Reviewer’s report

Title: A Theory-Based Approach for the Quantitative Analysis of Organizational Culture in Occupational Health Research

Version: 2 Date: 6 February 2013

Reviewer: Tuula Oksanen

Reviewer’s report:

Dear authors,

This is a validation study of a survey measure of organisational culture and an investigation of its cross-sectional association with indices of mental health. The study sample is small (1164 employees in 30 workplaces) but the response rate is acceptable (72.5% at individual level and 51.2% -100% at workplace-level). The paper reads well.

I have several major concerns that need to be addressed before considered for publication.

First, I am missing literature of organizational culture measures and justification for why the organizational culture profile is so meritorious. On page 7 you list several inconsistencies in the measure. You state it is one of the most widely cited survey instruments? What about its usage? Many other measures exist. See e.g. Scott et al. The Quantitative Measurement of Organizational Culture in Health Care: A Review of the Available Instruments. Health Serv Res. 2003 June; 38(3): 923–945.

Second, validation of a measure is to consider its construct, convergent, content and face validity. You seem to address the first two. Moreover, there are studies that test the validity of a organizational culture measure and Competing Values Framework, see e.g. Christian D Helfrich,Yu-Fang Li, David C Mohr, Mark Meterko and Anne E Sales. Assessing an organizational culture instrument based on the Competing Values Framework: Exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses. Implementation Science 2007, 2:13. Similarities and differences should be discussed.

Third, several statements need to be further elaborated to justify them for the reader to better understand the facts:

- page 4. “Scholars in this field are paying more attraction to workplace-level factors, but with an almost exclusive focus on specific psychosocial safety climate variables.” Describe more about previous evidence.

- page 5. “Meta-analytic evidence suggests that the Group culture is associated with job satisfaction “ What was the result actually?

- page 9. “Considering that socia support has received considerable attention in occupational health research at the individual-level of analysis, it seems
reasonable to consider that Group culture may influence individual experiences of stress and strain.” I did not understand nor find any support from references.

- page 17. “The results..... show significant variations of all four organizational culture types between workplaces”. No, at 10% level the variation differed from zero. ICC (Rho) was very little (<0.10) for three of the types describing that the perceptions were not clustered.

Fourth, at several points, you state that OCP fits occupational health research better than other measures. Why? Give references.

Fifth, several methodological problems exist. The study is cross-sectional in design. There is no way the authors can tease out the possibility of reverse causality. The results may confounded by socioeconomic status, that is occupational position and education. These needs to be added as a limitation and discussed.

Finally, how does this paper relate to the recent paper by the authors where they advance a framework linking organizational culture and mental health? Dextras-Gauthier, Julie; Marchand, Alain; Haines III, Victor. Organizational culture, work organization conditions, and mental health: A proposed integration. International Journal of Stress Management, Vol 19(2), May 2012, 81-104.).

Minor issues:
- the title does not describe the content of the paper. The title shoud include the study design.
- page 5. “a relatively short-form questionnaire”. You have 26 items, is that short?
- how was the status of mental health of the respondents? How many were distressed or depressed (cut-off points exist for these scales).
- According to journal instructions, results of statistical analysis should include, relative and absolute risks or risk reductions and confidence intervals. You show B-coefficients and p-values.
- how did you handle missing data on specific items?

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests’