

THE INFLUENCE OF FOUNDATIONAL AND EXPRESSED VALUES ON PERSONAL BEHAVIORS OF TEACHERS

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Abstract

As we press forward into the new millennium, agricultural educators across the country are continuing their quest to reshape agricultural education, to develop new approaches to teaching and learning that are more appropriate and effective for the 21st century. Our rapidly changing world demands an agricultural education system that equips children with the tools and skills they will need to succeed in a multicultural democracy. While many initiatives within agricultural education (National Research Council, 1988; Reinventing Agricultural Education for the Year 2020) have addressed the need to advance agricultural education in public schools, much work is still needed. Service learning may hold the key to connecting future generations with their diverse communities and democratic society at large. The purpose of this article was to outline the extent to which service learning can advance cultural competence within agricultural education.

Introduction/Theoretical Framework

Over 90% of Americans believe there is a significant “moral decline” in our country (Gough, 1998). In a recent poll of adult Americans conducted by *The Wall Street Journal* (1998), “moral decline” was cited as the biggest problem America faces in the next twenty years. This decline is not going unnoticed. According to Nussel (1994), almost all societal problems can be reduced to the failure to do something, and people make mistakes as a result of inaccurate information or a lack of information. Since the school transmits knowledge, skills and values regarded as critical within the society, it can be held accountable when problems arise (Nussel). Great strides are being made in incorporating moral education into the whole school environment, including the agricultural education curriculum. However, the instruction of value education is not clearly defined in the current American educational system.

Educators have realized for some time that what a student accomplishes depends on his/her attitude, philosophy and value judgments (Lockaby & Vaughn, 1999). According to Pullias and Lockhart (1963) educators must recognize that students possess value systems that influence the teaching/learning process, which in turn provides feedback to their individual system. It is part of the learning process to help students develop and utilize their individual value system. However, students are not the only ones to possess a value system. The teacher behaviors in the school setting is largely based on their personal characteristics and the school characteristics (Pullias & Lockhart). The model of the effects of personal characteristics and school characteristics on teacher behavior depicts factors that affect teachers’ behavior in the school setting (Figure 1). The personal characteristics sphere is a modification of Fessler’s Teacher Career Cycle Model (Burden, 1990) in which he described how personal environment and organizational environment influences the career cycle.

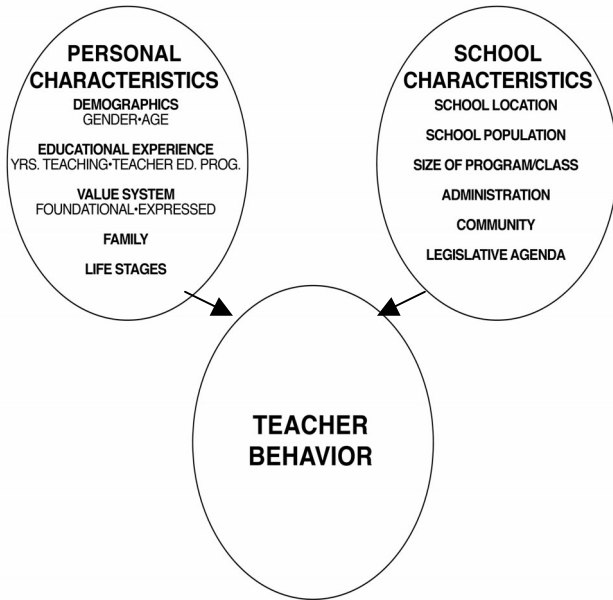


Figure 1. Effects of personal characteristics and school characteristics on teacher behavior

In the teacher behavior model, school characteristics refer to those attributes that affect the overall climate of the school and consequently influence teacher behavior. Fessler refers to these loosely as management style, societal expectations, regulations, and public trust (Burden, 1990). Examples of school characteristics include: school location, school population, size of program/class, administration, community, and legislative agenda. Personal characteristics include demographics of the teacher (gender and age); educational experience factors refer to the number of years teaching (specifically the number of years teaching agriculture), and the teacher education program that prepared them for entry into the teaching profession. Family and life stages refer to the personal traits of the teachers (Burden). The value system, or more specifically the foundational and expressed values, refers to the character of the teacher. According to Phipps and Osborne (1988), teachers of agriculture must possess unquestionable character as it is essential to be an effective teacher.

