefit stakeholders by decreasing the teacher shortage in Texas. By understanding the supports necessary to maintain a successful family and career, we can work to change the tide in retaining teachers in the profession.

Definition of Terms

For the study, the following terms were defined:

Attrition: Teachers who leave the profession for reasons other than retirement.

CDE: Career Development Event

FFA: The National FFA Organization is dedicated to making a positive difference in the lives of young people by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth, and career success through agricultural education (National FFA Organization, 2015).

LDE: Leadership Development Event

Retention- Teachers who remain in the teaching profession as instructors.

Work-life balance: An individual's perception of how well his or her life roles are balanced (Russo, Shteigman, & Carmeli, 2016).

Organization of the Remainder of the Dissertation

Chapter II contains a review of literature for this study. The review of literature examined the following:

1. The National FFA Organization
2. Teacher attrition
3. Women in the workplace
4. Female agricultural educators
5. Male agricultural educators
6. Supports for working parents

Chapter III describes the methods and collection of data used for conducting this study. Chapter IV provides a discussion of data analysis and results and findings of this study. Finally, Chapter V contains summary, conclusions, implications, and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

As agricultural educators across the United States plan for the future with an increasingly diverse population, and prepare to serve a global economy, there is a great need to recruit and retain members of diverse populations in teaching programs (Whent, 1993). The National FFA (2015) reports that there are more than 11,000 FFA advisors and agriculture teachers who deliver an integrated model of agricultural education, providing students with innovative and leading-edge education and enabling them to grow into competent leaders. Clearly understanding the history of women in the work force and causes of teacher attrition in education will help identify elements that make a teacher successful in dual roles as a mother, wife, teacher, and FFA advisory. The emergence of women agriculture teachers over the past 50 years has opened opportunities while revealing issues that females still face in agricultural education. The shear growth in the number of female agriculture teachers has been a positive development (Enns & Martin, 2015).

Vocational agriculture was conceived in many of the same ways we think of agricultural education today. Agriculture teachers worked primarily with high school students by delivering classroom instruction, managing students' supervised agriculture experience program (i.e., farming programs or supervised farming), and advising an FFA chapter (after 1929). The FFA quickly became an integral part of the vocational agricultural program after 1929. Males were typically the recipients of instruction and

providers/teachers of vocational agriculture instruction, though women were not excluded from targeted adult education groups (Enns & Martin, 2015).

This study sought to identify internal and external factors that contribute to the success of agricultural educators in Texas, determine perceived needed social supports, and determine how these teachers perceive their success in teaching agricultural sciences.

The National FFA Organization

The FFA organization is a key component of agricultural education and makes up a large part of an agriculture teacher's job. This organization allows students to participate in leadership development and career development opportunities, along with leadership roles, conventions, and providing awards for participation in supervised agriculture experiences. While an agriculture student is not required to become a member of their local FFA chapter, students are encouraged to join. "FFA makes a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth, and career success through agricultural education" (National FFA Organization, 2015). This organization is not new to school districts. "Future Farmers of America" was founded by a group of young farmers back in 1928. Their mission was to prepare future generations for the challenges of feeding a growing population (National FFA Organization, 2011).

The passage of the Smith-Hughes Vocational Education Act in 1917 not only provided federal funds to states for high school courses in vocational education (agriculture, family and consumer sciences, and trades and industries),– but it also led to the idea for an organization that is known today as the National FFA Organization. FFA was for young men who were studying vocational agriculture in public secondary schools, and the new organization was designed to develop agricultural leadership, character, thrift,

scholarship, cooperation, citizenship and patriotism. Originally, the letters FFA stood for Future Farmers of America. However, in 1988 the official name of the organization was changed from "Future Farmers of America" to "The National FFA Organization" to reflect the growing diversity of agriculture (National FFA Organization, 2011). According to the National FFA, FFA membership today is comprised of 629,327 student members in grades seven through 12 who belong to one of 7,757 local FFA chapters throughout the United States, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands (2015).

Students who participate in the FFA experience an agricultural education program made up of three parts: classroom instruction, FFA, and a Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE). The purpose of the SAE is to learn by doing with help from an agricultural teacher. The National FFA (2015) describes each of the SAE categories. Students with an ownership/entrepreneurship type SAE own the enterprise, equipment and supplies, make the management decisions and assume the financial risks to produce a product or provide a service. Placement/Internship programs involve the placement of students in agriculture, food or natural resources-related businesses to provide a "learning by doing" environment. In a research SAE student plan and conduct major agricultural experiments using the scientific process and discover new knowledge. As part of the research, students verify and demonstrate or learn about scientific principals in agriculture. Exploratory SAEs are appropriate for all agriculture students. This SAE activity is usually beginner level, short term and designed primarily to help students become literate in agriculture and/or become aware of possible careers in the Agriculture Food and Natural Resources career cluster. The school-based SAE is student managed, can be entrepreneurial or placement and takes place in a school setting outside of regularly

scheduled class time. The project needs to provide goods and services that meet the needs of an identified market and should replicate the workplace environment as closely as possible. Service-learning is a student-managed service activity where students are involved in the development of a needs assessment, planning the goals, objectives and budget, implementation of the activity, and promotion and evaluation of a chosen project.

Along with supervised agricultural experiences, FFA members can participate in a variety of Career Development Activities. Career opportunities abound within today's agriculture industry. Career Development Events (CDEs) help students develop abilities to think critically, communicate clearly, and perform effectively in a competitive job market (National FFA Organization, 2011). These teams include but are not limited to livestock judging, floriculture, job interview, agricultural mechanics, and agriculture sales. There are twenty-four events that students can participate in as a team or an individual. FFA chapters may participate in all of the different CDEs.

Teacher Attrition

Many small children dream of one day becoming a teacher and often mirror classroom settings in daily play. Teachers enjoy helping others learn and providing skills to help their students become successful after graduation. The goal of education is to provide opportunities to gain knowledge, skills, and attitudes that prepare young people for the adult world (Rolling, Burnett, & Huh, 1996).

Lulled into security by the Baby Boomers' long-term service, education leaders have operated for decades as if they were managing a smoothly functioning "career pipeline" in which large cohorts of young teachers will continue to enter classrooms in their twenties and exit for retirement after a successful career of 25 or 30 years (Carroll,

2010). Many students enroll in colleges to become teachers, complete their education and student teaching experience, and set off to find that first teaching job. As teaching is often known as the profession that eats its young, it is often questioned why teachers leave a profession that they love so much.

First-year teacher attrition has been steadily increasing since 1994. After five years after entering the profession, over 30% of our beginning teachers have left the profession (Carroll, 2010). Many of these teachers leave before they have had time to become proficient educators who know how to work with their colleagues to improve student learning. And their departure is expensive: National Commission on Teaching & America's Future estimated that the nation's school districts spent at least $7.2 billion a year on teacher turnover and churn (Carroll, 2010). The National FFA (2015) reports that 23% of agricultural teachers have five or fewer years of teaching experience.

In 2008, the National Council on Teacher Quality gave Texas a grade of a D+ for retaining effective teachers. In response to this grade, the council claimed that Texas does not require mentoring or any other induction support for new teachers, and the state's requirements for permanent licenses are burdensome and have not been shown to advance teacher effectiveness. Texas does support compensation for relevant prior work experience, differential pay for teachers working in high-needs schools and shortage subject areas, and performance pay, but the state's other policies regarding teacher compensation need improvement (2008).

Teacher retention is linked to a variety of factors within a school setting including job satisfaction, school climate, salary, workload, and colleague support. Billingsley (2004) shows that work environments are important to a teacher's job satisfaction and

subsequent career decisions. Factors that are generally associated with work environments include salary, school climate, administrative support, and colleague support. The National Center for Education Statistics conducted a schools and staffing survey to determine why teachers left their school in 2007-2008. 42% of those with four to nine years of experience said that they decided to pursue a position other than that of a K-12 teacher. 24.5% said they needed more time to raise or have children. 12.8% were dissatisfied with the administrators while 10.3% were dissatisfied with the lack of support received from administrators (National Center for Education Statistics, 2007). Ingersoll (2001) suggests that, in particular, inadequate support from the school administration, student discipline problems, limited faculty input into school decision-making, and to a lesser extent, low salaries, are all associated with higher rates of turnover, after controlling for the characteristics of both teachers and schools.

Ingersoll (2001) reported that the shortage of educators is not due to an increase in student population or the growing number of retirees, it is due to the large number of teachers who leave teaching for other jobs. The Texas Education Agency website reported in the 2011-2012 school year, 324,213 teachers were needed in Texas. By the school year 2016-2017, 352,756 teachers were reported in Texas (2018). In six years, this number has increased by eight percent.

One such suggestion as to why teachers leave their profession is that of salary. Often larger schools in more urban areas pay more than smaller school districts in rural towns. Billingsley, Carlson, and Klein (2004) reported that 10% of those who left an urban setting gave salary as one of the primary reasons for leaving their position. Ingersoll

conducted a teacher follow-up survey and found that three-fourths of participants linked their quitting to low salaries.

School Climate

Another factor that teachers often consider important is school climate. A school's climate consists of positive or negative atmosphere of the school, as well as the relationship with colleagues and administrators. Results of three large-scale studies (Billingsley, Carlson, & Klein, 2004) suggested that teachers who view school climate positively are more likely to stay or indicate intent to stay than those who have less positive views. Ingersoll (2001) found that in schools that provide more administrative support to teachers, turnover rates are distinctly lower.

Mothers deal with the ramifications of integrating work and family more often than men, and a supervisor who engages in family-supportive behaviors may be especially important to maintaining professional mothers' loyalty to their employers. Further, professional women who are comfortable discussing work-family issues with their supervisors may feel valued and appreciated, which may contribute to their loyalty (Leschyshyn & Minnotte, 2014).

Another area that most new teachers feel is not adequately met is new teacher mentoring. According to the National Council on Teacher Quality, mentoring and induction are critical needs of new teachers, especially of teachers beginning their careers in high-needs schools. Unfortunately, more than half of the states do not require that local districts provide new teachers with adequate support (2008).

Other teachers cite a heavy workload as also being another factor leading to teacher attrition. Work does not end with the sound of the school bell. Cano states that the FFA

organization requires a substantial amount of time as does supervising the students' SAE programs. Therefore, it's not unusual to find the work load of the vocational agriculture teachers as a potential source of burnout (1987). Demanding work schedules, including long hours spent at work, have been connected to job burnout and job turnover (Mazerolle & Goodman, 2013). It appears that with emerging changes in education, curriculum, accountability and standards, secondary agriculture teachers are being asked to do more without reducing responsibilities (Torres, Lambert, & Lawver, 2010).

Agriculture teachers are often overwhelmed with school-related commitments that impact their personal time with families. The agriculture teacher's school and community may not realize that a teacher may also have a spouse, children and families of their own. Marital relationships have been identified as one of the major factors causing vocational agriculture teachers to leave the profession. In a study conducted in New Mexico in the spring of 1985, fifty-five percent of the spouses in the sample indicated that the amount of time the vocational agriculture teacher is involved in the job does affect marital satisfaction and additional activities decrease marital satisfaction (Straquadine, 1987).

Within teaching agricultural education, it is noted that across the United States there is a shortage of agriculture science teachers. In 2001, 59% of qualified agricultural education graduates pursued teaching, 35 agriculture programs closed due to lack of qualified teachers and 365 agriculture teachers teach in more than one school. In addition, 23% of teachers have five or fewer years of teaching experience. The shortage of qualified agriculture teachers is the greatest challenge facing FFA and agricultural education (National FFA Organization, 2016).

Policymakers have often responded to the problem by trying to increase the supply of teachers. States, districts, and schools have instituted a wide range of initiatives to recruit new teachers: career-change programs designed to entice professionals into midcareer switches to teaching; alternative certification programs to allow college graduates to postpone formal education training and begin teaching immediately; recruitment of teaching candidates from other countries; and such financial incentives as signing bonuses, student loan forgiveness, housing assistance, and tuition reimbursement. The teaching occupation suffers from chronic and relatively high annual turnover compared with many other occupations. Total teacher turnover is fairly evenly split between two components: attrition (those who leave teaching altogether); and migration (those who move to teaching jobs in other schools) (Ingersoll, 2001).

What keeps a teacher teaching? Nieto's (2003) work points to seven characteristics: autobiography, love, hope and possibility, anger and desperation, intellectual work, democratic practice, the ability to shape the future, and the promise. Through this work, several teachers pointed to their own identities being deeply implicated in their teaching. In addition, many teachers feel a strong love for not only the subjects that they teach, but also love for their students. Often this is demonstrated through high expectations and rigorous demands on students. Hope is the essence of teaching, and these teachers demonstrate hope in many ways. They have hope and faith in their students, in their own abilities as teachers, in trusted colleagues and new teachers, in the promise of public education, and in the profession of teaching (Nieto, 2003).

