Assessing Organizational Values Within Ohio State University Extension
Research Summary

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Complete document can be found at:
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Introduction

Change is now a necessity within organizations due to the rapid and monumental changes taking place in the external environment (Cameron & Quinn, 2011). Due to declining economic conditions and the evolving dynamics of society, Extension systems across the nation are experiencing unprecedented organizational changes. An organization's culture poses a great influence on the change process (Latta, 2009) and is a key component to successful organizational change (Cameron & Quinn, 2011). The collective beliefs, values, and norms, comprising the culture of an organization, are represented by those individuals who work for the organization.

OSU Extension is a dynamic organization focused on improving the lives of Ohio's citizens. Guided by a strategic plan, employees located on-campus and distributed throughout Ohio's counties, work collectively to fulfill the mission of OSU Extension. Operating in fairly autonomous roles, Extension employees are motivated and deeply committed to their work. These committed professionals, representing OSU Extension's culture, are a critical factor affecting whether proposed changes succeed or fail. Congruence between individual employee values and the overall values exhibited by the organization increases the likelihood for employee loyalty and commitment to the organization (Jaskyte, 2004). Congruence is also essential for optimum organizational performance.

In early 2012, research was conducted within OSU Extension identifying work-related values of personnel. Also explored was the evidence of the identified organizational values exhibited within daily practices. This summary provides a brief overview of the research activities and findings as well as offers some recommendations for practice.

Methods

Participants for this study included a census of 623 OSU Extension personnel with a 0.5 appointment or greater housed within the Department of Extension. Utilizing a descriptive survey approach, data were collected and then analyzed using a combination of descriptive statistics and exploratory factor analysis. Detailed procedures used in this research study can be found in the complete document located at the link provided above.

The response rate was 66.6%. Non-response error was addressed through two widely accepted methods, comparisons between population and respondents and early and late respondents

(Lindner, Murphy, & Briers, 2001; Miller & Smith, 1983). Both methods revealed very similar groups, therefore findings from this study are representative of the entire population of OSU Extension personnel.

Findings

Demographics
The population and respondents in this study consist of white females averaging 48 years of age having served OSU Extension fulltime for approximately 15 to 16 years. A large percentage of employees were in three job groups including Educator (30%), Program support (30%), and Office support (24%). Personnel from program areas Family and Consumer Sciences and 4-H Youth Development constituted almost half (46%) of the population. The largest percentage of population possesses Master's degrees followed closely by high school diploma and Bachelor's degree.

Identifying Organizational Values
Utilizing exploratory factor analysis as a means of data reduction, a set of interpretable factors were extracted and parallel analysis used as an accurate and reliable method of factor retention (Costello & Osborne, 2005; Gliem, 2012; Hayton, Allen, & Scarpello, 2004).

Four factors, utilizing 39 concepts, were retained in this study. Of the 62 initial concepts, 23 were removed due to insignificant loading on any factor. Two concepts were removed from the four factor matrix due to lack of conceptual fit within their respective factor.

Each factor was named by the researcher based on the conceptual fit of the variables loading onto each. The resulting constructs, their reported means of perceived value, standard deviations, eigen values, internal consistency, and percent total variance are shown in Table 1. Each construct, based on perceived value, had a mean above 3.0 (1= *not valued*, 2 = *somewhat valued*, 3= *valued*, 4 = *extremely valued*) thereby signifying they were valued among the respondents. These are reported in no particular order as they are all identified as OSU Extension organizational values.

Table 1. Named Organizational Factors, means and standard deviation of perceived value, EFA eigen value, and measure of internal consistency.

Factor name	Mean	SD	Eigen Value	Cronbach's alpha
Program Planning & Implementation	3.63	0.317	13.4	0.87
Value & Relevance of the Organization	3.39	0.416	2.81	0.79
Diversity	3.02	0.571	1.94	0.83
Employment Conditions	3.69	0.351	1.64	0.78

Note. For mean, 1 = *not valued*, 2 = *somewhat valued*, 3 = *valued*, 4 = *extremely valued*

Assessing Value of Individual Concepts Within Constructs
Based on the percentages of respondents' ratings across the levels of the value scale, a majority of respondents rated each of the 39 individual concepts as either *valued* or *extremely valued* across the four constructs. Further analysis is discussed below by construct and illustrated in Tables 3-6.