In the foundational and expressed values model proposed by Lockaby, Baker, and

Hogg (2001) (Figure 2), values that are defined as foundational are those values a person must develop before other values can be expressed. For example a person must have a foundation of courtesy before it can be expressed as respect and tolerance; honesty is the foundation for truth; the expressions of commitment, self-respect, and service must first have the foundation of honor. The foundational values do have some overlap when they are expressed. For example kindness can be expressed as caring, and generosity can be expressed with service (an overlap with honor), caring (overlap with kindness) and friendship (an overlap with loyalty.) The foundational value of loyalty is expressed as friendship and trust, while diligence, prudence, and responsibility express the foundational value of perseverance.

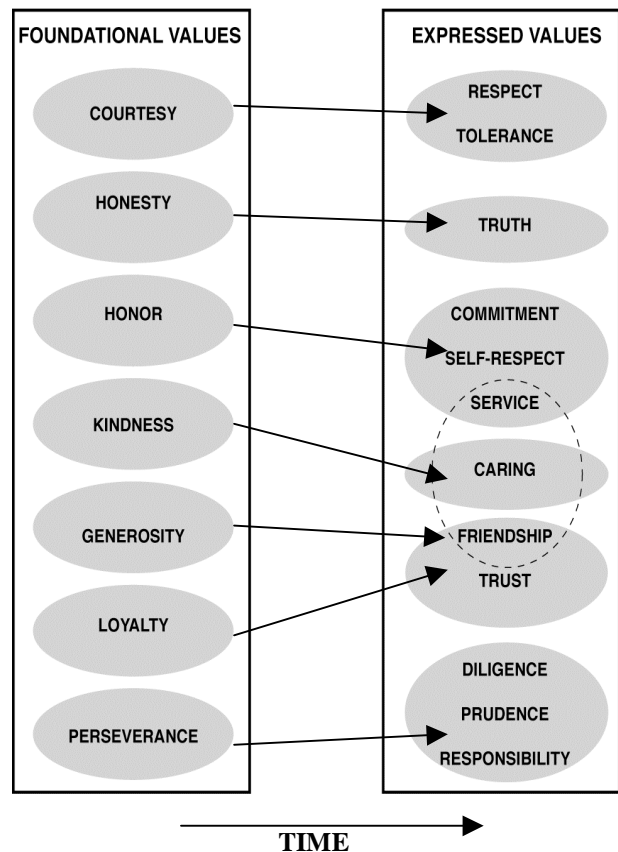


Figure 2. Foundational and expressed values model.

Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between personal and school characteristics on the value system of educators and to determine if value systems and personal and school characteristics contribute to the personal behaviors of teachers. As a means of accomplishing the purpose, the following objectives were developed:

1. Explore the influence of selected personal and school characteristics on foundational values.
2. Explore the influence of selected personal and school characteristics on expressed values.
3. Describe the relationship of selected personal and school characteristics, foundational values, and expressed values on personal behaviors of teachers.

Procedures

The current study was a part of an existing data set from a descriptive study by Lockaby and Vaughn (1999) that sought to determine perceptions of agricultural education teachers nationwide as to what values should be taught to students enrolled in high school agriscience courses. The target population of this study was all agriculture science teachers who taught in public secondary schools in the United States during the 1997-98 school year. The list of individuals in the target population was taken from the *Agricultural Educators Directory* (Henry, 1997). The response rate for the original survey was 70.5% (Lockaby & Vaughn).

Lockaby and Vaughn (1999) performed an extensive literature review to determine the suggested values to incorporate in a secondary agriscience curriculum. Using the data set from this study, researchers performed a factor analysis in an effort to establish unidimensionality of the constructs. For the examination of this instrument, the maximum likelihood method of analysis was used. The suitability of the

data set for exploratory factor analysis was examined and then the factor analysis was performed. Correlations among the items, the correlation matrix, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) statistic, and the measure of sampling adequacy were determined. The results of factor analysis were two derived variables (Foundational Values and Expressed Values) accounting for almost 50% of the variance in the respondents' perceptions towards what values should be taught to students enrolled in high school agriscience courses (Table 1).

Data reduction was conducted for the third section that measured the personal behaviors of teachers. This resulted in the removal of three items from the original data set due to loadings below .4. To determine personal behaviors of teachers, agricultural science teachers were asked to respond to scenario statements using a Likert-type scale. Table 2 identifies the specific factor loadings and items included in analysis. The authors propose that there is a time dimension to the development of a value system. A noted values and morals theorist, Kohlberg (1973) illustrated the characteristics of personal development stages as first described by Piaget. One characteristic is that stages imply distinct or qualitative differences in structures (modes of thinking) that perform the same function at various points in development. Therefore, the researchers contend that in order to exhibit the expressed value, a person must first have developed the foundational value and in time will express it accordingly. This study sought to develop an understanding of the relationship between foundational values, expressed values, and the personal behaviors of teachers.