One odd sounding reason for staying in education is anger and depression (Nieto, 2003). Often teachers are angry at the injustices their students must endure. In addition,

students in urban schools also face many problems and often teachers do not have the resources needed to deal with these needs. Teachers also claim that they stay for the intellectual stimulation that they receive from participating in conferences, mentoring new teachers, conducting research in classrooms, and writing journals. A common phrase heard from teachers is that they have the ability to shape the future. Teachers' words and actions are of greater consequence than those of almost any other profession. Nieto (2003) claims to keep good teachers, we must find ways to achieve the unfulfilled promise of public education. We must rethink teacher education so that it focuses on preparing teachers to work with enthusiasm, competence, and caring among the students in our urban schools.

Numerous studies show that job stress is far and away the major source of stress for American adults and that it has escalated progressively over the past few decades (The American Institute of Stress, n.d.). Stress is a highly personalized phenomenon and can vary widely even in identical situations for different reasons (The American Institute for Stress). A study by Lawver and Smith (2014) illustrates that agriculture teachers are under more perceived occupational stress than the average American. Additionally, agriculture teachers are more likely to use confrontive coping mechanisms for their stress when they report spending more time at work. This raises concern that stressful events of agriculture teachers are taking time away from quality teaching and teaching-related tasks, requiring agriculture teachers to spend more time at work to manage their workload at an adequate level to reduce stress (Lawver & Smith, 2014). Torres, Lambert, and Lawver (2010) found that the longer secondary agriculture teachers stay in the profession, the less stressed they tend to be. Conversely, novice teachers will need more support to deal with higher levels

of stress. Recruiting, preparing and retaining quality agricultural educators that meet the academic, career and developmental needs of diverse learners is vital (Lawver & Smith, 2014; Doefert, 2011).

Male Agricultural Educators

Sorenson, McKim and Velez (2017) found in a study of work characteristics that differences between male and female teachers were discovered within teaching experience and salary. A study by Murray, Flowers, Croom, and Wilson (2011) found that as a whole, male teachers reported working six days more in the summer than female teachers, which corresponded with the fact that males were on a longer extended year contract. The areas where male and female agricultural teachers displayed differences in summer employment were in the areas of SAE visits, CDE preparation, and managing the canning plant, with males working an average range of two to four more days in those areas than females. An increase in numbers of female agriculture teachers has happened slowly over time; therefore, the majority of older and more experienced teachers are male, while the younger teachers are more likely to be female. As most teacher salaries are largely based on years of teaching experience, it is likely the younger teachers, who are more likely to be female, will report lower salaries than the older teachers, who are more likely to be male (Sorenson, McKim & Velez, 2017). Murray et al (2011) found that both male and female agriculture teachers experience the burden of balancing work and family roles similarly (2011). Glinsky et al. report that perhaps male agriculture teachers are taking on a greater role at home, possibly due to the increase in dual earner households (2011).

Women in the Workforce

In early history, most of the workforce was made up of men in the United States. However, during World War I men were involved in the war, forcing women into the workplace. Since then, women have become a stable factor in the work place. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, women comprised 46.8 percent of the total U.S. labor force and are projected to account for 46.9 percent of the labor force in 2018. Women are projected to account for 51.2 percent of the increase in total labor force growth between 2008 and 2018. More specifically, 82 percent of teachers in the United States are female (2018).

Traditionally, boys become men and are responsible for the livelihood of their families. Girls become women and are blessed with the responsibilities of motherhood (Foster, 2001). Although both men and women can become loving parents, the mother's role is unique as the major caregiver providing nurturing to young children (Foster, 2001). During the early 20th century, women's roles on the farm and in rural communities were limited. A variety of community initiatives and federal programs pushed women into the role of homemaker (Enns & Martin, 2015). Women now are involved in the work-force and face traditional gender roles of being the nurturing care giver for children. Historically, women enter the labor force, then leave to care for their families and return to work later in life (Foster, 2001). Today's working woman is faced with maintaining a traditional family role and developing a new niche for her role as mother and career professional (Foster, 2001). The juggling act of balancing family and career is not unique to women in agricultural education (Foster, 2001). A mother is supposed to be a caregiver, but in today's economy she is often expected to be a wage earner, too (Foster, 2001).

Ingersoll (2001) found that male teachers are less likely to depart the teaching profession than are female teachers. In addition, barriers exist for women who pursue careers in nontraditional fields; most notable were gender bias and physical attractiveness (Kelsey, 2007; Fitzgerald & Betz, 1983). Equitable learning can help all students become aware of the careers available to them and help prepare them for changing roles at home and in the work place. Biased opportunities and differential expectations resulting from sex bias and role stereotyping can cause students to lose the freedom of career choice and limit their ability to learn and to succeed (Rolling, Burnett, & Huh, 1996).

Female Agricultural Educators

Men are traditionally seen as the first to be involved in agriculture. However, women have always been in agriculture - from the first pioneer family crossing the country to find new farmland to today's modern farm wife (Walters, 1972). Often women's contributions to agriculture are overlooked. Historically, males were the only individuals taught about agriculture, while females were taught homemaking skills courses. Even today, women still feel as if they lack knowledge in agricultural education. In a study by Trauger, Sachs, Barbercheck, Kiernan, Brasier, and Findeis (1998) most women reported major gaps in their agricultural education, such as a lack of education on equipment maintenance, that are a result of a gendered division of labor on farms and the cultural construction of femininity and masculinity around work. Women are not viewed as having bodies that enable them to farm, rather their bodies are percieved as lacking in masculine attributes leading to the view that women's work on farms is easier and of less value than men's work (Trauger, Sachs, Barbercheck, Kiernan, Brasier, & Findeis, 2008).

In 1917, the Smith-Hughes Act provided for the college training of teachers of agriculture for secondary schools (Kren, 1975). However, it was not until Title IX of the 1972 Educational Amendments when the doors opened wider for females in agricultural education. Title IX of the 1972 Educational Amendments prohibits discrimination based on sex under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance (Kren, 1975).

Kelsey (2006) reports that gender bias against women has been documented in the agricultural education literature for nearly 40 years. In 1967, Rudd found most of male secondary agricultural education teachers were not supportive of girls joining the Future Farmers of America and reported that there was "no need for women agricultural instructors." Foster (2001) found gender bias in secondary agricultural education, from women's inability to obtain employment as secondary agricultural education teachers to peer rejection and isolation while working in the field.

Embedded biases can be subtle or blatant and are usually unconscious. They are expressed when educators have preconceived ideas about a specific race or gender that limits the acceptance or access of that group into professional programs or careers. People with embedded biases can subtly or blatantly treat some people as less than equal (Whent, 1993). Many educators seem to be unaware of their embedded biases against women who are unemployed in agricultural education, and some educators did not perceive females as minorities (Whent, 1993).

Women are motivated to teach agricultural education because they want to improve agriculture, they enjoy teaching young people, and they were influenced by peers, parents, or other family members to enter the profession (Thompson, 1986). Bynum (2001) studied

females and discovered they were more of a team player; more nurturing, more willing to mentor; and better at networking, listening, and persistence than males (Ricketts, Osborne, Rudd, 2002). According to Bradley (1971) if women were to teach secondary agricultural education they should only teach in multi-teacher departments with a male partner and they should teach horticulture. Kelsey (2006) notes that within the agricultural education context, some women assume gender-stereotype roles, most noticeably as horticultural, agricultural communications, and leadership teachers as creating beauty and language arts are viewed as feminine, whereas, handling livestock and welding are perceived as masculine.

Female agriculture teachers wear many hats: teacher, adviser, coach, judge, spouse, parent, community member, and community leader. These different roles all require large amounts of time and are difficult to juggle. Foster (2001) explains the difficulty that any young professional must choose between a family and their career points to the obvious conclusion that the definition of what is expected of a secondary agricultural education teacher needs to be reviewed. Although many women teachers are ranked among some of the top in the field, they cannot be expected to maintain high levels of involvement without risk to personal happiness and physical health (Foster, 2001). Foster explained that women faced additional choices that men did not in defining their careers, such as choosing between having children or not, dealing with guilt related to working long hours when children were young, spousal support in balancing family and work, and ultimately having to choose between raising children or building a career as an agricultural education teacher.

Rocca and Washburn (2008) found that on average, both men and women felt that their family, relationships, home location, and willingness to move were slightly to moderately likely to impact their decision to enter the agriculture teaching profession. According to a study conducted by Swanson (1991), shortage of time, including time for family and children and time demands related to work, as well as financial issues were the greatest barriers to balancing career and family. Interestingly women who were single mothers reported less frustration with balancing family career than those women with a traditional family unit (Foster, 2001).

Supports for Working Parents

Women who work because they must and women who work because they want to are both seeking new avenues to provide the best of marriage and the best of job or career. Increased inflation, tighter job markets and rapidly changing roles are cited among women to demand additional support systems in both family and corporate structure (Sullivan, 2001). What happens between eight and five does, indeed, influence family, and, by the same measure, what happens at home does affect productivity at work. Work and family are fully integrated. When difficulties occur in either job or marriage, performance correspondingly deteriorates in the other (Sullivan, 2001). Many married women find themselves involved in multiple roles in their daily lives and many of them experience feelings of role conflict between work and family (Lee, Zvonkovic, & Crawford, 2014).

That professional mothers are more likely to leave the workplace than professional fathers; this sparks debate about why mothers leave (Leschyshyn & Minnotte, 2014). Leschyshyn and Minnotte claim that learning why parents remain loyal to their employers can help us understand opting out of the workforce. We argue that mothers and fathers

with high levels of employer loyalty are less likely to leave the workplace, and that identifying factors that detract from loyalty will help explain why some professional parents are opting out the workforce (2014). Research suggests that combining work and family are one reason why professional mothers leave the workforce at higher rates, with lack of flexible work arrangements noted as one main explanation for these patterns (Leschyshyn & Minnotte, 2014). Organizations that have more family-friendly policies in place, such as flextime and on-site child care, can better meet the personal and domestic needs of their employees, reducing the possibility of conflict between those different roles (Mazerolle & Gioodman, 2013).

Lee, Zvonkovic, and Crawford (2014), explored women's perceptions of their role balance by examining the perceptions of time and satisfaction related to factors concerning work experiences and family experiences. Most noteworthy were the connections between (a) job satisfaction and work balance and (b) job satisfaction and role balance.

Summary of Literature Review

This literature review shows how the workforce impacts the lives of both men and women in agriculture and teaching profession. There are substantial amounts of research suggesting the difficulty women experience in becoming successful agricultural educators. However, none of the research indicates how some females can maintain and balance this difficult lifestyle with a family. In addition, with more women in the workforce, males now take on more responsibilities at home causing male educators to also experience difficulty balancing careers and families. Figure I has been included to summarize the findings of the literature. This study will seek out the supports that both male and female agricultural educators need to have a work life balance.

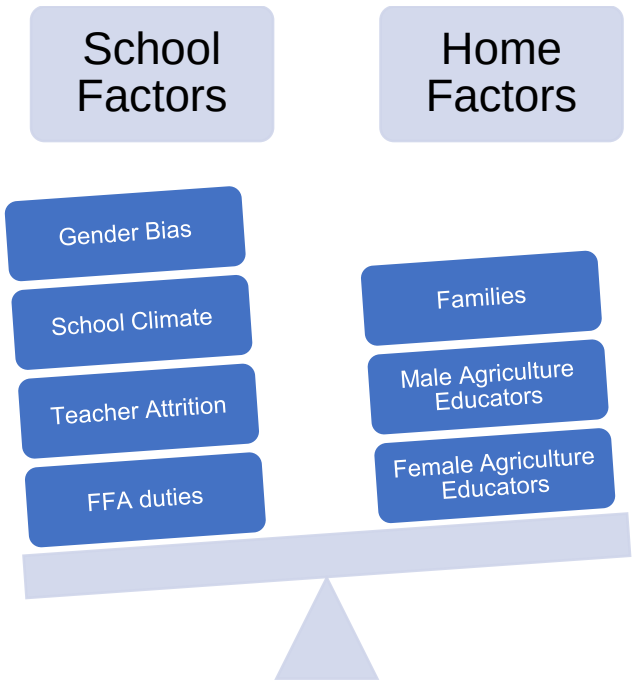

Figure I

Conceptual model of the literature review related to work life balance.

CHAPTER III

METHODS

This investigation explored agricultural sciences teachers who were successful at juggling their careers and their families and the supports necessary for that success. The researcher chose the qualitative phenomenological analysis method because it fit the nature of the investigation. Lodged as it is in the philosophy of phenomenology, this type of analysis attends to ferreting out the essence or basic structure of a phenomenon (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Research focused on understanding how agricultural science teachers are able to balance families and careers.

This research examined information about experiences. Therefore, individual interviews were the most fitting technique for research. Interviewing is necessary when we cannot observe behavior, feelings, or how people interpret the world around them (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The research sought to understand how these teachers make their career work with their family. The purpose of phenomenological reduction is to lead the researcher back to the experience of the participants and to reflect on it, in order to try to suspend judgment, so that one can stay with the lived experience of the phenomenon in order to get at its essence (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). It is important to understand what the commonalities are among agricultural science teachers in Texas who can juggle roles of being a successful agricultural science teacher while having a family.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study was established after a thorough review of literature. Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) is, at its core, a theory of motivation that is driven by the three constructs of self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and goal-

directed activity. These three constructs act as mediators in the relationships between individual and environmental experiences and outcome behaviors (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994, 2000). Figure II demonstrates how one's experiences can affect one's career choices.

