



Student Completed Project Information Sheet

Name of Project: Emotions And Emotion Regulation Strategies Of Male Farmers In North Carolina

Student Name: Robin Marcom, EdD, MPH, OTR Affiliation: North Carolina Agromedicine

Email: tutorr@ecu.edu

Phone: 252.744.1008

Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Elizabeth Wilson

Affiliation: Agricultural Institute
College of Agriculture & Life Sciences
North Carolina State University

Email: bwilson@ncsu.edu

Phone: 919-515-7035

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Sponsor, if applicable: NA

Project Abstract:

Depression, stress and suicide have been widely discussed in relation to farmers, (Fetsch, 2011; Fraser et al, 2005; Schulman, 2005); however, limited literature has been identified that addresses farmers' emotions, how those emotions are regulated, and what programs are needed to support farmers with emotionally-related issues. This interpretist-constructivist qualitative study was conducted to learn about farmers' emotions and emotion regulation strategies as well as to better inform the North Carolina Agromedicine Institute ('the Institute') to respond to requests from farm families for assistance with emotionally-related issues. The broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions (Fredrickson, 2001), interpersonal theory of suicide (Van Orden, Witte, Cukrowicz, Braithwaite, Selby, & Joiner, 2010) and the process model of emotion regulation (Gross, 1998, 2014, p.7) were the theoretical underpinnings of this study.

Semi-structured interviews were completed with a purposive sample of 15 farmers from across the state with whom the Institute had previously worked on agricultural health and safety issues. A brief survey was used to collect participant demographic data. Trustworthiness of the study was established through member checking, peer debriefing, maintenance of an audit trail, methods and reflexive journals, and use of thick description. Data was analyzed using an inductive, constant comparative process.

Key themes that emerged relative to the emotions expressed by farmers were minimally positive – the limited expression of positive emotions; negative patchwork – the preponderance to express an array of negative emotions; stress lining – the expression of experiencing stress on a daily basis; and, family, farm economics and the public – all precipitators of negative emotions and stress. Major themes that emerged with respect to how farmers regulated their emotions

were figure out and reassure – the tendency to turn inward and try to figure out or reason through what they can be done to change negative circumstances and outcomes as well as to reassure self and others that things would be okay going forward; modulate/suppress– efforts to regulate emotions and expression of emotions; galvanized by God – relying on a strong relationship with God and faith to deal with the challenges of living and working on the farm.

Primary themes associated with social regulation of emotion were: the traditional farm wife – describing the wife as meeting basic family care needs and not serving as an emotional support; no time for friends – having no time for friends due to on-farm obligations; and alone – being alone physically or feeling alone even when others were in close proximity. Farmers suggested that efforts be made to educate the public about farm production, develop programs to provide emotional support to farmers and their families and work with politicians and agribusiness leaders to examine current business models and their negative effects on farmers and their families as well as on the future sustainability of the farm.

Links to Project-related Products (e.g., publications, posters, educational products, etc.):

<https://repository.lib.ncsu.edu/bitstream/handle/1840.16/11023/etd.pdf?sequence=2&isAllowed=y>