Using Cronbach's coefficient alpha, reliability was assessed. Reliability of foundational values was $r = .93$ and expressed values was $r = .89$. Reliability for the personal behavior of teachers was $r = .73$. Based on factor analysis, grand means were calculated for all three sections (foundational values, expressed values and personal behaviors of teachers) for the purpose of analysis.

Table 1
 Factor Loadings: Foundational and Expressed Values

| Item ^a | Factor 1 Foundational Values | Factor 2 Expressed Values | Communality |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------|
| Honesty | .84 | | .75 |
| Honor | .83 | | .73 |
| Loyalty | .81 | | .83 |
| Kindness | .75 | | .71 |
| Courtesy | .72 | | .76 |
| Generosity | .72 | | .84 |
| Perseverance | .68 | | .60 |
| Self-Respect | | .74 | .71 |
| Service | | .68 | .57 |
| Prudence | | .63 | .45 |
| Diligence | | .61 | .47 |
| Trust | | .59 | .38 |
| Tolerance | | .58 | .36 |
| Respect | | .57 | .49 |
| Commitment | | .55 | .36 |
| Caring | | .54 | .41 |
| Cooperation | | .50 | .39 |
| Responsibility | | .47 | .45 |
| Sum of squared loadings | 5.028 | 5.150 | 8.376 |
| % of total variance | 23.94 | 24.52 | 39.88 |
| Cronbach's Alpha | .93 | .89 | |

Note. $N = 138$.

^aResponse scale: 1 = *Strongly disagree*; 2 = *Disagree*; 3 = *Uncertain*; 4 = *Agree*; 5 = *Strongly Agree*

Table 2
Factor Loadings: Personal Behaviors of Teachers

| Item ^a | Factor 1 Personal Behaviors of Teachers | Communality |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|-------------|
| “I can list numerous examples where I have ‘gone the extra mile’ to help students”. | .73 | .99 |
| “I try to see the other side of situations in which I find myself.” | .65 | .55 |
| “I consciously incorporate the teaching of values and morals into the agri-science curriculum.” | .58 | .35 |
| “I always strive to give accurate information.” | .51 | .26 |
| “When working with students and co-workers, I keep my temper under control.” | .48 | .23 |
| “I consciously keep confidential matters told to me by a co-worker to myself.” | .47 | .27 |
| Sum of squared loadings | 2.28 | 1.47 |
| % of total variance | 22.76 | 14.68 |
| Cronbach’s Alpha | .73 | |

Note. $N = 138$.

^aResponse scale: 1 = *Strongly disagree*; 2 = *Disagree*; 3 = *Uncertain*; 4 = *Agree*; 5 = *Strongly Agree*

Results

Objective One

To determine the amount of variance explained by personal and school characteristics in the foundational values, a multiple regression analysis was performed at the .05 level of significance (Table 3). The dependent variable for the regression was the foundational values as perceived by agricultural science teachers. The selected independent variables were the personal and school characteristics of the respondents’ (i.e. gender, number of years they have taught agriculture, and number of students enrolled in agriculture courses). A linear

combination of gender, number of years teaching and number of students enrolled in agriculture courses explained five percent of the variance in foundational values but was not found to be significant ($R^2 = .046$, $F = 2.135$, $p = .099$).

Objective Two

A multiple regression analysis was performed at the .05 level of significance to determine the amount of variance explained by the personal and school characteristics in the expressed values (Table 4). The dependent variable for the regression was the expressed values as perceived by agricultural science teachers. The

Table 3
Regression on Foundational Values

| Variables | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | <i>b</i> | <i>t</i> | <i>p</i> |
|-------------------------------------------|----------|-----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Gender ^a | 1.13 | 1.43 | -.028 | -.23 | .818 |
| Number of students in agriculture courses | 157.46 | 167.49 | .267 | 2.397 | .018 |
| Number of years teaching agriculture | 16.46 | 16.83 | -.141 | -1.216 | .226 |
| (Constant) | | | | 66.90 | <.001 |

Note. $N = 138$, $F = 2.135$, $p = .099$, $R^2 = .046$, $SEM = .5449$

^a1 = male, 2 = female

independent variables were the personal and school variables of gender, number of years teaching agriculture and number of students enrolled in agriculture courses.