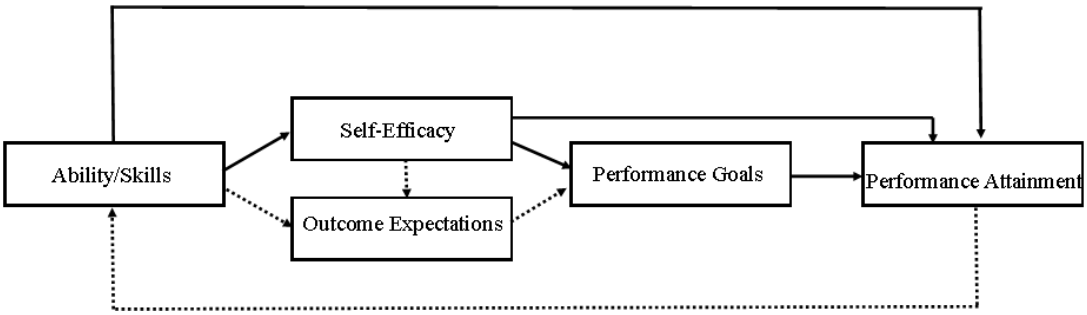

Figure II

Social cognitive career theory. (Adapted from Lent et al. 1999).

Social Cognitive Career Theory claims that career choice is dictated by both objective and perceived environmental factors. Lent, Brown and Hackett, (2000) explain, objective factors include one's own educational experience and the financial opportunities available for paying for the educational experience. A person's perceived environment can be beneficial or hurtful based on how a person sees themselves in that environment. Environmental variables are divided into two basic categories according to their relative proximity to the career choice-making process. The first category contains distal, background contextual factors that affect the learning experiences through which career-relevant self-efficacy and outcome expectations develop (Lent et al., 2000). An example of the first category is the type of role models that a person is exposed to and the amount of support that person receives from the role model. The second, proximal, category of contextual influences is particularly important during active phases of educational or career

decision making (Lent et al., 2000). This second category revolves around the contacts that one has in that career.

Barriers were a mechanism for explaining the restriction of women's career aspirations and the oft-noted gaps between their abilities and their (Lent et al., 2000). Swanson (1991) researched potential barriers among future educators. In her findings, she discovered that many females perceived barriers in their future careers. Barriers related to the balancing of one's career and family were predominantly social/interpersonal in nature; given the definition of social/interpersonal barriers as including concerns about future marriage and children, these results are hardly surprising.

Lent, Brown and Hackett's critique suggests several ways in which barriers research may be approached. In particular, it may be beneficial to (a) assess barriers in relation to specific developmental tasks and choice options, rather than as global, trait-like beliefs, (b) differentiate proximal and distal aspects of the environment, (c) consider the relation of barriers to other conceptually relevant variables, (d) ensure that barriers correspond appropriately with outcome criteria in terms of such dimensions as content and time frame, and (e) complement study of barriers with that of positive environmental conditions, or supports (2001).

Social Cognitive Career Theory focuses on the ability of a person's beliefs to influence decisions and overcome barriers. La Gro (2008) emphasizes, the focus is on the strength of the individual's belief that they can successfully accomplish something, and this belief is more powerful than interests, values, or abilities. She continues that individuals set goals to organize behavior and guide their actions. If a person feels confident and efficacious in a task, this may lead to more interest, rewards and confidence

about desired goals. Goals are self-motivating and a source of personal satisfaction (La Gro, 2008).

Sample

According to Lincoln and Guba naturalistic sampling's purpose is to maximize information, not facilitate generalization (1985). A sample population was selected as those individuals who were deemed by colleagues to be successful agricultural sciences teachers who maintain a family. In this study, focus was geared towards agricultural sciences teachers who were amid raising a family. Successful agricultural teachers were defined in this study as those individuals whose school districts participate in many leadership and career development events, as well as have district, area, and state officers, and/or hold positions in agricultural organizations. Teachers were selected from central Texas. All sampling was done with purpose in mind (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). A second means of locating contacts is to begin with a key person who is considered knowledgeable by others (Merriam, 2009).

The criteria for selecting agricultural sciences teachers for this study were the following:

1) Teaching experience: a minimum of 5 years of teaching experience since this is a popular time for teachers to have families.
2) Successful classrooms and FFA programs: this difficult balance to achieve involves teaching a variety of different courses while still training leadership and career development teams and a well-established FFA program.
3) Number: seven to fifteen agricultural science teachers will be selected or until data saturation.

Selecting respondents included using purposeful sampling to facilitate comparisons during data analysis. Non-probability sampling is the method of choice for most qualitative research (Merriam, 2009). Purposeful sampling assumes that the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Because generalization in a statistical sense is not a goal of qualitative research, probabilistic sampling is not necessary or even justifiable in qualitative research (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of crucial importance to the purpose of the inquiry (Merriam, 2009).

In addition, this research sought out individuals with very specific attributes. Therefore, a unique sample was selected. A unique sample is based on unique, atypical, perhaps rare attributes or occurrences of the phenomenon of interest (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). A key informant was selected based upon vast knowledge of individuals in the agricultural education field. Once a key informant is established, that person will help locate other teachers to participate in the study who meet the desired attributes.

Interview Protocol

To get at the essence or basic underlying structure of the meaning of an experience, the phenomenological interview is the primary method of data collection (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Participants were contacted through phone calls. Times were set up based upon the availability of the participant. I met with each participant at a location selected by the participant.

Before each interview, each participant received a notice of confidentiality. I explained the document and asked the participant to sign. The participant was later

emailed a copy of the signed notice of confidentiality. The research questions for this study are:

1. How do you make it all work in terms of family and work balance?
2. In terms of family, what are the social supports that you need to maintain your role?
3. How do you define success and has that changed since you first started teaching?

Additional follow-up questions were also asked based upon the participant's answers. Examples of these questions included: tell me about your background, what advice do you have for future ag teachers, and do you have any additional comments? Interviews ranged in time from twenty-five minutes until an hour and fifteen minutes. After each interview, I transcribed the interview. Transcriptions were emailed to each participant to verify that the correct information was included. Participants emailed back to me and verified their answers or made changes as needed. Each participant responded with less than two emails.

Data Collection

I conducted personal, semi-structured interviews as a main data collection technique. An interview is a process in which a researcher and participant engage in a conversation focused on questions related to a research study (Merriam, 2009). Interviewing is necessary when we cannot observe behavior, feelings, or how people interpret the world around them (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Lincoln and Guba state, "The human instrument builds upon his or her tactic knowledge as much as if not more than upon propositional knowledge and uses methods that are appropriate to humanly implemented inquiry: interviews, observations, document analysis, unobtrusive clues, and the like" (1985, p. 187). The researcher conducted a semi-structured interview focused

upon obtaining specific information from the participants. Most of the interview was guided by a list of questions or issues to be explored, and neither the exact wording nor the order of the questions was determined ahead of time. This format allowed the researcher to respond to the situation at hand, to the emerging worldview of the respondent, and to new ideas on the topic (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Interviews took place during April 2018. This was a selected time because teachers were training teams for career development events, getting students ready to complete star awards, proficiency applications, state degree applications, and more. In addition, teachers will have trained several leadership development events and are training for speaking development events. It was best to view this population when they were in the middle of this busy time in the school year and can discuss supports they need for their family and workplace.

The researcher used an interview protocol and data collection forms. The purpose of interviewing, then, is to allow us to enter the other person's perspective (Merriam, 2009). Inquiry should be carried out in a natural setting; therefore, a contextual inquiry demands a human instrument, fully adaptive to the indeterminate situation that will be encountered (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 187).

The site for interviews was conducted in a variety of locations based upon the interviewee's hometown and location of school. The researcher traveled to each town to conduct interviews. Lincoln and Guba suggest, "That inquiry be carried out in a natural setting because phenomena of study, whatever they may be physical, chemical, biological, social, psychological take their meaning as much from their contexts as they do from themselves" (1985, p.261). Agricultural science teachers interviewed were from a variety

of locations across central Texas. Texas is a large state and different areas have different cultures, values, and identities.

An outside observer will notice things that have become routine to the participants themselves, things that may lead to understanding the contexts (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). It is not possible to describe or explain everything that one "knows" in language form; some things must be experienced to be understood (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Things that an outside observer sees are simply something which you can think of or perceive, and to anyone who cannot think of or perceive them, you can never, by any definition make their nature known (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Ethical Consideration

All respondents received a Recruitment Letter and an Informed Consent in advance for participation in the study. Before the actual interviews and before the consent forms were signed, participants were notified of their rights to voluntarily participate in this study and that they could withdraw from the study at any point. The confidentiality of the participant's identity including names, positions, and work locations were also kept confidential.

Trustworthiness

Being able to trust research results is especially important to professionals in applied fields because practitioners intervene in people's lives (Merriam, 2009). Establishing credibility ensures that the researcher has represented the subject accurately. The conventional criteria for trustworthiness are internal validity, external validity, reliability, and objectivity (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). To establish trustworthiness the

researcher used the following methods: reflexive journaling, member checks, peer debriefing, triangulation, and audit trails.

Reflexive journaling is a technique that was used by the researcher to keep track of important details throughout the entire research process. The use of reflexive journaling displayed the investigator's mind processes, philosophical position, and the bases of decisions about the inquiry (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The journal was also used to keep track of the researcher's thoughts, feelings, and reactions during data collection and analysis. Also, journaling allowed the researcher to reduce biases in research and observations. Each investigator should keep a personal journal in which his or her own methodological decisions are recorded and made available for public scrutiny (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 210).

A common strategy for ensuring credibility is member checks. This is the single most important way of ruling out the possibility of misinterpreting the meaning of what participants say and do and the perspective of identifying your own biases and misunderstanding of what you observed (Merriam, 2009). This technique allowed the researcher to verify that the true voice of the respondent was heard. Participants should be able to recognize their experience in your interpretation or suggest some fine-tuning to better capture their perspective (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). In their zeal to meet criteria of internal validity, conventional inquirers create (contrive) contexts that influence behavior as much as natural ones do but produce responses that will never be found in a natural setting (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The researcher verified answers with each participant by recording responses and emailing the transcribed responses to each participant. Participants verified the information by making changes and emailing changes back.

Peer debriefing occurred after interviews through phone calls. I used peer debriefing after the first initial interview to discuss findings. Through this conversation, the third question was added to the research questions. Additional peer debriefing occurred four more times throughout the interview process. My committee chair, Julie Harlin, served in this role.

Dependability was established in this study by conducting a dependability audit. "Just as an auditor authenticates the accounts of a business, independent readers can authenticate the findings of a study by following the trail of the researcher" (Merriam, 2009). A dependability audit was created after the interviews. Information from the interviews was transcribed line by line so the true voice of the teacher would be noted. It is essential that adequate records (an audit trail) be kept of each such action (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). An audit trail in a qualitative study describes in detail how data were collected, how categories were derived, and how decisions were made throughout the inquiry (Merriam, 2009).

After information was transcribed, it was reviewed and analyzed by the researcher. Groups with frequent themes from interviews were created. These themes then were collapsed into three collective themes. A chart was created, and a peer debrief memo was sent to the dissertation chair to ensure confirmability.

Merriam and Tisdell suggest, triangulation using multiple sources of data means comparing and cross-checking data collected through observations at different times or in different places, or interview data collected from people with different perspectives or from follow-up interviews with the same people (2016, p. 245). The researcher used a triangulation technique to cross-check data through a variety of techniques. In this study,

the researcher used semi-structured interviews, field notes, reflexive journaling, and peer debriefing for triangulation.

Coding and references

Categorizing is a process whereby previously unitized data are organized into categories that provide descriptive or inferential information about the context or setting from which the units were derived (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The construction of categories is highly inductive. You begin with detailed bits or segments of data, cluster data units that seem to go together, then name the cluster (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). As I analyzed data, categories emerged and clustered together. Merriam and Tisdell expand that as one moves further along in the collection an analysis, some categories will remain solid and others will not hold up (2016).

To protect respondents, the names of the respondents were changed. Each line of the interview was coded with a number. Quote references were directly correlated to a line number. This coding system helped identify which teacher's perspective was being demonstrated. This system also helped organize the audit trails. Below are examples of the codes:

- Kristen 25 means "from respondent Kristen, line 25"
- Jack 101 means "from respondent Jack line 101"

At the end of each interview, recordings were transcribed. Each line was numbered. Coding was done by simply assigning each participant with pseudonym. Coding is nothing more than assigning some sort of shorthand designation to various aspects of your data so that you can easily retrieve specific pieces of the data (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). I reread each interview and jotted notes in the margins that were interesting

or noteworthy. These notes became categories. Several categories emerged as she coded data. The construction of categories in highly inductive. You begin with detailed bits or segments of data, cluster data units that seem to go together, then "name" the cluster (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

In addition, I kept a research journal throughout the process of collecting data. At the end of each interview, I would reflect about each interview. I recorded things that really stood out or new information that a participant mentioned. According to Merriam and Tisdell you also need to keep track of your thoughts, musings, speculations, and hunches as you prepare for you data analysis (2016). This is the first place that I noticed themes emerging.

