

4-1-2003

An Organizational Culture Assessment Using the Competing Values Framework: A Profile of Ohio State University Extension

Angel A. Berrio

National Institute for Agricultural Research (INIA), berrio1@mail.com



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-Share Alike 4.0 License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/).

Recommended Citation

Berrio, A. A. (2003). An Organizational Culture Assessment Using the Competing Values Framework: A Profile of Ohio State University Extension. *The Journal of Extension*, 41(2), Article 4.
<https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/joe/vol41/iss2/4>

This Feature Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Conferences at TigerPrints. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Journal of Extension by an authorized editor of TigerPrints. For more information, please contact kokeefe@clemson.edu.



April 2003 // Volume 41 // Number 2 // Feature Articles // 2FEA3



PREVIOUS
ARTICLE



ISSUE
CONTENTS



NEXT
ARTICLE

An Organizational Culture Assessment Using the Competing Values Framework: A Profile of Ohio State University Extension

Abstract

The competing values framework was used to describe the organizational culture type exhibited by Ohio State University Extension (OSU Extension) personnel. This framework assesses the dominant organizational culture based on four culture types: Clan, Hierarchy, Adhocracy, and Market. OSU Extension personnel exhibited a Clan culture type as dominant in both the current and preferred situations. The Clan culture portrays OSU Extension as an organization that concentrates on internal maintenance with flexibility, concern for people, and sensitivity for customers. The study suggests implications for Extension nationwide.

Angel A. Berrio

Researcher II

National Institute for Agricultural Research (INIA)

Maracay, Venezuela

Internet Address: berrio1@mail.com

Introduction

The contemporary definition of organizational culture (OC) includes what is valued, the dominant leadership style, the language and symbols, the procedures and routines, and the definitions of success that characterizes an organization. OC represents the values, underlying assumptions, expectations, collective memories, and definitions present in an organization (Schein, 1992; Cameron & Quinn, 1999).

Cameron and Quinn (1999) have developed an organizational culture framework built upon a theoretical model called the "Competing Values Framework." This framework refers to whether an organization has a predominant internal or external focus and whether it strives for flexibility and individuality or stability and control. The framework is also based on six organizational culture dimensions and four dominant culture types (i.e., clan, adhocracy, market, and hierarchy). In addition the framework authors generated an "Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument (OCAI)" which is used to identify the organizational culture profile based on the core values, assumptions, interpretations, and approaches that characterize organizations (Cameron & Quinn, 1999).

The central issue associated with organizational culture is its linkage with organizational performance. Connections between OC and performance have been established. An increasing body of evidence supports a linkage between an organization's culture and its business performance. In the business arena, evidence has confirmed that companies which put emphasis in key managerial components, such as customers, stakeholders and employees, and leadership, outperform those that do not have these cultural characteristics (Kotter & Heskett, 1992; Wagner & Spencer, 1996).

The competing values framework can be used in constructing an organizational culture profile. Through the use of the OCAI, an organizational culture profile can be drawn by establishing the organization's dominant culture type characteristics. In this respect the overall culture profile of an organization can be identified as:

- Clan: an organization that concentrates on internal maintenance with flexibility, concern for people, and sensitivity for customers.
- Hierarchy: an organization that focuses on internal maintenance with a need for stability and control.

- Adhocracy: an organization that concentrates on external positioning with a high degree of flexibility and individuality.
- Market: an organization that focuses on external maintenance with a need for stability and control.

The culture of Ohio State University Extension plays an important role in the way Extension personnel plan, implement, and evaluate educational programs. OSU Extension is perceived by its personnel to be an institution devoted to satisfying the needs and wants of its clients through programs that are clearly defined, sensible to public needs, constantly monitored for success, and pro-actively implemented (Berrio & Henderson, 1998).

Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of the study discussed here was to describe the dominant culture type of Ohio State University Extension (OSUE). The research study was designed as an evaluation survey with the purpose of exploring and describing Ohio State University Extension's organizational culture. It is also an organizational survey because its results were used as part of a larger change effort to diagnose issues related to leadership, teamwork, and management behavior and to determine the impact of these issues on employee outcomes (Wagner & Spencer, 1996). The researcher was also interested in studying factors that may account for variation among the organizational culture profile.