Approximately 12% ($R^2 = .117$, $F = 5.934$, $p = .001$) of the variance on expressed values was attributed to a linear combination of gender, number of students in agriculture courses, and number of years teaching agriculture. The most meaningful independent variable was number of students in agriculture courses. Respondents who had more students in their agriculture courses tended to have a higher level of agreement with the need to teach expressed values ($b = .427$, $t = 3.981$, $p = <.001$).

Objective Three

In determining the amount of variance that personal and school characteristics, foundational values, and expressed values explained in overall personal behavior of teachers (see Table 2), a multiple regression analysis was performed at the .05 level of significance (Table 5). The dependent variable for the regression was personal behavior of teachers. The selected independent variables used for the multiple regression included the personal and school characteristics of gender, number of years teaching agriculture and number of students in agriculture courses, as well as factor scores for foundational values and expressed values.

Table 4
Regression on Expressed Values

| Variables | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | <i>b</i> | <i>t</i> | <i>p</i> |
|-------------------------------------------|----------|-----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Gender ^a | 1.13 | 1.43 | -.160 | -1.365 | .175 |
| Number of students in agriculture courses | 157.46 | 167.49 | .427 | 3.981 | <.001 |
| Number of years teaching agriculture | 16.46 | 16.83 | -.023 | -.209 | .835 |
| (Constant) | | | | 98.915 | <.001 |

Note. $N = 138$, $F = 5.934$, $p = .001$, $R^2 = .117$, $SEM = .3611$

^a1 =male, 2=female

Table 5
Regression on Personal Behavior of Teachers

| Variables | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | <i>b</i> | <i>t</i> | <i>p</i> |
|-------------------------------------------|----------|-----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Gender | 1.13 | 1.43 | -.136 | -1.23 | .221 |
| Number of students in agriculture courses | 157.46 | 167.49 | .044 | .417 | .678 |
| Number of years teaching agriculture | 16.46 | 16.83 | .072 | .684 | .495 |
| Foundational Values | 4.64 | .552 | -.006 | -.059 | .953 |
| Expressed Values | 4.59 | .38 | .475 | 4.54 | <.001 |
| (Constant) | | | | 7.48 | <.001 |

Note. $N = 138$, $F = 8.33$, $p = <.001$, $R^2 = .240$, $SEM = .306$

Twenty-four percent ($R^2 = .240$, $F = 8.33$, $p = <.001$) of the variance in behavior was explained by a linear combination of foundational and expressed values along with gender, number of years teaching agriculture, and number of students in agriculture courses. The most meaningful independent variable was expressed values. Respondents who held stronger levels of agreement toward expressed values tended to exhibit more positive personal behaviors ($b = .475$, $t = 4.54$, $p <.001$).

Conclusions and Recommendations

The personal and school characteristics included in the initial model did not contribute significantly to the teachers' perceived importance of foundational values. This conclusion will enable state staff members, school district administrators, and curriculum development specialists to prepare instructional programs on the importance of foundational values without tailoring such programs to teacher gender, student enrollment, and years of teaching experience of faculty members. However, explanatory variables that exist contribute to the understanding of foundational values. Clearly some would argue that as adults regardless of teacher

background, there would be almost widespread agreement about the importance of foundational values such as honesty, courtesy, honor, kindness, generosity, loyalty, and perseverance. This current study certainly substantiates such a claim.

When exploring the influence of the same set of personal and school characteristics on perceived importance of expression values, a statistically significant relationship was found. Although neither of the personal characteristics was practically meaningful, the lone school characteristic was found to be statistically meaningful. Teachers with larger enrollments tended to view expressed values as being more important. This finding would support Fessler's Teacher Behavior Model in that selected school characteristics are important to expressed values.

This study showed that the combination of personal and school characteristics had a significant influence upon positive teacher behaviors. Teacher perceptions of expression values were the single most important factor included in this explanatory model. This provides solid evidence that this personal characteristic plays an essential role in a teacher's behavior. Agricultural education faculty need to make preservice teachers cognitively conscious that the

higher one values acting upon the foundational values, the greater the likelihood that an individual will exhibit positive teacher behaviors.

Although not certain, it stands to reason that teachers who possess a more positive perception of expressed values are more likely to actually practice those behaviors, and are consequently more effective teachers. If so, is this because they treat their students with more dignity and respect than others? This would clearly indicate the importance of teaching in the affective domain. In conclusion, the researchers suggest that more research on these complex constructs is needed. Future researchers should consider other factors that may influence positive teacher behaviors in order to add to the foundational theory in teaching and learning.

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