Data Analysis

Inductive data analysis may be defined most simply as a process for making sense of field data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Data analysis is the process of making sense out of the data (Merriam, 2009). We sometimes think of it as a dialectic in which you move between seeing the big picture (the "forest"), and the particulars (the "trees") (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Throughout this process, the researcher made observations that needed to be organized into groups to find emergent themes. Making sense out of data involves consolidating, reducing, and interpreting what people have said and what the researcher has seen, and read-it is the process of making meaning (Merriam, 2009). Data analysis continued until the researcher found answers to research questions. During the collection process the researcher served as a human instrument.

Analysis of the Data

The purpose of this study was to identify supports that educators need to maintain a healthy work life balance as contributors to teacher attrition and retention. Three research questions guided this study.

1. How do you make it all work in terms of family and work balance?
2. In terms of family, what are the social supports that you need to maintain your role?
3. How do you define success and has that changed since you first started teaching?

Human Instrument

For this study, I served as the human instrument. Growing up on a small cattle ranch in Texas gave me a great appreciation for agriculture. I knew early on that I wanted to spark in others that same love that I had. I quickly figured out that I needed to work in education and pursued a degree in agricultural education. Shortly after beginning my very first teaching job, I soon noticed how different working as a teacher was compared to my idyllic visions. As a new teacher, I was very nervous about working with students who were only a few years younger than me. Clipping animals, hauling animals to the veterinarian and to the fairgrounds, and completing paperwork consumed my afternoons and nights. Classroom duties also began running over into the late evenings. Hard work was inevitable. Luckily, I was taught the value of hard work from early on in life through my family cattle business. However, I soon realized that early in the school year, I was exhausted. That exhaustion lasted throughout the year.

The thrill of watching my students experience success kept me motivated and working. Going to workshops and conferences allowed me to meet many other

professionals in this field. Often, conversations revolved around job duties and responsibilities. I, too, was not the only person who felt overwhelmed and exhausted. Afternoons and weekends were filled with FFA events and lesson plans. The job I dreamed of consumed my entire life. My thoughts began to wonder how I would ever be able to have a family and do well in my job. After numerous conversations with other female agriculture teachers, I soon learned that I was not alone.

One of my most vivid memories was when I was teaching and got a phone call at ten o'clock at night. One of my students had a goat that jumped over the fence and hurt its leg. So, I had to drive to the school farm to care for the goat. These instances added up throughout the year. I knew that I loved working with students and loved teaching about agriculture, but I knew that if I ever wanted to have a family, it would be very difficult. My job completely ran my life. One of my teaching partners had a little boy at the time. I remember her struggles finding a place for her son during FFA meetings, when he was sick, or when she was traveling.

Several times I ate breakfast or lunch with other agriculture teachers from around the state. Conversations always revolved around balancing family, making it work, and getting everything done in a short amount of time. These conversations really resonated me. I started thinking about how she could have a family and work and balance all of the demands. After lots of research, I decided to go back to school to become a counselor. This seemed like the perfect solution because I would still be able to help students and support agriculture programs.

Today, I work in a school district as a Career and Technology Counselor. Through this position I am able to help students and help build my school district's agriculture

program. I still miss working with students as an FFA advisor and a teacher. However, I feel like this is the best solution for my family and career. I currently hold Honorary Membership in two FFA chapters in Texas. I am currently a doctoral student in the Department of Agricultural Leadership, Education, and Communications. This study is particularly important to me because I am one of the teachers who did not make it to year five. For this qualitative study, I served as the human instrument and collected, analyzed, and interpreted all data.

My prior knowledge and experience with this teaching field as well as FFA knowledge enhanced the data collection process. My prior teaching experience allowed me to connect with my participants and fully understand the agriculture teaching world. My former teaching experience helped me understand the needs and the feelings of the participants so that their voices were able to be heard. The timing of the interviews took place during a very hectic time of year. Because of the former connections and the connectedness of the key informant, participants were more willing to meet with me. Therefore, my prior experience played a role in the research design and collection procedures.

Overview of the Data Analysis Process

I utilized two distinct types of data analysis. The first was conducted during the data collection process at the research site. The second, triangulation was done at the completion of the data collection. While in the process of interviewing respondents, the researcher read through the transcripts of the previous interviews as well as journal entries, in hopes of establishing common patterns among answers.

Triangulation using multiple sources of data means comparing and cross-checking data collected through observations at various times or in different places, or interview data collected from people with different perspectives or from follow-up interviews with the same people (Merriam, 2009). Sources used in this study include semi-structured interviews, field notes, the researcher's observations, and reflexive journaling. No single item of information (unless coming from an elite and unimpeachable source) should ever be given serious consideration unless it can be triangulated (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Summary of Methods

The researcher adopted a qualitative phenomenological method. Personal, semi-structured interviews were conducted. Agricultural sciences teachers with at least five years of teaching experience were selected. The data was collected in late spring and analyzed for emergent themes. Data was coded and themes were noted. The use of field notes, reflexive journaling, audit trails, observations, and peer debriefing established trustworthiness.

CHAPTER IV

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

From this data, the researcher discovered themes that helped answer the research questions. Participants discussed ways in which they balance having a family and a career. They reflected on their definition of success and how that has evolved through their years of teaching. Much of the interview was spent answering questions related to their individual teaching experiences and how that helped them create a work life balance. Many of the teachers expressed concern about preparing future agriculture teachers as well as educating administration within school districts about what FFA all entails.

About the Participants

Landry

Landry grew up in a setting that many would see as the most typical background for an agriculture teacher. She had a very active chapter that trained many teams and showed animals. She began showing in third grade and participated in the junior FFA program. She originally went to college to major in agricultural business and wanted to focus more on the banking side of the agricultural industry. She decided to minor in teaching. Through her student teaching experience, she found that she loved teaching, so she began her career in education.

When she first began teaching, Landry lived and breathed her job. She actively trained teams, recruited members, helped raise and promote livestock, and grew her program to have a huge membership. She was also very active in her area teacher association and has served in several leadership positions. Several years after beginning her career, Landry got married and a year later had her first baby. Landry remained very

active in education but moved to a junior high counseling position. While working at a junior high position, she served as both counselor and assistant principal. When a local program opened a floral design position, Landry quickly accepted the position and has been teaching in a three-teacher department for three years.

Since moving to this teaching position, Landry has had a second daughter and currently runs a large floral design program, producing arrangements for many local and school district events as well as designing arrangements for many weddings. In addition, Landry serves as a mentor teacher for at least one student teacher each school year. While Landry is not from the town she currently teaches in, her family lives about an hour away from her school and her husband's family lives in the same town in which she teaches. She is currently contemplating moving to a high school counselor position within the same school district. Landry is a floral design teacher in a medium-sized school district where she is part of a three-teacher department. For this study, Landry also served as the key informant because she has served as an area officer in her professional organization and is very knowledgeable about the careers and families of many agriculture teachers across Texas.

Briana

Briana was a super shy student who grew up in the country. She took agriculture classes in high school where she says that her teachers made her participate in activities because she was so shy. When Briana first went to college, she wanted to do something in the agricultural economics field, not teaching agriculture. Her dream job was to manage a ranch. Eventually, she became an agriculture teacher and taught in Houston for two years.

While teaching in Houston, Briana met her husband. They decided that living in such a large town was not what they wanted for their future family. Soon, their family moved south of Houston to a much smaller town. There they had their daughter. During the three years that Briana has taught at her current school, she has helped increase student enrollment so that her high school agriculture program supported the addition of a third agricultural science teacher.

Briana's parents and siblings do not live close to her family, so she relies heavily on flexibility within her school and her husband's job. She believes that communication and honest conversations are vital to surviving teaching and having a family. Briana is a member of a three-teacher team in a small 3A high school is South Texas.

Wyatt

While Wyatt was a sophomore in high school, his family moved to a small 1A high school. Because he came from a high school that did not have an FFA program, moving to such a small school with an FFA program was quite a shock for him. He quickly began showing. Wyatt mentioned that he had a lot of support from his high school agriculture teacher who was a huge part of his local community. Throughout high school, Wyatt said that he had a hard time fitting in, but FFA was a place that he fit and a place that gave him belonging.

After graduating from college, Wyatt began his teaching career in a middle-sized school that had a team of five agriculture teachers. He trained teams and advanced one team to the state FFA career development event. After working several years in this school district, Wyatt decided to move back to his hometown and teach in a single teacher program.

Wyatt is married and has a seventeen-month-old daughter, and his wife is currently pregnant with their second child. He believes that being in a smaller school is not necessarily easier but working with his wife and in a community that knows his situation is also very valuable. Wyatt has a very understanding family and has parental support from both his and his wife's parents. He believes that it is very important to get into this profession for the right reasons and you have to have a family that understands your career. Wyatt teaches in a very small school district that has roughly one hundred twenty-seven students in grades seven through twelve.

Corey

Corey knew that as soon as he graduated from high school, he wanted to teach. Throughout high school, he participated in his FFA chapter, showed cattle and was an officer. He went to college and majored in education. However, his last year in college he could not afford to student teach so he changed his major. After working out in the oil field, Corey decided to go back to school and get his teaching certificate.

When Corey met his future wife, they were both living in towns that were pretty far from each other. Corey was enjoying teaching and coaching in a small town. Eventually he moved back to his hometown and got married. However, Cory lived more than an hour from the town that he worked in and his wife also drove more than an hour to her job. When their son was born, they knew they had to make some changes, but they were very fortunate by having family close by to help with raising their son.

Corey and his wife believe that their balance is accomplished by understanding that no ones' job is more important than the other. He also says that he has now learned how to say no to parents, kids, and families. Before he was married and had a family, he said that

he would never tell someone no. He has learned to prioritize. His best advice for other teachers is that when you get to the point where you are more worried about yourself than those kids, then this is probably not going to be for you. "The day I walk in and care more about myself than those kids, I'm done." Corey is a member of a four-teacher department in a medium sized school.

Anna

Anna is from a large town in Texas. She has a single mother and her father died when she was very young. She got involved in 4-H and began showing and she says this is what kept her stable growing up. When she was older, she joined her school's FFA chapter and she says that her agriculture teacher was exceptionally influential in her life. She took a large interest in Anna and always believed in her. Anna went to college and majored in dairy science. She worked at a company after graduation. When the company moved to New York, this pushed Anna to go back to college and earn her teaching degree after discussions with her former teacher. She truly believes that she got into teaching because her high school teacher took such an interest in her life. She also believes that the FFA kept her on the straight and narrow.

Anna works in a large school district that has two teachers in the department. This school year marks her twentieth year in education. She is married and has a twelve-year-old son who is now involved in 4-H and shows livestock. Over the years their family has had many struggles with her long work hours. Anna's in-laws are vital in helping her care for her son. Her husband now owns his own business, so he has a little more flexibility and is able to help her care for their son.

Anna feels like you must evaluate yourself to make sure that you are in education for the right reason. If a teacher just wants to show livestock, then you probably are not in in for the right reason. She also believes that if you make it to the five-year teaching mark, then you will teach agriculture forever. Anna works in a very large, diverse school district, teaches several courses, and trains many LDEs and CDEs.

Jennifer

Jennifer is a highly motivated teacher who is currently in her seventeenth year in education. Jennifer grew up in a household that revolved around FFA. Her father was an agriculture teacher for thirty years, so the FFA was engrained in her. However, she will be the first to tell you that her life as an agriculture teacher is very different than her father's because he was the dad and she is the mom. When she went to college, she did not know what she wanted to do other than help people. Her parents were very opposed to her becoming an agriculture teacher. She was very involved in FFA and served as an area officer. Training teams was not important in the valley where she grew up, instead, the focus was on raising and showing livestock.

Jennifer went to college on several scholarships and because of the small school that she went to, she had many opportunities. Her professor sent her to student teach in a new area that was very different than where she grew up. She admits that it was very hard for her, but eventually she came to love the new area. After student teaching, Jennifer knew that she wanted to become an agriculture teacher. She taught sixteen years in her first school district and just recently moved to another district.

Jennifer is married and has three children: a twelve-year-old daughter, a ten-year-old son, and a five-year-old daughter. While her father now lives close, most of Jennifer's

support comes from her husband and her village. Jennifer's husband is very supportive of her career and cares for her children while she is gone. In addition, he has helped her train teams. When needed, Jennifer relies on her "village" to help care for her children. She has a strong, close relationship with her teaching partners who help her shuttle her children to and from events.

Jennifer believes that to balance a family and a career, you must marry the right person. In addition, you must work for a school district that understands the role your family is going to play. If you ever work at a school that tells you your kids can't be around, then that's not the school. She also believes that it is important to have teaching partners who are supportive of your family. She continues that you must function as a family. She believes her teaching partners are a fantastic help to raising her family. Jennifer teaches in a large, urban school district with five teaching partners. Students and teams trained are wide and diverse.

Jack

Jack was born and raised in a suburb of Houston. He was very involved in the agriculture program there. He went to college and did very well. However, he says teaching fell in his lap. While student teaching his mentor teacher retired so he took his place. He is currently on his fifteenth year in education teaching agricultural mechanics.

Jack is married but does not have any children. He and his wife plan to have children in the future. However, Jack is involved in many projects. His parents are older, and Jack contributes to the family ranch both financially and physically. In addition, he operates another ranch and is getting ready to start a tire business. He believes that

teaching agriculture and having a family is a lot to juggle, so you have to define where your responsibilities lie within each and not let others down.

Jack feels that he needs little projects to help him balance his career and family. He enjoys working and taking care of his cattle. He also enjoys spending time with his friends and hunting. He believes that the key to keeping a happy marriage is making a special date every few weeks, dressing up, and taking his wife out to dinner. Jack is a member of a three-teacher department in a medium-sized school district that is very diverse in terms of population of students and teams trained.

Kristen

Kristen grew up in the world of agriculture, but she did not have plans to go directly into the agriculture education world because of maturity and her father being a well-known agriculture teacher. She began her career in the oilfield. However, their company lost a contract for work and she lost her job. During this time, she was pregnant with her first son and needed a job, so she took the first job that she could find in a small town away from her family and began her teaching career. She loved her students and the community. She eventually moved closer to home.

Kristen is the mother of two young, active little boys. She has been divorced for more than two years. She says that it is a real struggle to provide for her children and meet expectations at work. She heavily relies on her parents who are now close by as well as on close friends. Like several other teachers, she says that who you teach with is very important. Kristen says that to be successful at home and at work, it is important to work with people who value both work and family because they need to understand that things come up.

Kristen has been teaching for six years and is a member of a four-teacher agriculture department in a medium-sized high school. Her school district is very diverse in terms of membership and teams that are trained.

Nicole

Nicole was not raised on a farm, but her grandparents owned a farm that she loved. She was never really exposed to anything agriculturally based until she was in high school. She always thought that she wanted to become a teacher or an attorney when she graduated. Nicole remembers her first day of high school when she was asked to learn the creed. She learned it the first day. She completely bought into FFA from her first day in the program. She went to college and got a degree in agricultural education and has been teaching for twenty-two years.

Nicole has two children, a fourteen-year-old daughter and a thirteen-year-old son. She has been divorced for about twelve years. She has full custody of both of her children and has them 100% of the time. Her daughter is now old enough to participate in FFA and her younger son is also able to show. She manages all of this while working in a single teacher department. Her goal for this year is to grow her FFA chapter and add an additional teacher for the next school year.

Nicole believes that it is important for an agriculture teacher's family to be involved in the FFA program. She has always included her children in her passion and believes that this has helped her balance her family and her career.

Colton

Colton grew up in a family that has been involved in agriculture for years. He grew up farming. During high school, he was largely involved in agriculture and was very

active in his school's FFA program. He went to school to become an agricultural science teacher. During his career he has worked in several school districts in east Texas and south Texas. Colton has also worked for several years as part of the agricultural extension service as an extension agent.

Colton is married to a former agricultural sciences teacher. Together they have one ten-year-old son. His son now shows livestock through 4-H. Colton and his family enjoy raising livestock to show and sell to other exhibitors. Colton relies heavily on his wife for support with raising their son. Colton's father-in-law also lives next to their family and helps take care of their son and animals when needed.

Colton works in a large high school and has three teaching partners with a very diverse population of students. Colton is currently working to increase and rebuild the FFA chapter and agricultural science program at his high school. He feels that the key to success is classroom first. The more kids that are in your class, the more kids want to be in your program. In addition, having higher quality teams is more important than an abundance of teams.

Table 1

Study Participants

Pseudonym	Marital Status	Children	Department size	Gender	School Size	Community type	Years teaching
Landry	Married	2	3	Female	Medium	Urban	10
Briana	Married	1	3	Female	Small	Rural	5
Wyatt	Married	1	1	Male	Small	Rural	10
Corey	Married	1	4	Male	Medium	Rural	5

Table 1 Continued

Study Participants

Pseudonym	Marital Status	Children	Department size	Gender	School Size	Community type	Years teaching
Anna	Married	1	2	Female	Large	Urban	20
Jennifer	Married	3	5	Female	Large	Urban	17
Jack	Married	0	3	Male	Medium	Urban	15
Kristen	Divorced	2	4	Female	Medium	Rural	6
Nicole	Divorced	2	1	Female	Small	Rural	22
Colton	Married	1	4	Male	Medium	Rural	8

Research Question #1

How do you make it all work in terms of family and work balance?

Involving your children in the program

The first real category that emerged was that all the teachers interviewed felt very strongly about the involvement of their own children in their agriculture program. While not all children are the correct age to participate in FFA, it is important for teachers with children to bring their personal children to FFA events. For teachers, having their personal children involved in the program was the most important factor in choosing a district as well as being able to balance family and a career. Some teachers worry that they will be viewed negatively for always bringing their children to FFA meetings or team practices.

Nicole says, “What I see a lot of these days is that so many people want to separate the two and I have never seen it that way. My ag teacher’s families were involved. I have always been under the impression that as an ag teacher you are all in or you need to do

something else." She continued to explain, "My passion has always been known to them and included them. That can go for or against you" (Nicole, 10-16). Many teachers worry that their children will get burned out or feel pushed by having to participate in FFA activities. However, in Nicole's case, her children have been exposed to her passion for the FFA and enjoy being with their mother and participating as well.

One struggle is how to deal with an agriculture teacher's children competing with other students. Nicole continues to explain that her daughter has also bought into the program and loves FFA. Nicole opened a competition up to the entire FFA chapter. The first FFA member to say the FFA creed would win an FFA jacket. She made her daughter wait until at least the next day to say the FFA creed although she has known the creed for a long time. Her daughter was so excited and raced to say the creed the next day. She was actually the only student to say the creed that day. However, several students complained that her daughter had an unfair advantage because she has been exposed to FFA for a long time. Finding that line of balance for teachers can be very difficult.

Every school district has different viewpoints on allowing teacher's children at events and traveling in a district vehicle. Some school districts feel that traveling with a child who does not attend that school is a liability. School district policy may cover only children who attend that school. For instance, if a teacher brings a three-year-old child along and a teacher is involved in a wreck, the district's insurance may not cover that three-year-old child. Other districts frown upon bringing non-participating children to events because they feel that the students may not get the teacher's full attention.

Jennifer said, "You have to work for a school district that understands the role your family is going to play. My kids will never get in the way of my students. But my kids

will always be around. If you ever work at a school that tells you your kids can't be around, then that's not the school" (Jennifer, 36-40).

Landry claims that it is, "vital to work for a school district that understands that it is absolutely necessary that sometimes my kids have to go to a contest with me" (Landry, 14-15). For Landry, the time that she is away from her two small children is very hard. Sometimes that is the only time throughout the week that she gets to spend with her children. Other times, she does not have anyone to care for her children.

Teacher Organization

Training teams, officer meetings, FFA meetings, and travel can be a huge juggling act. When family is thrown in the mix, another huge layer is added. Keeping up with FFA events is quite a task. Livestock shows and contests have hard deadlines for entries. Missing a deadline for a livestock show is very serious because many families spend thousands of dollars paying for an animal as well as feeding and taking care of that animal. Missing a deadline for a contest or scholarship is also detrimental to a student's success. Many students depend upon participating in a contest so that the contest can be entered in their record book to qualify for awards and scholarships.

In addition to all the FFA events, agriculture teachers are also parents. As a parent, it is very difficult to keep track of all of the day-to-day activities for just their personal children. Many teachers interviewed use paper or google calendars that are color coded in order to keep up with all of the activities for each child and organization. Setting alarms and phone reminders is also helpful to staying organized.

Anna said, "We just make it work. I have a calendar at home for events. Also, communication, always checking in with each other help us make it work" (Anna, 17-19).

Kristen noted, “You have to have everything planned, a phone that has reminders and a paper calendar. If you miss something at home or at school that can be detrimental. You have to stay organized. You have to have a system in place” (Kristen, 48-50).

Everyone is different in methods of staying organized. For some, keeping a calendar of events is very important. Others seem to like reminders from their spouse or those with whom they work. The key is finding what type of system works for each family and teaching team.

Prioritizing Time

When a teacher first begins teaching, that teacher always dreams of being a successful, well-liked teacher. Visions are of someone who can answer any question that a student has or can help in any situation. People get into the education world because they enjoy helping others. Every person interviewed in this study said that one of their initial reasons that they went into education was to help others.

Being an agriculture teacher is so different than being a core area teacher. Nicole says, “People in general have to know that ag is different, it’s not the same beast” (Nicole, 43-44). Because teaching agriculture classes has an outside component, the FFA, there are so many more elements involved in each person’s job. Students, parents, and community members depend on FFA advisors for knowledge, and these advisors are a specialized resource within the community. Therefore, agriculture teachers typically are asked for lots of help from their students for care of livestock projects and training teams. Community members also ask for help with volunteer projects, restoration projects, and livestock help. In addition, these teachers still have all their duties at the school as well. Teachers may be preparing for an end of the year FFA banquet, picking livestock animals out for the next

county fair late at night with students, training speaking events for the end of the year Area contest, and then going to school the next day to give end of course exams for Algebra I.

To succeed, several teachers stressed the importance of limiting the amount of work or teams that they trained. Colton explains, "You can't do everything, you have to limit yourself. I think you have more success that way when you limit yourself. There are times I tell people no I can't do that on that day. I haven't always been able to do that" (Colton, 6-9). Learning to say no to others is a skill that teachers must learn. When a teacher first starts out, however, they do not want to ever tell someone no. They feel that they are not up to the high expectations set for themselves. As a teacher gains confidence in their abilities, they gradually learn how to stand up for himself.

Another key element is knowing how much a teacher can handle. Briana says, "Don't overload yourself. If you know it's going to be hard to travel, don't pick up so many responsibilities" (Briana, 26-28). Anna remembers, "Thinking back, I probably should have put my family first. I do that now. I think that comes with age and maturity. Now I can say no; in my younger years I would never say no to a parent or kid, because I thought that was my job. It is ok to say no" (Anna, 63-65). For agriculture teachers, saying no is hard. Corey agrees, "You have to have parents, kids, and families know that you have to say no. In the past, I would never say no. After I got married I hit a point where I decided that it was too much and I had to say no. It's important to have an administrator that will back you on this" (Corey, 15-18). Colton suggests, "Learn to say no. Focus on a certain thing and stick with it and promote it. Stick with a few teams and do well with it. Success breeds success. Find out what you are good at and follow that" (Colton, 26-40).

Many of the participants in this study also felt that it was very important that the school district administration backed a teacher and their ability to tell parents and students no. Kristen says, "It is important to have administration, CTE director, and secretary understand responsibility at home and at work. People have to know expectations at work and at home" (Kristen, 21-22). She continued, "A teacher should involve the people that you work with in your life. If you already have kids, make sure that the people that work above you and with you know how important your family is to you. Tell these people that your kids play t-ball and missing these things are non-negotiable. The worst thing is to not let people know what is going on with your kids" (Kristen, 33-39).

As teachers reflect on how they balance their family and career, they cite three major themes that are vital to their survival. Involving their personal children within the FFA program seemed to be the most common answer that teachers had to have. From bringing children along to FFA events, to having supportive teaching partners and administration, this was the most important necessity. Staying organized also rose to the top of most necessary items. Keeping a calendar and communicating with spouses, teaching partners, and administrators were the most noted tips for survival strategies. Finally, the most difficult for agriculture teachers is the ability to say no and prioritize time. These combined strategies are the most needed strategies cited by the agriculture teachers interviewed.

Research Question #2

In terms of family, what are the social supports that you need to maintain your role?

Teaching Partners

Many agriculture teachers jokingly say that their teaching partners are their work spouses. This seems to ring true but often, teaching partners spend more time with their work partners than they do with their actual spouses. Learning how to work with another person can be difficult so it is very important that all members on the team contribute to the workload, all members of the team are able to communicate, and everyone can work together toward a common goal.

When looking at a school district to teach in, many agriculture teachers consider who their teaching partners are. Kristen claims that she did not accept the job until she knew who her teaching partners were going to be (29-30). For her, she wanted to make sure that the other teachers on her team understood her family dynamic and would be understanding of her family.

When thinking about this question, Jack claimed that he worried about letting others down. Jack explained that, "It's a lot to juggle and you have to define where your responsibilities lie within each and not let other people down" (Jack, 9-11). Jennifer also subscribes to the notion that your teaching partners are like your work spouses. She stressed, "Teaching partners, pull your weight. Try to get along. It's like a marriage. You aren't always going to get along but you are married and have children and divorce is not an option. Don't fight in front of kids, go behind closed doors. You have to put on a united front and support each other. You have to forgive" (Jennifer, 74-79).

Sometimes flexibility is also an issue. Kristen further explained, "To be successful at home and at work, it's important to work with people who value both work and family

because they understand things come up. If teaching partners don't understand, that can build up frustration" (Kristen, 19-22).

