Lessons Learned from In-Depth Interviews to Assess Workplace Climate

Ala Qubbaj
The University of Texas – Pan American

UC Davis ADVANCE Paid Program
Workplace Climate: Assessments and Interventions to Improve Diversity among STEM Faculty

UT PAN AMERICAN
ADVANCE
GENDER DIVERSITY MATTERS
Sponsored by NSF

UTPA ADVANCE Program

Five Year ADVANCE institutional transformation grant from the National Science Foundation (started Fall 2012)

Goal: to increase the representation and advancement of female faculty in STEM fields *(with special focus on Hispanic women)*

*Focus Areas: Faculty Recruitment, Advancement Education and Empowerment, as well as **Policy and Climate***

Policy and Climate

Objective: Promote a positive workplace climate along with family-friendly policies

A. **Family- Frie**

 Dual Career   urse Banking,
 Modified Ins   Paternity
 Leave , Sick

B. **Climate As**

➢ Climate Su

➢ **In-depth Interviews** (with curren

➢ **In-depth "Exit" Interviews**

*PHW
The Psychologically Healthy
Workplace framework by the
American Psychological
Association*
PHW 5 Areas of Focus:
• Growth and Development
• Involvement
• Recognition
• Health & Well-Being
• Work-Life Balance

In-Depth Interviews

Process and content

- Invited all STEM women (and Hispanic STEM men) via email

- Response rate: 57%, (for a total of 50 interviews)

- Pre-interview survey (basic socio-demographi...)

- 2 Faculty members (from ADVANCE) conduc...

- Place: campus offices or locations as selected

- Consent form (48 of the 50 interviews were rec...)

- Length: between 45 minutes and 3 hours

- 15 questions (personal experiences in terms of relationships and the **5 focus areas in the PHW framework,** and an open-ended question)

*PHW
The Psychologically Healthy Workplace framework by the American Psychological Association
PHW 5 Areas of Focus:
- Growth and Development
- Involvement
- Recognition
- Health & Well-Being
- Work-Life Balance

UT PAN AMERICAN
ADVANCE
Sponsored by NSF
GENDER DIVERSITY MATTERS

In-Depth Interviews (cont.)

Pros

- Flexible scheduling

- Inexpensive

- Captures personal and professional experiences, perceptions and insights (*and allows for understanding the dept. climate*)

Cons

- Time consuming

- Internal interviewers

  - Potential for reduced candidness due to fear of being identified (Museus, 2007)

  - Potential for confirmation bias: interviewers may inadvertently prompt for certain responses based on certain knowledge or biases (Onwuegbuzie and Leech, 2007)

Exit Interviews

Process

- All tenured/tenure-track faculty leaving the university are invited
- Invitations sent via email, with pre-interview questionnaires/survey
- Response rate has been 60-70%
- Conducted by Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs
- Interviews last for one hour

Pros

- More candid feedback (compared to the interviews of current faculty)
- Allows for better understanding of departmental climates and faculty retention issues

Cons

- Time consuming

Recommendations

➢ Use a framework to formulate the questions and assess the climate

➢ Assure and reassure confidentiality and anonymity to mitigate fear of being identified (Museus, 2007; Gardner, 2013)

➢ Record and transcribe interviews: essential to effective data interpretation (DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree, 2006)

➢ Use external interviewers as opposed to internal ones to assure confidentiality and limit confirmation bias (Onwuegbuzie and Leech, 2007)

Recommendations (cont.)

➢ Supplement with exit interviews (Rosser, 2004)

➢ Triangulate the data (Leech and Onwuegbuzie, 2007; Guion, Diehl, and McDonald, 2011; Maxwell, 1996, Bodgan and Biklen, 2003)

➢ Use the interviews as a positive intervention in and of itself (Amelink and Hyer, 2006; Vallancourt, 2011)

➢ Act on climate assessment and develop systematic interventions at the various levels (Gardner, 2013)

Sources Cited

Amelink, Catherine T. and Patricia Hyer. "Voluntary Departures Among Tenure and Tenure-Track Faculty at Virginia Tech: A Gender Perspective" (2006).

Bogdan, R. C., and S. K. Biklen, *Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theories and methods.* Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2003.

DiCicco-Bloom, B. and Crabtree, B. F. "The qualitative research interview," *Medical Education* 40 (2006).

Gardner, Susan K. "Women Faculty Departures from a Striving Institution: Between a Rock and a Hard Place," *The Review of Higher Education* 36, no. 3 (Spring 2013).

Guion, Lisa A. David C. Diehl, and Debra McDonald. "Triangulation: Establishing the Validity of Qualitative Studies." http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/fy394.

Leech, Nancy L. and Anthony J. Onwuegbuzie. "An Array of Qualitative Data Analysis Tools: A Call for Data Analysis Triangulation." *School Psychology Quarterly* 22, no. 4 (2007).

Maxwell, J. A. *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1996.

Museus, Samuel D. "Using qualitative methods to assess diverse institutional cultures." *New Directions for Institutional Research* 136 (2007).

Onwuegbuzie, Anthony and Nancy Leech. "Validity and Qualitative Research: An Oxymoron?" *Quality and Quantity* 41 (2007).

Rosser, Vicki J. "Faculty Members' Intentions to Leave: A National Study on Their Worklife and Satisfaction," *Research in Higher Education* 45, no. 3 (May 2004).

Vallancourt, Allison. "The Power of the Anti-Exit Interview," *Chronicle of Higher Education.* 14 April 2011.

Thank You