

Campus Climate: Including Agricultural Identity as a Social Identity

LORI L. MOORE, TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

DUSTIN K. GRABSCH, TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

JACKIE BRUCE, NORTH CAROLINA STATE UNIVERSITY

CARRIE A. STEPHENS,

NC STATE UNIVERSITY

College of Agriculture and Life Sciences



**AGRICULTURE
& LIFE SCIENCES**
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

UTCASNR
INSTITUTE OF AGRICULTURE
THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE

Background

- Campus climate studies continue to be used by institutions of higher education to aid in creating safe, diverse, and productive environments
 - Measure (real or perceived) of an academic institution's environment
 - Limited consensus on a single campus climate definition
 - Related to interpersonal, academic, and professional interactions
 - Includes events, messages, symbols, core beliefs, feelings, attitudes, and more
 - Make the institution a welcome (or not) environment for everyone
- Prior research suggests various social identity groups perceive the campus climate differently
 - Age, gender, race, socioeconomic status, and ethnicity
 - These perceptions may adversely affect working and learning outcomes
- Little understanding as to which social identity experiences ought to be included in campus climate studies

Purpose and Objectives

- To consider the inclusion of *agricultural identity* as a social identity group within campus climate assessment and studies
 - Land-grant institutions are unique because of their agricultural history and background
 - This institutional history may influence the climate
- Specific objectives of the study
 1. Explore the extent to which students in colleges of agriculture and three land-grant institutions identify agricultural identity as a social identity
 2. Explore differences in self-reported success outcomes of students with and without an agricultural identity

Methods and Procedures

- 3 land-grant institutions with 12,600 undergraduate and graduate students in colleges of agriculture within the United States
 - 1,257 participants
 - 55.5% undergraduate
- 56-item online survey instrument
 - Included adaptations from Chen (2005), the Aspects of Identity Questionnaire (AIQ-IV), and Skyfactor Mapworks student retention and success system
 - Included researcher-developed questions related to *agricultural identity*
 - Operationally defined as the social and cultural meanings associated with rural and/or agricultural backgrounds
 - Administered via Qualtrics following the Dillman et al. (2009) Tailored Design Method
- Data analysis included descriptive statistics, ANOVA, and multivariate statistics

Findings – Objective 1

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics for Agricultural Identity

Item	Not at all		Moderate		To a great extent
The degree to which I identify with an agricultural identity	125 (17.5%)	91 (12.7%)	174 (24.3%)	149 (20.8%)	177 (24.7%)

Findings – Objective 1

Table 2
Frequencies for Agricultural Identity in Top Three Social Identities

Institution	Yes	No	Total
University of Tennessee	64 (55.7%)	51 (44.3%)	115
North Carolina State University	101 (51.2%)	96 (48.7%)	197
Texas A&M University	138 (50%)	138 (50%)	276
Total	303 (51.5%)	285 (48.5%)	588

Findings – Objective 2

- An initial MANOVA examined respondents who indicated *agricultural identity* in their top three social identities and their associations to sixteen self-reported success/retention outcomes
 - Success outcomes included questions such as:
 - “I feel like my university is a good fit for me”
 - “I am attending most of my classes most of the time”
 - “I feel I belong at my university”
 - “I am seriously considering leaving my academic college during or after this semester. Not due to graduation.”
 - There was a statistically significant difference in success outcomes based on an *agricultural identity*
 - $F(34, 302) = 1.571, p < .05$; Wilk's $\Lambda = 0.450$, partial $\eta^2 = .15$.

Findings – Objective 2

- Follow-up univariate ANOVAs showed that *agricultural identity* has a statistically significant effect on a respondent's consideration to leave their:
 - Academic department
 - $F(2, 167) = 3.35; p < .05; \text{partial } \eta^2 = .039$
 - Academic college
 - $F(2, 167) = 3.35; p < .05; \text{partial } \eta^2 = .039$
 - Institution
 - $F(2, 167) = 3.35; p < .05; \text{partial } \eta^2 = .039$

Conclusions

- Agricultural identity is an important social identity
 - 51% of participants included it in their top three social identities
 - Not unique to one institution but rather consistent across the three institutions
- There is utility in including agricultural identity in future campus climate assessments and studies
 - This may be particularly important at institutions with land-grant missions or a strong agricultural histories

Questions???

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