Supportive Spouses

Spousal support was also another emergent theme among those interviewed. What was most noted was that teachers mentioned not just having a spouse who was supportive, but many mentioned having a spouse who was also an agriculture teacher is important to the successful work life balance.

Anna said, "One of the most important supports that is needed to be successful is to have a spouse that is also an ag teacher because when you don't, they just don't understand. It has taken many years for my husband to come to terms with my passion. It has caused a lot of marital problems because of so much time away from home" (Anna, 12-16). Nicole agrees, "The person that you are married too really needs to understand what it means to be an ag teacher because that is going to be the demise. If you don't have that support in your house, then it's never going to work" (Nicole, 36-38).

Jennifer also explained, "You have to marry the right person" (Jennifer, 36). Her husband understands that sometimes he will be a single parent and will be responsible for picking up and taking care of three children by himself. Other times, he would hold a wildlife team practice when she is out of town with other teams. Landry agrees, "It is important that a husband understands that sometimes summer vacation means going to ag teacher's conference. They have to understand that they are marrying this job, too" (Landry, 19-21).

It takes a Village

In education, we often hear that it takes a village to raise a child. In this sense, it is meant to create a successful child, teachers, administrators, parents, and the community must all come together to support each child. However, for many agriculture teachers, this saying rings true. To them, having a supportive village to raise their own family is imperative to being successful in their career. Each teacher's village is very different. Most of these villages include family members, teaching partners, community parents, and even their own FFA members.

Those who have been in education the longest seem to utilize their village more often. Those who have more than one child utilize this village frequently. Nicole, a single mother of two children says, "I have amazing friends when I have to go out of town. My parents were both super helpful. I have the best students and parents. If you want me to be with your kids, I need you to help me with mine" (Nicole, 21-23). She knows that she needs to spend time practicing with her FFA members. However, to do this, she may need an FFA member's parent to pick up her children so that they can get their homework done or complete school projects.

Jennifer uses her village often. "Everyone tries to make it a treat when mom's out of town. I have a high school girl that picks up my oldest, so I can still have practice. One stays in daycare and one rides the bus. When we are gone someone is always around. We call on our village. When we were on the Tarleton road trip, some of the parents offered to pick up the kids" (Jennifer, 27-28). FFA parents step and pick up her children and often takes them for treats such as ice cream. She even cites one time this school year when she was out of town for her son's birthday. One of her teaching partners took her son for a

special breakfast taco trip. Another parent brought birthday cupcakes to the school and delivered a birthday card from her to her son. Everyone went out of their way to make him feel special. Her village pulled together to make sure that her son had a special day.

Extended Family

When originally beginning this journey, many felt that this would be one of the most important themes to emerge. Family support from not only a spouse, but support from parents, in-laws, and siblings also seems very important to an agriculture teacher's survival. For a large majority of those interviewed, at least one family member lived close to the agriculture teacher and served as support for the family.

Landry exclaims, "I absolutely must have family that lives close. I don't think traditional daycare would work for me" (Landry, 18-19). She also shared, "My husband is from here; if we lived in a town where we didn't have family living near us then I wouldn't be an ag teacher. My in-laws are retired so they are like a second set of parents; they pick them up and give them baths, they spend a lot of Saturdays with them" (Landry, 8-11). Colton said, "My wife picks up the slack and my father-in-law is able to help out a lot picking up my son and taking care of stuff when I'm gone" (Colton, 12-14).

For Kristen, being a single parent is very difficult. Juggling two small boys would be very difficult if her parents did not live close by. Anna also frequently depended upon her in-laws to help care for her son, especially when he was young. In addition, she utilized her sister-in-law and cousins to help her balance her work schedule and care for her young son. Having family close by provided a second set of parents to help balance the workload as well as easing the balance of meetings as well as personal children's after school activities.

Supportive Administration and School District

A supportive school district and administration was also a popular theme among those interviewed. Support needed included allowing children on FFA trips, understanding teacher differences including specialty areas, and learning about the total FFA program and curriculum. Teachers need support both inside the classroom as well as through the intra-curricular side through FFA.

Many teachers need to bring their personal children along on FFA trips, especially when these trips are overnight. Briana said, "My school is supportive of taking my daughter on trips. They questioned me a few times, but I told the superintendent that it's the only option for me staying" (Briana, 9-10). She believes that if her district ever tells her that she cannot take her daughter on trips with her, then she will have to move to another school district. She went on to stress that, "a lot of districts see traveling with kids as a liability, but an ag teacher must be upfront with the school district" (Briana, 25-26). She suggests having a conversation with administrators to let them know that this is the only option for you.

Landry follows with, "In terms of social supports, it is necessary for me to work for a school district that understands that it is absolutely necessary that my kids have to go to a contest with me" (Landry, 14-15). For Landry, time at contests is sometimes the only time that she gets to spend time with her own children as she spends so much time upfront preparing for the contests. She suggests, "We really need to teach administrators and those coming out of college to have a really candid conversation about what you need and if you are going to be a fit for that program" (Landry, 39-41). She believes that getting conversations started so that everyone understand expectations is key.

Several teachers also need their administration to realize that each teacher on the team has very different strengths. Some teachers may excel at raising livestock while others may be fantastic in a shop or laboratory setting. It is important to have a well-balanced program. Sometimes that means getting extra support or help for teachers. Nicole described her current school district, "I'm a single teaching department now. I told them that I will do this job by myself for a year but then next year you need to hire a second person. I'm not going to kill myself for more than a year. I know my limits. I have been very honest with administrators" (Nicole, 67-70). Similar to Landry, Nicole's honesty with her administrators opens communication lines to tell her administrators exactly what she needs in order to be successful.

Learning about the agriculture program and finding out what teachers need is very important to agriculture teachers. There are so many extra duties and tasks that others do not realize that these teachers must complete. Jennifer exasperates, "Administrators need to take care of your ag teachers, don't abuse them. Administrators need to take care of problems and solutions. Find out what's going on in the classroom. Hire help when needed" (Jennifer, 71-73).

Agriculture teachers understand that not every administrator has a background in agriculture or the FFA program. What these teachers do want is for administrators to come to their classrooms and try to learn about the program. If there is something that the administrator does not understand, ask the teacher about it. Kristen explains, "Not every administrator has an agriculture background. It will also benefit the administration so that they don't have to question everything that the teacher is doing. Sometimes if an administrator questions something, it's because they don't know what's going on and they

are interested but to the teacher it seems like they may be micromanaging. But this is not the case. So, administrators, learn about the program" (Kristen, 41-46).

There are many supports that teachers feel are key to having a successful career and family balance. Agricultural science teachers interviewed for this study felt that having supportive, understanding teaching partners who were dependable and helped them was very important. Having a supportive spouse was also a very strong theme among those interviewed. In fact, many even suggested having a spouse who also was an FFA advisor. Utilizing a "village" of individuals is also linked to the success of many teachers who can balance a family and career. Having family close by to help raise and care for children, especially when they are young is extremely important. Finally, many teachers claimed that a supportive school district and administration was one of the most important factors for having a successful work life balance.

Research Question #3

How do you define success and has that changed since you first started teaching?

For many teachers interviewed, defining success was their hardest task. Most teachers *felt* success more than they could put a definition into words. For so many interviewed, success was different based on every person. This definition of success also changed throughout their teaching careers. Merriam-Webster defines success as a favorable or desired outcome (2018). When someone walks into an agriculture classroom, they quickly notice the royal blue and corn gold banners earned from speaking and judging contests as well as plaques and trophies. Can that measure success? For some teachers, qualifying for state contest every year is success. Others take a very different meaning and measure success based on each individual child.

Many teachers feel that they have to win as part of their job. As they get older and have a family though, those ideas seem to change. Landry explains, "When I first got started and wasn't married and had kids, I lived and breathed my job. I thought these kids had to win, I had to have a district or area officer. I still have goals. Now that I have kids, I realize that I'm not going to live at the school; I'm going to go home and put my kids to bed and cook supper" (Landry, 26-30).

For younger agriculture teachers, winning and earning banners and trophies meant that you were successful. Anna remembers, "I think when I was younger and competing with all of my friends, I wanted to beat them. It was more about being first or getting to state or a trophy. I wanted to rub it in my friends' faces you know. I wanted to prove myself" (Anna, 33-35).

Jennifer recalls, "When I first got started there were so few women and the way I was treated was not very positive because of my gender so I felt like I had something to prove. As I've gotten more mature, I have realized that was me being young and dumb and letting other people get in my head. It was more about changing lives and that's what I needed to get back to. It's about the life of the student being impacted" (Jennifer, 58-63).

Briana reflects on her version of success, claiming that this was her most difficult question to answer. "Success is overall happiness, if I'm miserable then that's not success. Being happy as an individual, have a happy family, and making FFA family happy. Then having a balance and having a happy medium, then that's success" (Briana, 18-20).

Student Success

Success is measured differently by every teacher. Those who have been in the field for more than five years have changed their versions of success since beginning their

teaching careers. Every student is different and unique. They all have different learning styles, abilities, and interests. Therefore, gauging each student on the same measurement would be unfair. The teachers interviewed felt that their students' success is how they measure their own success.

For some students, the experience is the accomplished success. For others, making friends or learning leadership skills is key. Landry has learned that, "At the end of the day a kid doesn't really remember if they were 4th place or 1st place, they remember the big picture, the experiences, the friendships. If that happens then I have done my job" (Landry, 30-32).

Many educators, regardless of subject taught, seek those moments with students when a student finally understands something. Jennifer describes success as, "Lives that I have been able to change. For some kids, I am their parent. When you have a kid sitting in your room and that lightbulb goes off, that's success" (Jennifer 48-50). "Success is different to every kid depending on their situation. Sometimes just getting the steer to a major show is successful for a kid. It's not about what you see as success but what the kid sees as successful" (Jennifer, 23-25).

Some students may never compete in an FFA contest. However, these students a teacher may make the most impact on as they choose to stay in the agriculture program from freshman to senior year of high school. Jack says, "Sometimes success for kids is looking at how far they have come. It is measured by each individual kid. Program banners and plaques are nice but I look at how many kids come back and say that this was an impactful three to four years" (Jack, 20-23). For Jennifer, "It's that special needs kid in your class that accomplishes something that may mean nothing to someone else. Any little

or big positive thing, it's never about winning, sometimes it's about losing, that push that losing gives you and the things you learn along the way. Success is about playing fair when no one else is playing fair; it's about integrity and those kind of things" (Jennifer, 50-54).

Seeing the skills that a student has learned was important to all the teachers interviewed. Sometimes we forget though that the skills a student learns in one area may be transferable to other areas of a student's life. To Anna, "The real success is my students using the skills they have learned from me teaching them. We have had a lot of students that are successful in their own right, we have students who own their own business or are successful in sports and a lot of them contribute their success to skills they have learned while in the FFA. That's true success, you have helped them be the best they can be" (Anna, 27-31).

Everyone Survived

Parents with young children, parents with children who are very active, or anyone who has been busy understands that sometimes making it through the day without a major catastrophe is a good day. Busy weeks followed by even busier weekends can add stress to any career including a busy FFA driven lifestyle. Looking back over the school year, these tired and worn out teachers noted that sometimes making it through the school day was a major success.

For some teachers, making it through the day counted as success. Landry feels like, "Success is juggling everything and nothing falling on the floor and crashing. I have survived and got through the week and all of my kids got through the week. Or all of my kids learned something and grades got put in the gradebook. Like sometimes success is

survival" (Landry, 22-25). Jack also agreed, "Success is, did you remember everything you were supposed to do and did you let anyone down (Jack, 19-20).

When Corey looked back over his teaching career, he noted that there were many key changes in what he felt success looked like. "What I considered successful my first year was just getting through the day and not getting fired. Now I'm not focused on myself but now I'm more focused on the program" (Corey, 37-39). Once he was able to realize that success was so much larger than himself, he was able to focus on more important tasks.

Well-Rounded Program

Someone who has been in education for many years typically does not think about only the FFA Organization and instead gauges success based on the total school program. Sometimes outsiders looking in see a successful program as an FFA program that has a large membership with many voting delegates. Trips are filled with a sea of blue and gold jackets and students are marching back to the school buses with banners, plaques, and trophies. The end of the year banquet has slide after slide of smiling FFA members competing in events and representing their school. However, what one does not see is what the actual agriculture classroom looks like. When the teacher is gone to contests, livestock shows, area meetings, what happens to the students who are left behind, those who are not FFA members?

Colton calmly explained, "Everybody has a different perspective. Success is a well-rounded program that kids want to be involved in and are active in; they don't have to win but be active. Having kids want to be involved and understand what the program is about" (Colton, 26-29). Colton wants students to be active in the classroom and stay in the

program for more than one year. These students should follow a pathway of courses that lead to a potential career. Anna furthers this notion, "To me there are two types of teachers. There's an FFA teacher that is all about the teams, going to livestock shows. Then you have ag teachers that take care of the classroom, teach bell to bell, and focus on the classroom" (Anna, 40-42).

