Reviewer's report

Title: Organizational culture and climate profiles: Relationships with fidelity to three evidence-based practices for autism in elementary schools

Version: 0 Date: 29 Oct 2018

Reviewer: Alicia Bunger

Reviewer's report:

I appreciated the opportunity to review this important and well-written manuscript. This study examines the role of the overall organizational social context during implementation. Based on 65 schools implementing three effective interventions for serving children with autism, the authors identified four culture/climate profiles (comprehensive, supportive, constrained, and indifferent). Schools with comprehensive profiles (high proficiency, and positive workplace climates) demonstrated better implementation outcomes than the other profiles. The substantial sample of schools is a key strength of this study, as is the profile approach. While I don't have expertise in the latent profile modeling, it was described and justified in a thorough yet straightforward manner. Importantly, while this manuscript answers two questions, it raises a whole host of new ones related to theory, measurement, and practice that I would like to see drawn out a bit more. Specific comments/reactions follow:

1. Table 1 details participant demographics. Are there similar school/organizational demographics (besides size and % students who receive free lunch) that are available to better understand the sample of schools? While I understand that examining predictors of profile membership is beyond the scope, I cannot help but wonder about what's driving differences in contextual profiles. Also, region may be insufficiently granular to account for the unique policy/funding context in US schools which can vary dramatically by neighborhood in the US. (note: wasn't able to access supplemental file)

2. This study would have been strengthened with qualitative data/member checking/stakeholder engagement around the findings. I'm wondering whether your stakeholders find the four profiles to be meaningful, whether your findings resonate with them, (e.g. is there some face validity here, given the importance of this work for advancing both theory and practice).

3. Do you think that similar profiles would emerge if you focused on other types of health and human service organizations (and more of them)?

4. Generally, I agree with the authors that the research questions are important for implementation. However, in both the intro (pg. 6) and throughout the discussion, please describe more specifically how your results have potential to advance implementation and theory. For instance, does your study have any implications for advancing causal theories of implementation (given the field's interest in mechanisms that underlie implementation)
5. Also, when considering implications of these findings for implementation, what is the changeability of OSC over time? Does it change? How long does it take? Do we know how to change organizational culture/climate? This seems especially important for advancing other bigger outcomes beyond implementation that are also shaped by the social context. I'm thinking especially of your findings that only 9% of schools had a "comprehensive" context, suggesting that nearly all of the schools have some work to do re: building a comprehensive proficient and supportive context. However, they may need help in different ways (e.g. being less rigid vs building proficiency). Does this mean implementation strategies may vary depending on the contextual profile of the school?

6. OSC measure/surveys. For the OSC surveys, could you add a sentence or two about length of time it took to administer, nature of response scales, etc. I know it's been published elsewhere, but would be helpful to have all in one place when considering the present study. Also, did survey items reference the general organizational environment or the environment for implementing the specific EBP? There has been discussion in the literature about this (re: theory/conceptualization and measurement) - is it possible that the same workplace could be "comprehensive" in general, but only supportive for an individual EBP (e.g. low proficiency in that specific practice)? You begin to discuss this a bit on page 18 lines 417-423, and I'm left wondering whether your results imply that we should be measuring BOTH the general and specific contexts.

7. The authors highlight a tension between focusing on the gestalt context vs. individual dimensions, demonstrating that the context is more than the sum of its measured dimensions. Can you provide more specific recommendations for how we might begin to investigate this further? Would a combinatorial approach be useful? (identifying combinations of necessary/sufficient conditions).

8. Why do you think the relationship between context and VS implementation was not significant?

9. Fidelity checklists - additional information would be helpful here. Are these existing checklists or created new? I'm assuming each item corresponds to key components of each intervention?

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