The current and preferred dominant culture types and selected demographic characteristics were analyzed in order to establish a profile of Ohio State University Extension. The study was guided by the following objectives:

1. Describe the dominant culture type of OSUE as perceived by their personnel. This objective was subdivided into:
 - a. Describe the dominant culture type in both current and preferred situations;
 - b. Describe the strength of the culture type;
 - c. Describe the culture profile findings among groups of individuals at OSUE.
2. Describe OSUE personnel by demographic characteristics of job title, major program area, sex, age, and length of employment.

Methodology

The study was classified as descriptive-correlational. The target and accessible populations were Ohio State University Extension personnel distributed in 5 districts and 88 counties (N=965). A sample was drawn from the population (N=434), composed of the following three personnel categories: professionals (n=357), paraprofessionals (n=347), and support staff (n=261).

The questionnaire used to gather data from the sample consisted of a modified version of the "Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument" developed by Cameron and Quinn (1999). The OCAI instrument was adapted and used to describe the organizational culture profile of Ohio State University Extension.

For the purpose of the study, instrument validity and reliability were established. In assessing the reliability of scales used in the questionnaire a coefficient of internal consistency was calculated using Cronbach's alpha methodology (Santos, 1999). The results for the statements contained in the OCAI for both current and preferred situations are shown in Table 1.

Data were collected by a mail questionnaire using a modification of the procedures recommended by Salant and Dillman (1994). The first mailing and follow-up postcard resulted in a 53% response rate. After the second mailing, an overall response rate of 74% was established, with a 68% usable return rate for the study.

Table 1.
Coefficients of Internal Consistency Using Crombach's Alpha Methodology

Culture Type	Reliability Coefficients for Current Situation	Reliability Coefficients for Preferred Situation	Comparison Reliability Coefficients*
Clan	.80	.77	.82
Adhocracy	.75	.72	.83

Sex					1	4.39	.508
Male	96	31.72	8.09	Clan			
Female	198	32.37	7.74	Clan			
Location					2	1.976	.140
County	182	32.17	7.68	Clan			
District	48	33.79	6.96	Clan			
State	67	30.86	8.65	Clan			
Program Area					4	1.333	.258
Agr. & Nat. Res.	79	31.35	8.21	Clan			
Comm. Dev.	21	31.45	7.76	Clan			
Fam. & Con. Sci.	69	31.54	7.30	Clan			
4-H Youth Dev.	74	32.23	7.13	Clan			
More than one	51	34.33	8.94	Clan			
Job Title					2	3.125	.045*
Profes./Admin.	147	31.53	7.53	Clan			
Paraprofes.	64	31.17	7.75	Clan			
Support Staff	86	33.89	8.18	Clan			
Age					2	1.052	.351
20-40 years	93	32.94	8.42	Clan			
41-50 years	114	31.38	8.16	Clan			
51 + years	87	32.35	6.71	Clan			
Length Employment					2	.1367	.257
01-05 years	105	31.46	7.78	Clan			
06-13 years	92	31.86	7.32	Clan			

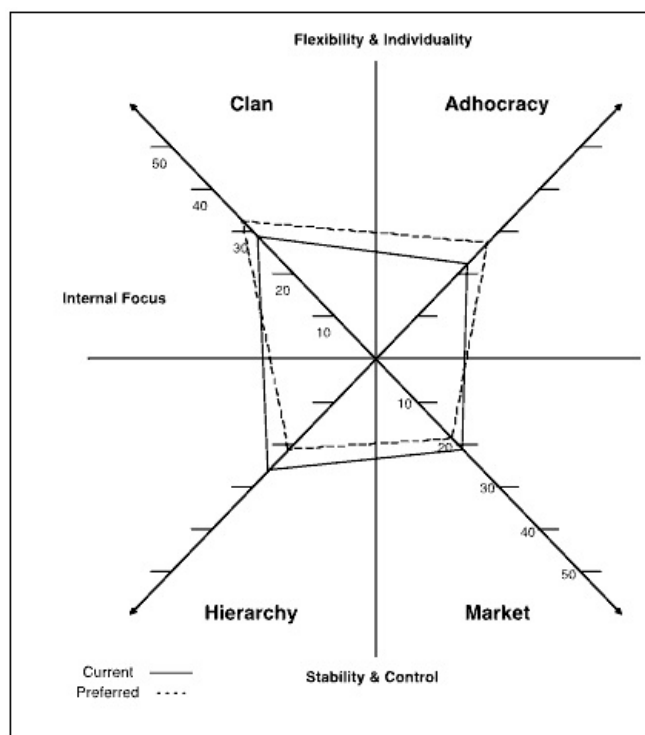
14 + years	97	33.21	8.36	Clan			
* p < .05 Note: Mean scores could range from 0 to 100. Representing a percentage out of 100.							

The dominant culture type exhibited by OSU Extension personnel in the group categories labeled as sex, location, program area, job title, age, and length of employment was the Clan culture. A statistically significant difference was found among job title categories. The post hoc pairwise multiple comparison analysis using the Tukey method revealed that there were not significant differences between pairs of groups, meaning that the significant difference could be between one group and a combination of two other groups.

Figure 1 shows a graphical representation of the mean scores obtained in each of the four culture types for both the current and preferred situations of OSU Extension personnel using the competing values framework axis and quadrants. Figure 2 shows that the mean scores are diminishing in the Hierarchy and Market culture quadrants (current), and the mean scores in the Clan and Adhocracy quadrants are increasing (preferred).

Figure 1.

Graphical Representation of the Highest Mean Scores in the Four Culture Types for Both Actual and Preferred Situations of OSU Extension Personnel



Dominant Culture Type Strength

The strength of the dominant culture type exhibited by OSU Extension personnel is related to the number of points assigned to a specific culture type. In the current situation, the Clan culture type exhibited by OSU Extension is slightly strong, while in the preferred situation the Clan culture type is considered moderately strong. In the case of the dominant Clan culture type exhibited by OSU Extension personnel in the current situation, a mean score of 28.44 was considered less strong than a mean score of 32.14 in the preferred situation (Smart & St. John, 1996; Cameron & Quinn, 1999).

When the mean scores of the culture types Adhocracy, Market, and Hierarchy, are compared with the mean score of the dominant Clan culture exhibited by OSU Extension personnel, statistically significant differences are found between the dominant Clan culture and the Market and Hierarchy culture types in both current and preferred situations. This finding suggests the presence of characteristics of both Clan and Adhocracy culture types in the organization. Table 4 shows the mean scores by culture type for OSU Extension personnel in both current and preferred situations.

Table 4.

Mean Scores by Culture Type for OSU Extension Personnel in Both Current and Preferred Situations

--	--	--

Culture Type	Current Situation					Preferred Situation				
	Mean	S.D.	df	F	p	Mean	S.D.	df	F	p
Clan	28.44	9.33				32.14	7.82			
Adhocracy	23.44	6.93	83	1.173	.182	27.93	6.14	79	1.134	.238
Market	22.09	8.74	83	5.310	.000*	18.52	6.64	79	6.595	.000*
Hierarchy	25.63	8.56	83	2.003	.000*	21.31	5.74	79	1.943	.000*

* p < .05
Note: Mean scores could range from 0 to 100. Representing a percentage out of 100.

Dimensions of Organizational Culture

Six dimensions were analyzed by the organizational culture assessment instrument using the competing values framework. The highest mean score for each of the culture types in both current and preferred situations for OSU Extension personnel are shown in Table 5. In the current situation, the highest mean score exhibited by OSU Extension personnel was in the criteria for success dimension (Mean= 34.07), while the lowest mean score recorded was in the organizational glue dimension (Mean= 26.90).

Table 5.

Highest Mean Scores on the Organizational Culture Dimensions for OSU Extension Personnel

Dimension	Current Situation			Preferred Situation		
	Mean	S.D.	Culture Type	Mean	S.D.	Culture Type
Dominant Characteristics	27.49	14.62	Clan	28.83	11.61	Adhocracy
Organizational Leadership	30.05	14.55	Hierarchy	30.07	11.39	Clan
Management	30.64	13.84	Clan	35.19	12.71	Clan
Organizational Glue	26.90	15.07	Clan	31.98	12.63	Clan
Strategic Emphases	28.90	11.85	Adhocracy	32.08	9.82	Adhocracy
Criteria for Success	34.07	17.60	Clan	37.19	14.33	Clan

Mean scores could range from 0 to 100. Representing a percentage out of 100.

In the preferred situation, the highest mean score exhibited by OSU Extension personnel was in the criteria for success dimension (Mean= 37.19), while the lowest mean score recorded was in the dominant characteristics dimension (Mean= 28.83). Two dimensional profiles demonstrated to be different from the overall Clan culture profile in the current situation, organizational leadership

(Hierarchy) and strategic emphases (Adhocracy). Two dimensional profiles demonstrated to be different from the overall Clan culture profile in the preferred situation, dominant characteristics (Adhocracy) and strategic emphases (Adhocracy).

Conclusions and Recommendations

The findings of this study are in agreement with the fact that almost two thirds of the colleges and universities in a nationwide study currently have a Clan culture type. In the same study, trustees, administrators, and department chairpersons perceive the Clan culture as the most effective culture type for colleges and universities (Smart & Hamm, 1993; Smart & St. John, 1996).

The Clan culture classification applied to Extension portrays the institution as an organization that concentrates on internal maintenance with flexibility, concern for people, and sensitivity for customers. The Clan culture is characterized as a family type of organization and represents a friendly place to work, where people share a lot of themselves. The Clan culture views its leaders as having the role of mentors or facilitators. The glue that maintains the organization together is loyalty and tradition, with a high level of commitment among its members. Clan organizations emphasize individual development, morale, teamwork, participation, and consensus (Cameron & Quinn, 1999).

The strength of the culture is determined by the number of points conceded to a specific culture type. In the current situation, the Clan culture type exhibited by OSU Extension is slightly strong, while in the preferred situation the Clan culture type is considered moderately strong. OSU Extension personnel desire a stronger (moderately) Clan culture in the future. This finding is in agreement with what research has revealed about organizations that possess strong cultures; they are associated with having homogeneity of effort, clear focus, and higher performance in environments where unity and common vision are required (Cameron & Quinn, 1999).

Three dimensions of organizational culture displayed a distinctive profile from the overall culture profile exhibited by OSU Extension in current and preferred situations. The dimension labeled as "Dominant Characteristics" is concerned with what the overall organization is like. The Adhocracy classification in the preferred situation is not in agreement with the overall culture profile of OSU Extension (Clan), but it is in agreement with the finding that no statistically significant difference was found between the mean scores of the Clan and Adhocracy cultures in the preferred situation. This finding suggests that OSU Extension possesses a combination of the core characteristics of the dominant Clan culture with those of the less dominant Adhocracy culture type.

The dimension labeled as "Organizational Leadership" is related to the dominant leadership style and approaches used by leaders and administrators in the organization. The Hierarchy classification in the current situation of this dimension is not in agreement with the overall culture profile of OSU Extension (Clan). In terms of the leadership style, OSU Extension personnel perceives its leaders and administrators as currently having a Hierarchical type of culture, wanting them to change to a preferred Clan culture type.

The dimension labeled as "Strategic emphases" is concerned with the definition of areas of emphasis that drive the organization's strategy. The Adhocracy classification in both the current and preferred situations are not in agreement with the overall Clan culture exhibited by OSU Extension personnel, but they are in agreement with the finding that no statistically significant difference was found between the mean scores of the Clan and Adhocracy cultures in both current and preferred situation. This finding suggest that OSU Extension possesses a combination of the core characteristics of the dominant Clan culture with those of the less dominant Adhocracy culture type when it comes to areas of emphasis and strategy in the current situation and that OSU Extension personnel want this condition to become stronger in the future.

Some demographic groups considered in this study displayed a different culture type from the overall dominant Clan culture of Extension. The demographic groups comprised of OSU Extension employees at the state level and in the Community Development program area exhibited a Hierarchical type of culture in the current situation. Evidence supports the fact that the culture type considered most effective in a college or university setting is the Clan culture. In addition, organizational success is said to depend on matching the culture type with the demands of the external environment (Smart & St. John, 1996; Cameron & Quinn, 1999). In the case of OSU Extension, where characteristics of the Clan and Adhocracy culture coexist, the strengths of both culture types should be used to conform to the external environment.

Although the study applies to Ohio State University Extension, it has implications for Extension on a national level. The research results might provide some thoughts on the way to embrace some of the issues facing Extension nowadays. In this regard, one of the strategic issues identified by the Cooperative Extension System (CES) in *Framing the Future: Strategic Framework for a System of Partnerships* report was: "Extension must embrace multiple organizational models to be visionary and responsible" (p. 6). On the other hand, one of the actions for success recommended was: "... to challenge and rethink assumptions about organizations, methods, and processes" (p. 6). The CES report also recommends addressing issues and challenges, and making changes in Extension's complex internal environment in order to secure the evolution of the Cooperative Extension System.

This could only be done by means of identifying critical internal factors, and it has been suggested

that Organizational Culture is one of those factors compromising the CES effectiveness (ECOP-CSREES; 1995). The researcher recommends that other states perform similar studies in order to have a better understanding of the current organizational culture type, which could help Extension make the necessary changes in pursuing enhanced effectiveness of its programs.

Acknowledgments

The author would like to acknowledge the cooperation of Ohio State University Extension personnel at the county, district, and state levels in answering the survey questionnaire. The author would also like to acknowledge the collaboration of OSU Extension Associate Vice-President & Director, Keith Smith; OSU Extension Organizational Learning Officer, Nikki Conklin; and OSU Extension Organizational Learning Team, Jo Jones and coworkers. A special recognition is extended to the author's advisor, Janet Henderson, Associate Professor of the Human and Community Resource Development Department at The Ohio State University, for her continuous guidance and support during the research process.

References

- Berrio, A. A., & Henderson, J. L. (1998). Assessing customer orientation in public, non-profit organizations: A profile of Ohio State University Extension. *Journal of Agricultural Education*, 39(4), 11-17.
- Cameron, K. S., & Quinn, R. E. (1999). *Diagnosing and changing organizational culture*. Reading: Addison-Wesley.
- ECOP-CSREES. (1995). *Framing the future: Strategic framework for a system of partnerships* (p. 25).
- Kotter, J. P., & Heskett, J. L. (1992). *Corporate culture and performance*. New York: The Free Press.
- Salant, P., & Dillman, D. A. (1994). *How to conduct your own survey*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Santos, J. R. (1999). Cronbach's Alpha: A tool for assessing the reliability of scales. *Journal of Extension* [On-line], 37(2). Available at: <http://www.joe.org/joe/1999april/tt3.html>
- Schein, E. H. (1992). *Organizational culture and leadership* (2nd Ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Smart, J. C., & Hamm, R. E. (1993). Organizational effectiveness and mission orientations of two-year colleges. *Research in Higher Education*, 34(4), 489-502.
- Smart, J. C., & St. John, E. P. (1996). Organizational culture and effectiveness in higher education: A test of the "Culture Type" and "Strong Culture" hypotheses. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 16(3), 219-241.
- Wagner, D. B., & Spencer J. L. (1996). The role of surveys in transforming culture: Data, knowledge, and action. In Kraut, A. I. (Eds.), *Organizational surveys: Tools for assessment and change*. (pp.67-87). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Copyright © by Extension Journal, Inc. ISSN 1077-5315. Articles appearing in the Journal become the property of the Journal. Single copies of articles may be reproduced in electronic or print form for use in educational or training activities. Inclusion of articles in other publications, electronic sources, or systematic large-scale distribution may be done only with prior electronic or written permission of the *Journal Editorial Office*, joe-ed@joe.org.

If you have difficulties viewing or printing this page, please contact [JOE Technical Support](#)