



**COLLEGE AND CAREER
ADVISING BY SECONDARY
AGRICULTURAL
EDUCATION TEACHERS:
PREPARING HIGH SCHOOL
STUDENTS FOR SUCCESS**

North Carolina State University

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Introduction

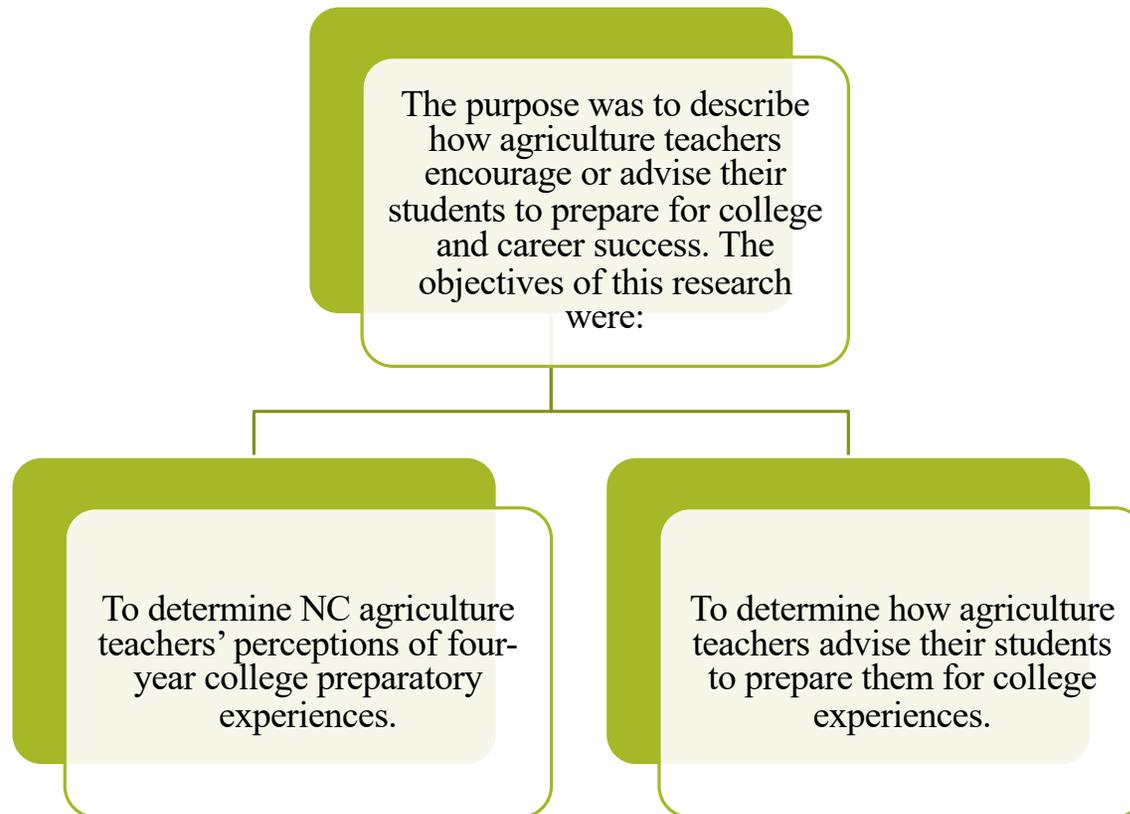
High school students have misconceptions college preparation

- believing their senior year does not count
- community college has no academic standards
- easier classes should be taken in order to boost grades (Venezia, Kirst, & Antonio, 2003).

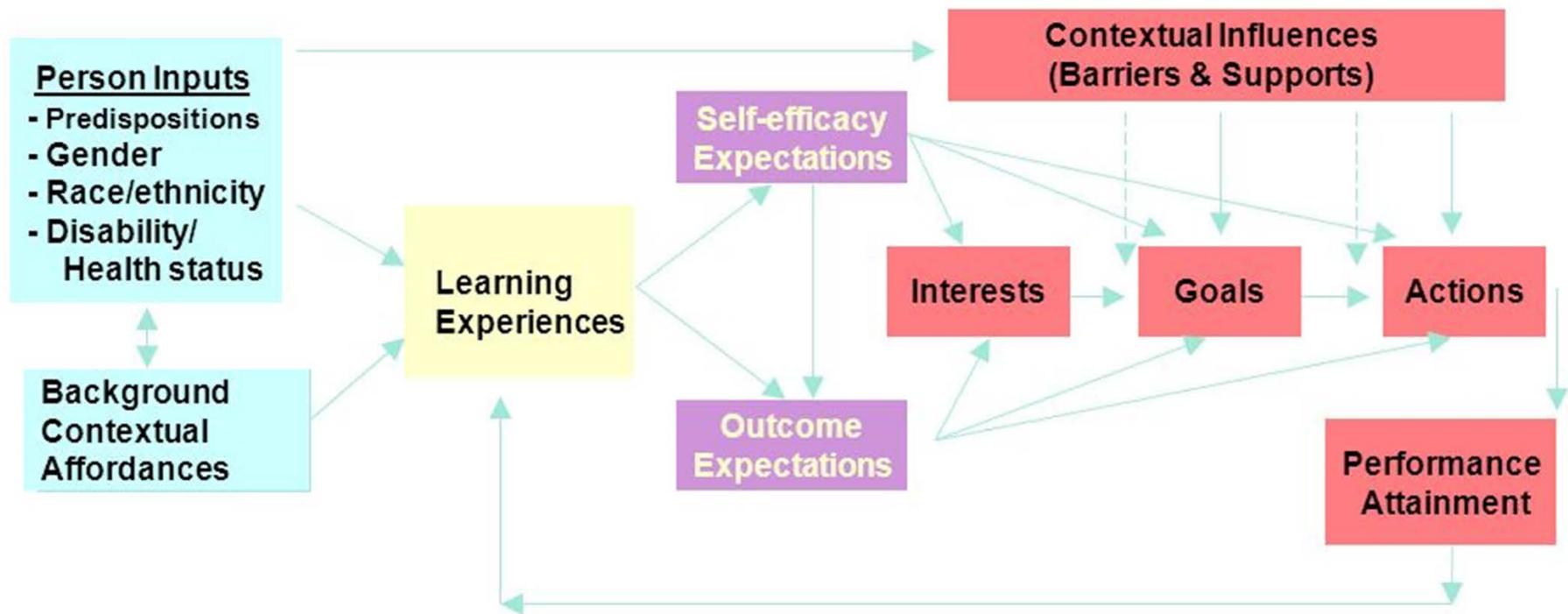
Factors in college admission decisions

- grades in college preparatory courses
 - overall high school GPA
 - admission test scores
 - strength of curriculum (Clinedinst & Patel, 2018).
- Students need teachers to provide accurate information, since teachers are the primary external influence following family members and personal interest (USDE, 2009).

Purpose and Objectives



Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT)



Theoretical Framework

Contextual Influences Affect Interests, Goals, & Actions

Agriculture teachers have the opportunity to provide a positive structure and support system through career and college advice from possibly middle school throughout students' senior year of high school (Talbert, Vaughn, Croom, & Lee, 2007).

Opportunity Structures or Barriers

By understanding how agriculture teachers' roles are embedded within students' proximal contextual influences, we hope to better identify how teachers' collegiate and career encouragement can operate as either opportunity structures or barriers.

Methods



4-point rating scale items with answer choices ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 4 (Strongly Agree) related to how agriculture teachers advise and prepare students for college and career success.



A simple random sample was conducted of all North Carolina high school agriculture teachers (N=267, n=158).

Methods

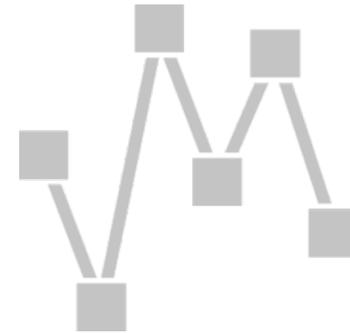


Three teachers were first-year teachers in first-year agriculture programs.

Sample frame of 155 high school agriculture teachers.

90 agriculture teachers responded to the questionnaire

Usable response rate of 58.1%.

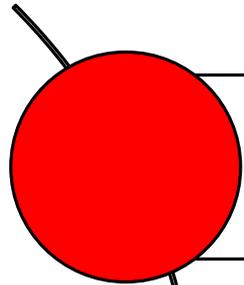


10% of non-respondents were called.