Colton is currently working on rebuilding a run-down program with a rich history of student success both in the classroom and in FFA events. Colton continues, "Success is different to everybody. Here any kind of improvement and attracting kids. A growing program is successful. Classroom first, the more kids in your class the more kids want to be in your program. Quality teams, not an abundance" (Colton, 18-20).

Teachers in this study gave a variety of answers about what success looks like to each one of them as well as how that version of success has changed over their teaching career. For these teachers, success is not something that they have or have accomplished.

1. Success is more about the individual student. Success is different based upon each student and what each student is capable of achieving.
2. Sometimes success is about surviving the school day and not disappointing anyone.
3. Teachers who focus on students alone also see success as providing a well-rounded program and offering quality programs that all students can be successful in.

Summary of Results

Agriculture science teachers were asked three questions to determine the supports needed to retain their role in their family and career. This study found that to make their life balance they had to involve their children in their agriculture program, maintain an organization system, and prioritize their time. In terms of family, the social supports

needed to maintain their role included: teaching partners, supportive spouses, finding a village of people, extended family, and a supportive administration and school district. When asked to define success and how that has changed throughout their career, teachers listed student success, everyday survival, and a well-rounded program as their versions of success. Research questions were addressed by agriculture teachers to describe needed supports to remain in the agriculture education profession and have a family.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Summary of the Study

This study identified the supports that agricultural science teachers need in order to maintain a career and a family to remain teachers in the profession. Participants were identified using a key informant who was also an agriculture science teacher. These teachers were identified as having more than five years of teaching experience and who excelled at balancing a career and a family. In addition, these teachers identified their versions of success and how that has changed since starting teaching. The study was designed to hear the individual voices of each participant.

The researcher interviewed each participant to gain insight into how these selected individuals were able to manage a successful career and family. The first question asked participants how they were able to make it all work in terms of family and work balance. Three major themes emerged from this question. For many with children, being able to involve their personal children in their program was vital to them being able to manage their career and children. This included bringing their own children on FFA trips, including riding in school vehicles and staying at hotels with their parents and allowing their children to attend FFA meetings and practices. The next theme that emerged was how a teacher can stay organized. Teachers suggested keeping a very accurate, up-to-date calendar that may be color-coded. These calendars can be paper or electronic and sometimes can even be set with reminders for events or tasks. In addition to the organization piece, teachers also emphasized the importance of communication.

Communication between teaching partners also plays an important role in keeping the department running smoothly so every team member knows their individual responsibilities. Among the most difficult to attain is for a teacher to learn how to prioritize activities and having to justify these priorities to students, parents, teachers, and administration. While this is very difficult trick to learn, it can have a huge impact on being able to balance a family and career. Allowing time for one's own family is very important for work life happiness.

The next question sought to address the supports that teachers with families need. Rising to the top of the list included having teaching partners who are supportive and know their individual duties. It is important that each team member pulls their weight and accomplishes their duties. Many teachers cited the importance of having teaching partners who are understanding to their family responsibilities as well. Having supportive spouses also emerged as a theme. Several teachers suggested that being married to another agriculture teacher would be very helpful so that their spouse would understand their role and duties. Others felt that it was important that their spouses understood their career and helped care for their personal children. The suggestion of "it takes a village" rang true with many of these wise teachers. These teachers utilized family members, FFA members, community members, and other teaching partners to help care for their own children. Among that village, family members also emerged as a key to helping balance a family and a career. Finally, having a supportive school district and administration was of importance to all of those interviewed.

The most difficult question for all of the teachers interviewed was defining success and how this definition has changed throughout their teaching career. After much

hesitation, the teachers carefully describe a much different version of success than what one would traditionally view as success. When these teachers began teaching, their views of success included banners, trophies, and plaques. Trips to the State CDE contest lingered in their minds. Proving their worth as an ag teacher was also very important. Over time their vision has changed. For these teachers, watching a student accomplish something difficult or seeing a light bulb go off in a student was viewed as successful. Every student has their own bar to meet and watching students meet this bar is what is successful to these veteran teachers. Some days are more difficult than others. Some days just surviving the day and entering grades in the gradebook can be successful. For most, however, creating and running a well-rounded program that meets the needs of students is very important.

Work-life balance literature focuses on problems in education and issues that agricultural educators struggle with. Literature focuses on both male and female agricultural educators, the FFA, teacher attrition, school climate, families, and gender bias. Through interviews with agriculture science teachers and data analysis for this study supports necessary to maintain a work life balance were identified. When these factors are in place, agriculture teachers experience balance in their work life and family. While many teachers still experience guilt about work or family life, teachers are more likely to stay in the profession when their family and careers are in balance.

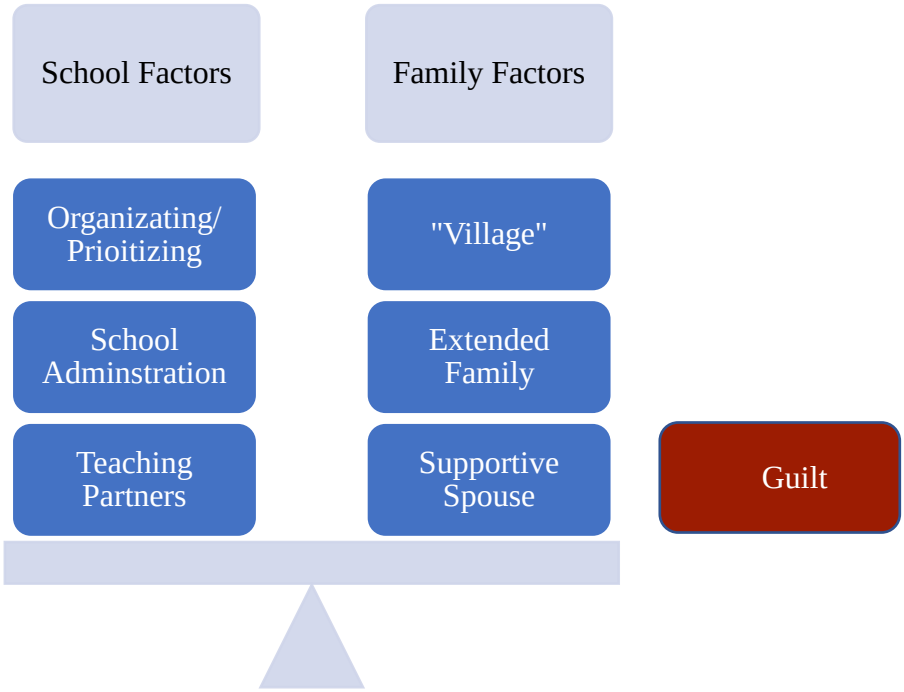

Figure III

Conceptual Model of the findings related to work-life balance.

This study identified the supports that agriculture science teachers need in order to maintain a healthy work-life balance. Teachers were able share insights about how they balance day-to-day activities among their own FFA program as well as still provide for their own families. Teachers in this study were identified as being leaders in their communities and being able to balance a successful program while also having a family. Figure III demonstrates the findings of this study related to the school and family factors that affect work life balance.

Conclusions

As this study began, it was important to choose a knowledgeable key informant to suggest participants who fit this study. We carefully created a list of individuals who we felt would be able to share how they balanced a successful career and family. What was most interesting to note is that many of those selected to participate were very excited to participate. These teachers want their voices to be heard. In addition, many wanted to know what others said about the same questions. This led the me to feel that so much more conversation is needed among this group of agriculture teachers.

Researchers have focused on females in agricultural education. Because of dual income families and more women in the workforce, both parents are now forced to deal with balancing a career and family. When interviewing both male and female agriculture teachers, it is interesting to note that both genders answered questions very similarly. Both genders struggle with finding an ideal balance that allows them to have a successful career and a happy family life. All genders mentioned the importance of working for school districts that were supportive, having supportive teaching partners, and supportive spouses. In addition, both genders mentioned the importance of their own teacher organization and prioritizing time

A recent article by Peck sought to find why U.S. birth rates are dropping. The Center for Disease Control recently released a report revealing that the U.S. birth rate—the number of babies born nationwide—is the lowest it has been in 30 years and is below the replacement rate needed to sustain the population (Peck, 2018). She continues that one article said “social factors” explained the decline; women were putting off childbirth in favor of their careers. But all of these stories ignore a basic reality: Most women in the

U.S., even before they get pregnant, know how little social support exists for mothers (Peck, 2018).

As interviews began, one agriculture teacher posted a message on a Facebook group called Ag Teacher Buddies (https://www.facebook.com/groups/186499761376658/search/?query=Jeff%20Klose). In this post the teacher shared reflections on his career and how it related to his family. He recalled one year in which he spent ninety-three nights away from home doing this job (Klose, 2018). This post inspired fifty-eight comments from other agriculture teachers who shared similar sentiments. Comments ranged from, I really needed to hear this today, to this has taken me a long hard time to realize how to put my family first. Another group member commented that she finally realized that it is okay to rearrange the FFA schedule (when you make it) for the benefit of your family. After having the chapter banquet date set since September, they changed the date because her son had a program at school the same night. Along with the grueling hours agricultural teachers spend at work, family responsibilities and obligations also demand time from teachers' strained schedules (Hainline, Ulmer, Ritz, Burris, & Gibson, 2015). Agriculture teachers are often overwhelmed with school related commitments that often impact their personal time and time with their families (Straquadine, 1987).

Guilt

Teachers in this career field also experience a large amount of guilt. Anna says, "As I have gotten older my priorities have changed. As a younger person I should have put more of a priority on my family. Like I wouldn't attend family events because I had an FFA thing going on. I felt like I left my son behind a lot and those were formable years"

(Anna, 60-64). It is also important to prioritize family events. However, making time for activities like family reunions, vacations, and other family functions a priority shows the individuals in your family they do come first (Epps, 2011). One poster on the Facebook page mentioned, "Single parent here and it feels like my son is raising himself. I have enormous guilt that all the time away from him focusing on my job and students is detrimental to him. However, I have to work, so lately I have been thinking I just have to prioritize things differently." Similarly, one teacher who participated in this study mentioned this post and described the amount of guilt that she felt as a mom when leaving her children to attend FFA events. She noted that her oldest child's grades fluctuated based on her work schedule. Although social norms may be changing regarding the extent to which spouses share household and parenting activities, women continue to provide a majority of child care and household work (Lee, Zvonkovic, & Crawford, 2014). In the field of agricultural education, the struggles encountered in the attempt to balance family and work life are amplified for female teachers raising children (Hainline, Ulmer, Ritz, Burris, & Gibson, 2015).

Briana explains, "You have to find the school you were meant to be at. It may take you four to five schools to find it. If you are really wanting to make a difference, then it's worth it. You must be happy at the end of the day. You must be flexible and figure out if it's me or is it the teaching part of it" (Briana, 38-41). Klose, who created the Facebook post wrote, "I've learned to rely on the community when we need them, to trust my teaching partners more, and to always put my family first if possible. This community is great about helping. We have neighbors and students that help get kids where they need to be when I am gone, and amazing people who help when the truck is snowed in, and great

teaching partners that pick my kids up when I am out of town. I mean it really does take a village and that is one of the best lessons there is... trust your village" (Klose, 2018).

So how do agriculture teachers make it all work? How do they juggle a family and a successful career? The most common answer to this question was involving your children in the program. For so many teachers this was the only way to successfully balance both a career and a family. Taking their own children along with FFA members on trips was vital not only from an organizational standpoint but also it was key to spending important quality time with their children. A family-friendly work culture must exist throughout schools coupled with professional development opportunities which encourage teachers with families to participate (Sorensen, McKim, & Velez, 2016). When looking at school districts to work for, teachers looked at which school district would allow their children to be involved with the agricultural education program.

Organization also emerged as a strong theme for balancing a family. Teachers use a variety of methods to stay organized so that they were able to spend time with their family as well as meet important school obligations. Learning to prioritize is vital to agriculture teacher survival. For many teachers, this was something that took many years to learn. Many feared saying no to other teachers, students, and parents. Epps (2011) writes, that most agricultural educators eventually realize that they aren't superhuman and can't do it all. This is when being able to prioritize tasks becomes extremely important. Torres, Lambert, and Lawver (2010) found that the longer secondary agriculture teachers stay in the profession, the less stressed they tend to be. Conversely, novice teachers will need more support to deal with the higher levels of stress. Hainline et al (2015) suggests

reducing the long hours spent at work, so teachers should eliminate non-obligatory duties from their schedule and utilize more delegation to lighten their workload.

When determining the social supports that teachers need to maintain their role, I identified four themes from the data. In effective working environments, teaching partners play a large role in the support needed to juggle a family and a career. Teaching partners spend a large portion of the day with their counterparts. Often, teaching partners spend more time working together than time spent with spouses. The hours spent at work by Texas agricultural sciences teacher exceeds the 50.56 average American work week (USBLS 2013). As teachers we have an impact on all the links in the chain. Our influence, work, attitude, and determination will have an effect on all the other links of the chain (Davis & Warren, 2003). A majority of those interviewed elaborated that they needed reliable teaching partners who valued both work and family. Those interviewed felt like it was vital to the success of the program to have individuals who were dependable to work with. Jennifer also explained that it is very important for teaching partners to pull their weight and help out (Jennifer, 74-75).

Several other participants mentioned that in order to maintain their role they needed a supportive spouse. Crutchfield (2013) wrote that she has heard stories of spouses bringing supper and children to the agricultural sciences building so the family could spend time together while the teacher supervised CDE practices or made livestock show preparations. Communication between spouses helped remove confusion about duties with children. One essential activity to creating balance is communicating with your spouse/partner regarding the activities you have as priorities. This can include going over the schedule for the week so any changes in who may be picking up the children or caring

for the animals can be covered (Epps, 2011). In a case study conducted by Lee, Zvonkovic, and Crawford (2014), many paths between perceptual factors and role balance were significant in the models. Most noteworthy were the connections between (a) spousal support and role balance (in the family sphere) and (b) job satisfaction and role balance (in the work sphere). While not all felt it was vital to be married to another agriculture teacher, many suggested that this option was very helpful to the success of their juggling careers and family.

We often hear in education that it takes a village to raise children. During this study a large portion of those with children said that they needed a village around them to help raise their children. This village often included family, friends, students, and parents of students. Having family close by and active was also very important. Many teachers needed help caring for children on late nights and weekends when traveling with students. Epps (2011) suggests that it is essential to find those individuals in your life who you can contact when you need help.

Supportive administration also appeared frequently among those interviewed. Ingersoll (2001) suggests that the data show that, in particular, inadequate support from the school administration, student discipline problems, limited faculty input into school decision-making, and to a lesser extent, low salaries, are all associated with higher rates of turnover, after controlling for the characteristics of both teachers and schools. While an administrator may not always know everything about FFA and agriculture, taking an interest in the program and learning about the program was key to providing support for teachers. In a study completed by Crutchfield, Ritz, and Burris (2013), school administrators and state agricultural education staff should increase awareness of the

reported conflict that exists when work interferes with the agricultural educators' family life. When teachers assume too much responsibility for activities beyond classroom instruction, there is the potential for negative impact on their commitment to remain. Other teachers site a heavy workload as also being another factor leading to teacher attrition. Work does not end with the sound of the school bell. Cano (1987) states that the FFA organization requires a substantial amount of time as does supervising the students' SAE programs. Therefore, it's not unusual to find the work load of the vocational agriculture teachers as a potential source of burnout.

Defining success is one area that many teachers feel grows and evolves over time. According to Messersmith (2007), "Most Americans would define student success as the ability of a student to support himself or herself in this society after completing the educational process." Teachers enjoy helping others learn and providing skills to help their students become successful after graduation. The goal of education is to provide opportunities to gain knowledge, skills and attitudes that prepare young people for the adult world (Rolling, Burnett, & Huh, 1996). When many teachers began teaching, their heads were filled with visions of trophies, banners, and producing state qualifying teams. While some felt that they had to prove themselves, other loved the competition. There are many different versions of success as teachers earn their stripes of being an agriculture teacher. Some enjoy seeing individual student success and how a student grows and changes. We love growing young people who will be successful no matter what they do in life. This is what really keeps us engaged. When an individual is engaged in their work, they experience fulfillment (Crutchfield, 2013).

For some, just surviving the day- to-day tasks proved successful. For some of the most veteran teachers, providing a well-rounded program is key. Agriculture teachers can face even greater job demands than non-career and technical education teachers as they often work well beyond a 40-hour work week to supervise student projects, coach career development teams, evaluate papers and projects, and prepare lessons (Croom, 2003). A study by Neito (2003) found that many teachers feel a strong love for not only the subjects that they teach, but also love for their students. Often this is demonstrated through high expectations and rigorous demands on students. Hope is the essence of teaching, and these teachers demonstrate hope in many ways. They have hope and faith in their students, in their own abilities as teachers, in trusted colleagues and new teachers, in the promise of public education, and in the profession of teaching. Amidst the changing and varied meanings of student success in public education, surprisingly little research directly examines the definitions of success prevalent among teachers or how teachers construct meanings about student success (Everitt, Hernandez Vidal, & Williams, 2016).

Crutchfield (2013) suggests, helping each other find balance will increase our engagement and ultimately our commitment to remain in the profession. Rather than feeling like we are sacrificing, we will start to feel value in separating the time we spend engaged in work versus engaged personal roles. Family-work balance is a process, not a static achievement. It's important to make the "big decisions"—selecting careers and jobs, timing children, allocating roles and responsibilities that will provide the opportunity for balance (Kuhlman & Kuhlman, 2004).

Recommendations and Implications

For Future Agriculture Teachers

A majority of all participants in this study mentioned properly preparing future agriculture teachers for the challenges of balancing work and family. Because so many are passionate about the agriculture field, they are very concerned with preparing future teachers. Many of those interviewed expressed concern about the lack of understanding the amount of time this career field requires.

Jennifer suggested, "One thing lacking in today's ag teachers is work ethic. That is going to really kill you when you are trying to make a family work and a teaching job work. Being a mom and dad takes a lot of work ethic, to be good at it. Being an ag teacher takes a ton of work ethic, especially in the classroom. You are going to have to be willing to put the time and effort in" (Jennifer, 81-87). Nicole furthers this statement; "Ag teaching is an all-in thing. So many people now prefer a 187-day contact, if that is your theory, then don't teach ag" (Nicole, 40-41). Landry mentioned, "Before you decide to be a student teacher, a student needs to shadow a day/week in the life of an ag teacher. These kids are like oh I had so much fun in FFA, but they really have no idea how much time it takes. They don't realize the number of hours it takes. Your job is never really done. If it's not a lifestyle, they aren't going to make it" (Landry, 33-37). Anna, a seasoned teacher suggested for future agriculture science teachers to sit down with an ag teacher and talk about what the commitment is really all about. She believes that the reason ag teachers quit is that they don't realize how much time it takes away from your personal time (36-39).

Many of the teachers interviewed mentioned that the first few years of teaching are very difficult. Corey explains that, "The first year is going to be tough" (Corey, 40). Anna suggests, "You really have to evaluate yourself so that you are in it for the right reason. If you are in it for going to livestock shows, then you probably aren't in it for the right reason. Ag teachers get bogged down and frustrated with the teacher component. It takes three to five years to build that arsenal of lesson plans and supplies and becoming comfortable with curriculum. If you can make it to that five-year mark, then you will teach ag forever" (Anna, 43-48).

This study sought to help agricultural sciences teachers find answers about how to make it all work. Those who are successful at maintaining a happy family and a successful career gave insight into how they make it work. In the Facebook post by Jeff Klose, he spoke about how great the agriculture education community is about helping each other. Many of the teachers interviewed for this study also mentioned how important their teaching partners are. They stressed helping each other, having each other's back when needed, and being reliable. Jessica suggests, "It's ok not to know anything, just ask a lot of questions. There are a lot of old people that want to see young ag teachers be successful. Bring your kids to things. We will help you make it work" (Jessica, 88-91). She later continues, "We will help you make it work. If you want to learn to train a team, but don't know anything about it, come along and ask and we will help you" (Jessica, 90-92).

Administrators in Education

While interviewing individual teachers, agricultural science teachers contributed support from administrators as being a key component to success. When choosing a

school, Nicole mentioned that she wanted a program that gives her the trust to take the program where it needs to go and not micromanage (Nicole, 60-62).

Understanding the program is also very important. Nicole also explains, "People in general must know that ag is different, it's not the same beast. Everything has a season but ag doesn't have a season. I think there is a lot of trying to put things into a box and sometimes you can't put this into a box, it just doesn't fit. If you don't know, go find out. We don't expect you to know it all or understand it all" (Nicole, 51-54). Kristen suggested for administrators to learn about the program. It will benefit them so that they don't have to question everything that the teacher is doing. Sometimes if an administrator questions something, it's because they don't know what's going on and they are interested but to the teacher it seems like you are questioning what they are doing and why they are doing it, and that may not be the case" (Kristen, 41-45).

In addition, teachers felt like it is important to teach administrators to have conversations with their teachers. Landry suggests, "We really need to teach administrators and those coming out of college to have a candid conversation about what you need and if you are going to be a fit for that program" (Landry, 39-41). Jack says, "A good administrator would sit down with your program every couple of years and educate themselves. Also, pop in and see what is going on" (Jack, 28-30). As agricultural sciences teachers interview for each position, it is important for the teacher to ask about administrator expectations. Some administrators focus on winning banners and trophies, while other administrators focus on individual student success.

Further Research

Although this study was able to identify many of the supports that were needed to balance a family and a career, more questions for future research were raised. There are several areas that have gaps in research that could be studied.

Several female agricultural science teachers noted that they felt that they had to work harder and prove themselves in comparison with their male counterparts. Jennifer grew up in a family in which her father taught agriculture science and mentioned that her life as an ag teacher is completely different than her dad's experience. "He was the dad not the mom" (Jennifer, 6-7). In fact, she later stressed that she felt more competitive in her early years of teaching because she felt that she had to prove herself. Later she continued that when she first started teaching, there were so few women and the way she was treated was not very positive because of her gender so she felt that she had something to prove (Jennifer, 58-60). Future research may focus on comparing male and female agriculture teachers and how each gender balances their family and career roles.

Another future study could look at other careers that are similar to agriculture teachers and how they balance work and a family. In education, coaches also lead a similar lifestyle to agriculture teachers. These teachers train for athletic events, holding numerous practices throughout the week. Then coaches take teams to different towns to play games and tournaments. When the coach returns, a classroom of students awaits the next day. Outside of the public education system, there are other agricultural careers that face similar challenges. For instance, county extension agents often travel and put in numerous days "off the clock." In addition, veterinarians also work long hours, taking these individuals away from their families.

A topic of interest to several agriculture teachers was how they needed to be supported by a school district. Many teachers noted that they were successful and happy at their current schools because they were supported by their administration. A study could focus solely on how administration supports their agriculture teachers.

While there are many studies regarding agriculture teachers and how they stressed these individuals feel, future research could be done on how each gender handles stress. Epps (2011) describes, in one article, that with all of the juggling going on, agricultural educators are quick to ignore their bodies and health.

This study looked at supports necessary for teachers currently in the profession. It is also suggested that a study be conducted on those who left the profession to determine the supports lacking for them to be retained in the profession.

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APPENDIX A

IRB APPROVAL

DIVISION OF RESEARCH

TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

APPROVAL OF RESEARCH
Using Expedited Procedures

April 02, 2018

Type of Review:	Initial Review
Title:	Making it work, juggling roles as an Agricultural Science Teacher
Investigator:	Julie Harlin
IRB ID:	IRB2018-0157D
Reference Number:	071595
Documents Approved:	IRB Application Version 1.3; Informed Consent Version 1.3; Email to Educators Version 1.0
Risk Level of Study:	Not Greater than Minimal Risk under 45 CFR 46 / 21 CFR 56
Review Category:	Category 6: Collection of data from voice, video, digital, or image recordings made for research purposes Category 7: Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies

The IRB approved this research from 04/02/2018 to 04/01/2019 inclusive.

It is recommended that you submit your next continuing review by 03/01/2019 to avoid a lapse in approval. Your study approval will end on 04/01/2019.

Your study must maintain an **approved status** as long as you are interacting or intervening with living individuals or their identifiable private information or identifiable specimens.

Obtaining identifiable private information or identifiable specimens includes, but is not limited to:

1. using, studying, or analyzing for research purposes identifiable private information or identifiable specimens that have been provided to investigators from any source; and

2. using, studying, or analyzing for research purposes identifiable private information or identifiable specimens that were already in the possession of the investigator.

In general, OHRP considers private information or specimens to be individually identifiable as defined at 45 CFR 46.102(f) when they can be linked to specific individuals by the investigator(s) either directly or indirectly through coding systems.

If you have any questions, please contact the IRB Administrative Office at 1-979-458-4067, toll free at 1-855-795-8636.

Sincerely,
IRB Administration

APPENDIX B

SAMPLE INVITATION EMAIL TO STUDY

Dear Fellow Educator,

In an effort to determine factors that contribute to the retention of agricultural sciences educators I am seeking agricultural teachers that have been teaching between 5-10 years, excel in their careers, and also have a family. I would appreciate you taking the time to meet with me for an interview. I will use the information as part of a study aimed at addressing the lack of females who remain in the agricultural sciences teaching profession. Please email or call me if you have any questions or concerns. Thank you for your time.

Kelley Sommerlatte

Doctoral Student

Texas A&M University

Phone – 979-203-0653

Email- kelleyrlowes@gmail.com

APPENDIX C

SAMPLE EMAIL TRANSCRIPT APPROVAL

Kelley Lowes kelleyrlowes@gmail.com Apr 24

To: Name Omitted

Subject: Interview Summary

Good morning,

Can you read through your summary of the interview to see if it sounds ok to you? Thank you so much for your help and patience.

From: Name Omitted April 24

To: Kelley Lowes

Subject: Interview Summary

Hey there…interview questions look fine… only on number five it should say "this year, I've only advanced…".

Don't want to sound like I stink as a teacher lol.