Organizational Mindfulness in Business Schools
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Abstract
Business schools exist in increasingly turbulent environments. Making mistakes in such environments is less likely when organizations are “mindful” – when they pay close attention to what is happening around them and maintain the capacity to act on unexpected signals (Weick & Sutcliffe, 2001). Organizational mindfulness, however, is a theoretical construct that has yet to be empirically validated.

Background
Organizational mindfulness originated from the work of psychologists who developed the notion of individual mindfulness as a state of alertness and active awareness, characterized by the creation and refinement of categories, openness to new information and awareness of multiple perspectives.

There are a number of positive benefits associated with mindfulness, such as
- Health benefits
- Stress reduction
- Increased creativity
- Decreased burnout

Dimensions of Mindfulness

- Preoccupation with Failure
- Reluctance to Simplify
- Sensitivity to Operations
- Commitment to Resilience
- Deference to Expertise

Methods
A survey was made to collect data from top level administrators in accredited colleges of business during the year of 2004.

- 3-week period data collection through an online survey
- 4 organizational roles

Results
Survey responses from 180 colleges of business
Received total of 310 survey responses/225 completed

Label for Position: 1=Deans; 2= Associate Deans; 3= Assistant Deans; 4=Department Heads

The findings show that the closer the role is to the top of the organization the higher the mindfulness score.

Conclusions
- Evidence of the five components of organizational mindfulness was provided which should aid future research
- The role in the organization can lead to different perceptions of organization functioning
- Business colleges could reduce vulnerabilities by becoming more situationally aware and by developing the capacity for action