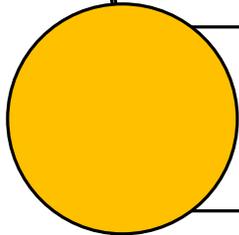
Only significant difference was conducting assignments about agricultural careers ($\alpha = .25$), where respondents were more likely to conduct assignments about agricultural careers.

Respondents can be considered the same as non-respondents.

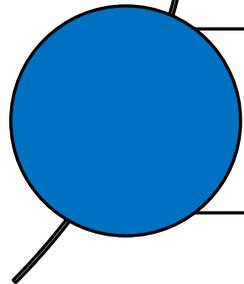
Results



Teachers most frequently conducted a generic assignment about careers ($M = 3.78$, $SD = .60$) and instructed students to research a college and at least one agriculture career ($M = 3.31$, $SD = .92$).

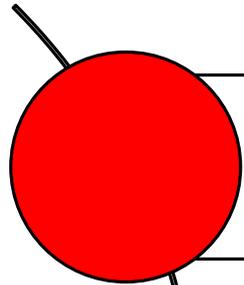


Teachers reported a lower frequency of taking students to visit a college ($M = 2.47$, $SD = 1.08$); there was a higher frequency on assignments about college exploration ($M = 2.87$, $SD = .88$).

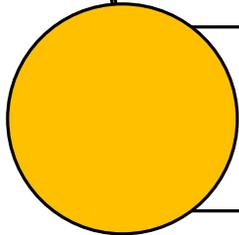


Agriculture teachers' encouragement in general agricultural careers overall was 96.6%.

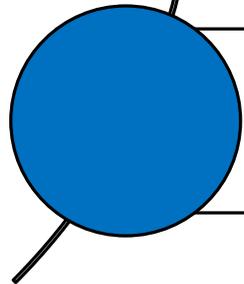
Results



Teachers ranked the most important factors influencing college admission decisions: (1) extracurricular activities, (2) grade point average, (3) SAT/ACT.



Teachers' encouragement of students to pursue a career in agricultural education was 73.0%.



Teachers also reported they did not regularly visit NC State University as a way to encourage agricultural career paths ($M = 2.11$, $SD = 1.12$).

Discussion



North Carolina teachers encouraged and introduced career exploration and preparation to students about careers in agriculture.



Teachers frequently encouraged students through classroom assignments, field trips to colleges, and through positive beliefs and perceptions of higher education.



Teachers believe strongly that part of their job is to encourage students into agricultural careers, but they did not strongly encourage students to consider careers specifically in agriculture education.



Teachers put primary importance on extracurricular activities despite the leading factors of college admissions decisions being coursework and grades.

Limitations

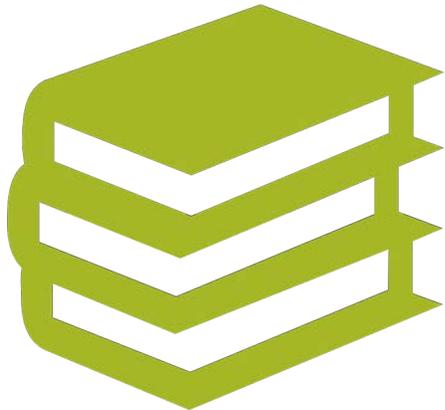
Construct reliability was confirmed for:

- 1) teacher perceptions of the importance of college admissions decisions factors,
- 2) activities/assignments to encourage career exploration,
- 3) encouragement of careers in agriculture.

However, construct validity is difficult to achieve without another measure. Future research will continue to investigate construct validity of the scale.

The first question asked teachers to report how many students attended college after graduation in the past year—many teachers did not know, thus did not complete the survey. This contributed to a low response rate that limits generalizability.

Implications & Recommendations



- State leaders of Ag Ed and land-grant universities should consider professional development opportunities for teachers to prepare and expose their students to college.
- Research is needed to understand the discrepancy between teachers' agreement that part of their job is to encourage careers in agriculture and the lower percentage who specifically encouraged agricultural education.
- Surveying teachers nationwide to better understand teachers' attitudes about four-year college experiences and how they advise their students in regard to college and career preparation.