

I will begin by commending the authors on conducting an evaluation of program standards developed for public school agricultural education programs in Georgia. It is indeed important to note that not only were the standards developed by and for teachers, and subsequently adopted by the Georgia Department of Education, but that the use of the standards was deemed an important area of inquiry for program monitoring purposes.

In the introduction, the authors did a good job of providing a historic backdrop on the development of the program standards. Often in our profession, we do a less than adequate job in describing the intervention associated with the investigation. A listing of the specific program standards would have helped me to better understand the evaluation items related to their use. The authors did not present a theoretical framework related to the measured variables in the study. For example, is there any evidence to support the inclusion of the specific demographic variables, which were subsequently used as independent variables in the final research objective? Such a framework would provide foundational depth for the study.

The methodology of the study was described as being “descriptive ex post facto “. With the absence of a comparison group being studied, perhaps “descriptive correlational” would be the more appropriate typology to use. The population for the study was all Agricultural Education personnel in Georgia. A total sample of 256 was then reported. This reviewer would ask, is the 256 a ‘sample’ or simply the ‘accessible population.’ This a particularly appropriate question to ask since inferential statistics were used on the data set. The authors were very careful in reporting how the instrument was developed. Rather than assuming the 32-items used to assess the standards were one construct (as was the case when a single reliability coefficient was reported), components analysis could be used to verify that the 32-items measured a uni-dimensional construct. This would also discourage the multiple inferential statistical analyses using a single Likert-type item as a dependent variable.

The results on demographics, program standard use, and attitudes toward the standards were clearly reported. However, the findings of relationships between demographic characteristics and ratings of evaluation statements were not presented clearly. The reader was unclear as per how the items that differed – differed. For example, when educational level was used as an independent variable, seven of the 32 items differed significantly. Exactly how they differed is unclear.

In conclusion, the researchers looked at an important topic – not just in Georgia but to the profession in general. It is my hope that we as a professional can build upon their work as we develop and ‘field test’ national standards for AAEE.