   Program Planning & Implementation. Concepts within this construct were relatively highly valued and respondents exhibited relative agreement noting a lower standard deviation. The concept of greatest value to respondents, noting the highest percentage of respondents rating *extremely valued,* was that of "Credibility with clientele". This concept had 82% of respondents rate it *extremely valued* and 94% *valued* or *extremely valued*.

   Value & Relevance of the Organization. Concepts within this construct were also relatively highly valued by respondents yet noted slightly less agreement among respondents. A range of 75-92% is seen across concepts rated *valued* or *extremely valued* combined, with the largest (92.8%) being "OSU Extension as an integral component of The Ohio State University".

   Diversity. This construct showed dispersed percentages of respondents across each of the four levels of the scale, thus supporting the larger standard deviation. The concepts in this construct ranged from 21.7-85.5% *valued* or *extremely valued*. The least *valued* or *extremely valued* concept being "employee participation in an educational program in a foreign country" (21.7%) and the highest being "a general appreciation of diversity" (85.5%).

   Employment Conditions. Respondents' ratings in this construct noted highly valued concepts. All of the concepts within this construct were at least 63% *extremely valued* and ranged from 91-96% across both *valued* or *extremely valued*.

Assessing Congruency Among Value and Evidence of Individual Concepts Within Constructs
To illustrate similarities and/or differences in the data, this study utilized descriptive comparisons. Comparisons of the value and evidence construct means are shown in Table 2. All value construct means are greater than those of the evidence constructs. With this in mind the differences reflect the gap between perceived value and perceived evidence among the respondents. The largest difference is found among *Employment Conditions* (0.83) and the smallest difference among *Diversity* (0.28).

Table 2. Difference of Construct Means of Perceived Value and Perceived Evidence

	Program Planning & Implementation			Value & Relevance of the Organization			Diversity			Employment Conditions		
	V1	E1	Diff	V2	E2	Diff	V3	E3	Diff	V4	E4	Diff
Mean	3.63	2.98	.65	3.39	2.97	.42	3.02	2.74	.28	3.68	2.85	.83
SD	.317	.512		.415	.515		.571	.598		.351	.575	

Note. 1= *not valued*, *not evident*, 4= *extremely valued*, *extremely evident*.

To further explore the similarities and differences between perceived value and perceived evidence percentages of respondents were compared. Tables 3-6 show, by construct, the percentages of personnel rating each concept as *valued* or *extremely valued* combined and as *evident* or *extremely evident* combined. Overall findings show personnel *valued* or *extremely*

valued concepts greater than they were perceived *evident* or *extremely evident*. Very large percentages of personnel expressed high levels of value for concepts within *Employment Conditions* and *Program Planning and Implementation* yet perceived many of these concepts as less evident within daily practices.

Table 3. Comparison of Percentages of Respondents Rating Individual Concepts *Valued & Extremely Valued* and *Evident & Extremely Evident* for Construct *Program Planning and Implementation*

Program Planning and Implementation	Valued & Extremely Valued	Evident & Extremely Evident
Extension programs based on needs identified at the local level	95.5%	61.4%
Extension programs that help people solve problems.	95.1%	80.7%
Our role in bringing about change in people's lives.	95.1%	77.6%
An emphasis on excellence in educational programming.	94.9%	80.7%
Useful/practical programs.	94.5%	76.0%
Credibility with clientele.	94.2%	77.8%
Helping people help themselves.	93.7%	81.0%
Innovation/creativity in programming	93.3%	63.8%
Unbiased delivery of information.	93.0%	81.7%
Proactive educational programs.	92.0%	68.4%
Flexibility/adaptability in local programming.	91.8%	64.1%
Working with groups of clients.	89.8%	76.1%
Freedom/independence in local programming.	87.7%	59.3%
Leveraging resources to maximize impact.	87.3%	59.6%
Direct client involvement in program planning.	79.0%	52.0%

Note. Respondents were not required to designate a response to every concept.

Table 4. Comparison of Percentages of Respondents Rating Individual Concepts *Valued & Extremely Valued* and *Evident & Extremely Evident* for Construct *Employment Conditions*

Employment Conditions	Valued & Extremely Valued	Evident & Extremely Evident
Adequate resources to perform job responsibilities.	96.0%	58.8%
Teamwork among coworkers.	95.4%	70.1%
Supervisors who demonstrate sensitivity to the personal and family responsibilities of employees.	94.7%	73.0%
The recognition that our employees are our organization's greatest resource.	94.2%	54.0%
Good fringe benefits for employees.	93.8%	80.5%
The effective flow of communications through all organizational levels.	93.7%	39.2%
Equal opportunities for male and female employees.	90.8%	73.2%

Note. Respondents were not required to designate a response to every concept.

Table 5. Comparison of Percentages of Respondents Rating Individual Concepts *Valued & Extremely Valued* and *Evident & Extremely Evident* for Construct *Value and Relevance of the Organization*

Value & Relevance of the Organization	Valued & Extremely Valued	Evident & Extremely Evident
OSU Extension as an integral component of The Ohio State University.	92.8%	59.7%
The federal, state, and local Extension partnership.	87.8%	72.8%
The involvement of volunteers to multiply our educational outreach.	87.0%	75.9%
Extension financial support from the federal level.	87.0%	60.9%
OSU Extension as an integral part of The College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences.	85.6%	74.2%
OSU Extension as a leader in overall outreach and engagement at The Ohio State University.	85.1%	60.2%
Alternative/external funding sources (grants, cost recovery, etc.) utilized in supporting Extension's mission.	81.9%	73.3%
Documentation of outcomes and impacts in Extension work.	81.2%	77.3%
Specialization for educators/field specialists to provide subject matter expertise.	78.8%	64.4%
Consistent programming offered across regions or state to address critical issues.	75.7%	56.7%

Note. Respondents were not required to designate a response to every concept.

Table 6. Comparison of Percentages of Respondents Rating Individual Concepts *Valued & Extremely Valued* and *Evident & Extremely Evident* for Construct *Diversity*

Diversity	Valued & Extremely Valued	Evident & Extremely Evident
A general appreciation of diversity.	85.5%	73.8%
Racial/ethnic diversity among clientele.	79.0%	62.6%
Racial/ethnic diversity among employees.	74.9%	64.1%
A general awareness of global issues.	74.7%	55.6%
Interdisciplinary programs.	69.6%	50.6%
Targeting clientele from urban/metro areas.	68.0%	60.0%
Employee participation in an educational program in a foreign country.	21.7%	19.5%

Note. Respondents were not required to designate a response to every concept.

Program Planning & Implementation. Most of the concepts within this construct were *valued* or *extremely valued* by large percentages of respondents with ratings of *evident* or *extremely evident* being moderately lower. Minimal gaps between value and evidence were noted among concepts "unbiased delivery of information", "helping people help themselves" and "working with groups of clients". Larger gaps were noted between value and evidence among

"Extension programs based on needs identified at the local level", "innovation /creativity in programming" and "freedom/ independence in local programming".

Employment Conditions. Large gaps were found between value and evidence, specifically among "the effective flow of communications through all organizational levels" and "the recognition that our employee's are our organization's greatest resource". These large gaps were followed by "adequate resources to perform job responsibilities", representing a slightly smaller gap. In general, there were not high levels of congruence among value and evidence within this construct.

Value & Relevance of the Organization. The concept with the largest percentage (92.8%) of personnel rating *valued* or *extremely valued*, "OSU Extension as an integral component of The Ohio State University", also had one of the lowest percentages (59.7%) among *evident* or *extremely evident*. Thus this concept had the largest gap between value and evidence. Other gaps seen across the concepts were minimal therefore showing relative congruence between value and evidence within this construct.

Diversity. Overall there was relative congruence between value and evidence within this construct. There were no extremely large gaps. Personnel were aligned in their rating for "employee participation in an educational program in a foreign country" as it had the smallest gap between value and evidence across all of the constructs.

Discussion

OSUE demographics

Considering the current average years of service within OSU Extension, one must recognize that many years of service may result in entrenched behaviors and could present a challenge during times of organizational change. The lengthy tenure over the population combined with the lack of ethnic/cultural diversity increases the underlying assumptions within the organizational culture thus, making it difficult for personnel to accept change.

Identification of constructs by perceived value

As a result of the use of factor analysis and the use of a representative population, a comprehensive set of organizational values were identified in this study. The constructs were named based on the conceptual themes across each of the individual concepts within. Each concept represents a work related notion that, collectively, can be summarized into a value statement for each construct and utilized by OSU Extension when making future administrative decisions. The identified set of organizational values from this study represents OSU Extension in its entirety.

Organizational values

Comparing the current listing of organizational values to those from previous studies with OSU Extension (Safrit, Conklin, & Jones, 2003) and other states (Seevers, 2003; Barker, 1994; Safrit, 1990), a distinct pattern emerged. The majority of values identified in those lists comprise only one of the currently identified constructs, *Program Planning and Implementation.* This is evidence that the majority of identified past organizational values are program focused and have only represented a specific portion of the organization. The large amount of program-related values highlights the intense programmatic focus within Extension potentially reflecting a less comprehensive view of other organizational functions. Through the current analysis,

organizational values represent a more holistic view thus highlighting areas that otherwise may have gone unnoticed or have been too narrowly focused.

Congruency Between Organizational Values and Evidence in Practice
A signifier of prosperity within an organization is evidence of an agreement between organizational values and routine behaviors of its personnel (Safrit, Conklin, & Jones, 2003; Seevers, 2000). Organizational values represent the image of the organization. If values are not shared between organizational leadership and personnel, this can result in conflicting strategies, perspectives, and goals thereby redirecting personnel focus and draining positive energy towards achieving a common goal (Cameron & Quinn, 2011).

Though it may seem fairly obvious, by the high levels of value among the individual concepts, OSU Extension personnel are committed to their work and support the fundamental philosophy of why their work is important. However, these same individuals perceive organizational values as being less evident in daily practice. Here forth, congruence is discussed by individual construct.

   Congruency for *Program Planning and Implementation*. The construct containing the most individual concepts, *Program Planning and Implementation*, showed large percentages of personnel highly valuing concepts related to helping people solve problems and bringing about change in their lives through the use of programs. Also highly valued were concepts involving excellence in useful and practical programs based on local needs as well as establishing credibility with clientele.

Considering how highly valued the concepts within this construct were, gaps between value and evidence were seen. Overall, gaps were reported for each individual concept, however, the largest gaps were reported among "Extension programs based on needs identified at the local level", "innovation/creativity in programming" and "freedom and independence in local programming". Perhaps these concepts were considered less evident due to an increased focus on statewide programs, implemented with the latest round of organizational changes.

Also being a factor, could be the location of personnel. Many of OSU Extension personnel implementing programs are doing so at the local level where they potentially feel an obligation towards their clientele. Educators in the field have the opportunity to build lasting relationships, create change, and solve problems in the lives of those they directly serve. Increased oversight in OSU Extension programming may have suppressed the opportunity for local educators to be flexible and innovative with their local programmatic efforts. Furthermore, in the context of organizational restructuring, local is less defined by geographical boundaries (i.e. county lines). Extension Educators are becoming more likely to address needs of clientele based on areas of expertise rather than specific geographical locations.

   Congruency for *Value and Relevance of the Organization*. The connection between OSU Extension and The Ohio State University appears to be a concept resonating with OSU Extension personnel. The concept "OSU Extension as an integral component of The Ohio State University" was the highest valued concept within this construct, yet was perceived less evident among personnel. The disconnect experienced by personnel could be a direct reflection of their location throughout the state. OSU Extension employees are out in the state working to address the goals, as represented in both the College and University strategic plans, but perhaps don't feel appreciated by The Ohio State University for their efforts.

Great amounts of attention have been directed towards the documentation of impacts of OSU Extension programming. Due to funding issues this has become an important and necessary function to evaluate OSU Extension and its impact on Ohio's citizens. In concert with this, is the requisition of alternative funding sources (grants, cost recovery, etc.) to support OSU Extension's mission. OSU Extension personnel in this study exhibit relative congruence between value and evidence of these concepts. It is most likely due to the intense focus on these concepts within the last few years that reflect their necessary functions in today's environment.

Congruency for *Diversity*. Diversity, broadly defined, is about differences. Among the results of this study, diversity was reflected through geographic locations, knowledge specialties, as well as racial and ethnic differences. This construct was the least valued of all four constructs, yet reported the most congruency between value and evidence. This was a surprising finding due to the higher standard deviations for both value and evidence *Diversity* constructs. The findings from this study show that there are relatively large groups of personnel representing each level of the measurement scales.

This finding represents the efforts put forth by OSU Extension to enhance diversity awareness thus allowing personnel to be more knowledgeable yet still lacking the actions associated with it. Take for example, "interdisciplinary programs", as it is not highly valued by personnel and even less evident. Interdisciplinary seems to be the direction of the current change efforts within OSU Extension, yet personnel appear to be reticent about engaging in projects across program lines. A question I would put forth is, in what ways could or should OSU Extension support an interdisciplinary focus among its personnel?

It does not go without notice that the population demographics are saturated with White females. The experiences and culture of this particular group may have significant effects on the findings of this study. Cultures are partly composed of underlying assumptions that have been catalogued based on our experiences throughout our lives and are subconsciously exhibited in our daily actions (Schein, 2010). These assumptions are difficult to change. OSU Extension has initiated an effort towards altering the existing population but perhaps should consider adding alternative means of changing the culture in relation to enhancing diversity.

Congruency for *Employment Conditions*. Each concept within this construct was *valued* or *extremely valued* by a minimum of 90% of personnel. Conversely, the majority of the concepts were rated as less evident by personnel. One concept in particular, "the effective flow of communications through all organizational levels" stands out as having the largest gap between value and evidence across all four constructs. Based on this finding one could presume that the current vertical communication strategy within OSU Extension is not resonating with a majority of the personnel. Prior to the implementation of the change initiatives within OSU Extension, increased communication efforts were put in place intended to update personnel and provide needed information. Perhaps, it is not solely the amount of communications through the organizational levels but the content, tone, and delivery of the messages that are not resonating with personnel. Are there ways that these messages providing necessary information could be more aligned with the values of the personnel, thus creating greater interest and understanding of the content?

Also potentially contributing to the communication lapse is a lack of lateral communication among personnel. The relative autonomy among county personnel promotes unique programming and communication efforts within localized environments. Strategically opening up these environments allowing personnel to have immediate communication access to colleagues throughout the state could reduce redundancies and enhance efficiencies and team based mentalities.

Other findings within this construct, related to larger gaps between value and evidence, were seen among "the recognition that our employees are our organization's greatest resource" and "adequate resources to perform job responsibilities". Due to the strong historical programmatic focus, the recognition and appreciation of those implementing the programs has been unintentionally overshadowed by developing the overall impact of the program. Among the well educated personnel within OSU Extension, there lies underutilized potential that if allowed to surface could provide great opportunity for the organization. The lack of evidence related to adequate resources for personnel may be a reflection of the decreased funding experienced by many within OSU Extension. This could also be a reflection of the availability of support provided when assuming new job roles and responsibilities as well as guidance for navigating the multitude of policies and procedures governing the organizational functions.

Decisions made from past organizational value sets narrowly focused on the programmatic perspective thus limiting the context of the decision. Looking at situations through a balanced focus on both programmatic needs and working conditions will lead to more effective programming efforts across the organization. The discrepancies noted within this construct could be a direct reflection of the uncertainty associated with organizational change. I do not intend to minimize the importance of these identified issues but feel it is important to recognize the impact of change, as it is the current context of the organization.

<div align="center">Recommendations for Practice</div>

Based on these findings, coupled with a review of relevant literature the following recommendations are offered and may provide valuable insight for OSU Extension. These recommendations include:

- **Collectively evaluate existing policies and practices**. Utilize the collective themes (i.e. constructs) found in this study as a framework of evaluating the individual concepts by reviewing and developing plans to reduce the currently existing gaps striving towards overall organizational alignment.
- **Analyze communication strategies organization wide**. Members of OSU Extension should reflect on current ways of communicating and devise strategies to enhance effective communications across all levels of the organization, specifically looking at the construction of messages aligning with value set.
- **Attract diverse talent**. Review and revamp recruitment and hiring processes towards enhancing overall diversity within OSU Extension. OSU Extension should look towards attracting and retaining diverse populations, though not sacrificing the placement of talented individuals, regardless of their background, in the position for which they are best qualified.
- **Continue moving forward**. Positive gains have been made in the area of diversity though the population is still quite divided. Continue efforts towards creating diversity awareness and strive towards engaging personnel towards implementing actions.

Future Research

Based on the findings from this study, the following recommendations are made for further research. First, research could be conducted utilizing the additional un-reported data obtained in this study. Respondents were given the opportunity to offer any additional comments that they believed were useful to the study. These comments could continue to provide useful insight into personnel experiences and expectations. Second, to gain greater confidence in an organizational value set and how to increase its evidence within the organization, ways of operationalizing the individual concepts should be explored. This research focus would provide a greater awareness into the behavioral expectations of the organization and provide a consistent framework of reference. Finally, findings from the previous OSU Extension organizational values studies could be compared with the current findings to explore the evolution of organizational values over two decades.

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