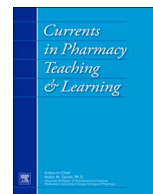




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Research Paper

Perceptions of organizational culture and organizational citizenship by faculty in U.S. colleges and schools of pharmacy

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ABSTRACT

Objectives: (1) Describe perceptions of organizational culture and prevalence of organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs) among faculty at United States (U.S.) colleges/schools of pharmacy; (2) determine which aspects of those phenomena are strongest and which are most problematic; (3) evaluate the psychometric properties of measures for organizational culture and OCBs in academic pharmacy; and (4) identify any relationships between organizational culture and organizational citizenship among academic pharmacy faculty.

Methods: A random sample of 600 U.S. academic pharmacists acquired from the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy were distributed an email survey through the use of Qualtrics technology. The procedures closely resembled the Total Design Method advocated to maximize survey response, including use of a pre-notification letter, reminders, and a nominal financial inducement. In addition to demographic questions, the survey employed multiple-item measures of organizational culture and OCBs described previously in the literature and derived from Delphi consensus-building procedures. The analysis plan incorporated use of factor and item analyses to evaluate psychometric properties of the measure and elicit the inherent domains comprising these phenomena, along with descriptive statistics to describe facets of organizational culture and OCBs that were most prevalent.

Results: A total of 177 responses were delivered. Factor analysis of organizational culture revealed a five-factor solution emphasizing achievement orientation, professionalism, stability, supportiveness, and reflectiveness. OCB domains were along the possibility of faculty being virtuous, disrespectful, sportsmanlike, and benevolent/malevolent. Even while multi-faceted and avoiding a simple typological descriptor, academic pharmacy cultures were reportedly healthy. Sportsmanship, while still somewhat commonly observed, was seen less frequently than other behaviors. The measures demonstrated logical, cogent factor structures and excellent internal consistency reliability.

Conclusions: Psychometrically well-performing measures were used to assess the multi-faceted organizational culture of academic pharmacy programs and the organizational citizenship behaviors of its constituent faculty. The results can be used to measure these phenomena at individual organizations for benchmarking and to inform future inquiries that can assist with development of strategies that impact academic worklife and outcomes.

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Introduction

Higher education continues a long history of evolution. Initial changes were brought about through the proliferation of academic disciplines into specialized fields where quantity of research output became the expectation.¹ With this continued expectation also arises more recently greater accountability for teaching outcomes.² Currently, academic pharmacists are beset with internal and external pressures to be consummate teacher-scholars, with the possibility of role conflict even among more seasoned and adept academicians.³ This is further exacerbated by the expectation (and need) for advocacy not only by institutions but by individual faculty so as to promote the profession and leverage those actions into provider status for practitioners,⁴ along with an increasing emphasis on assessment of myriad types of outcomes.⁵

As such, the concept of organizational culture has received considerable attention in the academic milieu in general, and in academic pharmacy, specifically.⁶ Academic pharmacy has described the need to promote a culture of scholarship,⁷ assessment,⁸ diversity and inclusion,⁹ academic integrity,¹⁰ cultural competence,¹¹ professionalism,¹² and many more such “sub-cultures”. Promoting these subcultures is indeed admirable, if not always easy to achieve. One aspect of these subcultures is that they approach organizational culture as a typological versus a dimensional concept. A typological approach regards organizational culture as having the presence or absence of a certain quality. A dimensional approach takes into account the various underlying components of culture, with an appreciation for their interrelatedness.¹³ This is underscored within a more recent definition by Schein,¹³ regarded by many as one of the greater authorities on organizational culture, and whose definition serves as the basis for this research. Schein indicates organizational culture to be a pattern of shared basic assumptions learned by a group as it solves problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that work well enough to be considered valid.¹³

However, the impact played by organizational culture on a day-to-day basis often gets overlooked. One reason is that agreement on a definition remains elusive. There are many definitions, which the simplest and perhaps most frequently cited being, “how things are done around here.”¹⁴ However, more comprehensive assessments recognize culture's multidimensional nature and are careful to distinguish organizational culture from organizational climate.¹⁵ Climate is more transient, temporal, and subject to manipulation by people with power, rather than culture, which can be gradually impacted by those same individuals, but which involves a more holistic, comprehensive, and evolutionary approach.¹⁶

Organizational culture can vary not only among institutions within a certain area, or industry, but can also vary from one area/industry to another. Academia (particularly at four-year institutions) involves the provision of service, rather than a product. Moreover, many of its employees, even while under contracts, are faculty that serve to some degree as independent contractors, each with considerable autonomy to provide teaching, scholarship, and service as they see fit, or at least in accord with the mission of the organization. The clients of academic organizations are actually many, but center around students, wherein the customer versus learner argument is prevalent. As such, the culture of higher learning institutions can be said to be different from organizations in other industries.

Organizational culture in academia has long been viewed to be relatively unhealthy. Huyghe and Kockaert¹⁷ found that the culture of many academic organizations was more inhibitory than facilitating of entrepreneurship among leading researchers, even while collaboration fueled by cultural alignment has been shown to produce copious new knowledge.¹⁸ Organizational culture has an impact not only on research, but even the adoption of innovative teaching methods.¹⁹ Both within and outside of academia, organizational culture has been frequently cited as a primary driver behind employee motivation, satisfaction, productivity, and longevity.²⁰ It has been argued that facilitating organizational change must be accompanied by an examination of culture.²¹ In fact, a closer introspection of culture has been called for specifically in academic pharmacy,²² wherein a compelling case made that a thorough examination, even codifying culture, should precede strategic planning efforts;²³ and indeed, there are now specific standards and considerable language addressing organizational culture in ACPE's most recent standards.⁵

One facet of organizational culture shown to be especially salient and a component within many measures of culture is organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs). The prevailing cultural norms in an academic organization along with the general citizenship of its constituent members help to create an environment filled with putative emotions that can be either healthy, or volatile and deleterious.²⁴ Willson²¹ found that unresolved conflicts about organizational norms of collegiality create scholarly anomie among its constituent faculty members. The American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy Council of Deans/Council of Faculties (AACP COD/COF) pointed to the criticality of organizational culture in academic pharmacy, but suggested in the absence of stronger, more formal mentoring programs, that organizational citizenship was an area ripe for further development within the Academy.²⁵

Organizational citizenship behaviors are discretionary not always directly recognized by the formal reward system but yet still important for effective functioning of an organization.²⁶ OCBs have been referred to as a direct manifestation of collegiality.²⁷ Collegiality is important because of its implications for quality of worklife and turnover.^{28,29} It has been demonstrated that a framework of (i.e., culture allowing for/encouraging) OCBs creates heightened social capital (camaraderie, effective collegial partnerships, goodwill), which might not only improve organizational performance but have a positive impact on employee work environments.³⁰ In fact, positive OCBs directed at peers have been associated with increased levels of reciprocal social support.³¹

The positive and negative OCBs carried out by individuals can also quickly manifest into a climate that can be reflective of an entire program (college or school) and/or within academic departments and inter-departmental cadres and cliques.³² OCBs both inform and are a reflection of climate, but have roots in the broader culture.³³ In fact, positive OCBs can actually buffer an otherwise unhealthy or unstable culture and serve to “protect” vulnerable faculty such as those who are new or prone social or professional isolation.³⁴ While a holistic remedy of an ailing culture rests on the actions of persons comprising the entire organization, leader can at least role model and potentially precipitate citizenship behaviors, particularly if their actions are deemed as fair and equitable.³⁵

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