

DOES THE NUMBER OF YEARS OF WORK IN HIGHER EDUCATION RELATE
TO FACULTY PERCEPTIONS OF ASSESSMENT CULTURE?

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Robert Blake Tritico

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By

Robert Blake Tritico

APPROVED:

Matthew B. Fuller, PhD
Committee Director

George Moore, PhD
Committee Member

Julie Combs, EdD
Committee Member

Stacey L. Edmonson, EdD
Dean, College of Education

DEDICATION

For F.E.T. What wouldn't you do for your brother? I cannot thank you enough.

ABSTRACT

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The goal of this quantitative study was to examine if *Time as a Faculty Member* as an independent variable had an effect on the dependent variables (a) *Focus on Student Learning*; (b) *Fear or Distrust of Assessment*; (c) *Benefits of Assessment*; (d) *Clarity of Assessment Leadership*; (e) *Use of Assessment Data*; and (f) *Sharing Assessment Results*. This study used a linear regression to determine if the independent variable could predict any of the dependent variables.

In this study, p values were reported and interpreted for statistical significance, effect sizes (R^2) were reported and used to assist in determining whether data are useful beyond statistically. Although p values were low, the effect size (R^2) was large enough to indicate the independent variable, *Time as a Faculty Member* had an effect on the majority of the dependent variables. Further, discussion on the use of the results of this study include ways in which assessment leaders can address training both early- and latter-career faculty and suggestions for additional research.

KEY WORDS: Sam Houston State University, Graduate School, Texas, Culture of Assessment, Assessment, Faculty perception of assessment, *Survey of Assessment Culture*

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Typically, this is the place an author's statement of indebtedness to others goes. If everyone to whom I was indebted to for assistance during my doctoral journey, the list would be longer than my dissertation. Let me try and make as complete an acknowledgement as can be made here.

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

Higher education assessment has evolved from a useful tool for the exploration of student learning to a professional expectation for colleges and universities. The question of what assessment means has been overshadowed by the process of assessment itself. Methods of assessment have outpaced questions regarding the meaning and value of assessment. To answer questions regarding the meaning and value of assessment, those who lead assessment have, of late, reflected on underlying factors of an institution's assessment practices (Fuller, 2011). These reflections have taken place under the auspices of emerging studies related to *cultures of assessment* in higher education. At the heart of these reflections and an institution's assessment program are faculty, whose daily interactions with students provide the primary means of accomplishing institutional missions of teaching, research, and service.

Culture of assessment refers to “the deeply embedded values and beliefs collectively held by members of an institution influencing assessment practices at their institution” (Fuller & Skidmore, 2014, p.10). Further, other scholars (Banta & Associates, 2002; Banta, Lund, Black, & Oblander, 1996; Bresciani, Zelna, & Anderson, 2004; Maki, 2010) express that a culture of assessment is assembled from the values and beliefs members of an institution hold influencing the practice of assessment. These reflections and criticisms of assessment have taken place with little reference to the institutional contexts in which assessment finds itself (Duff, 2010; Ewell, 2002; Farkas, 2013). Indeed, many scholars expect assessment to change the contexts of higher

education with little regard to institutional contexts for leadership, resource management, and change.

The assessment movement within higher education is responsible for wide-ranging discussions within institutions (Baas, Rhodes, & Thomas, 2016). The stakeholders in higher education assessment are varied; accreditors, prospective and current students, the public, and political leaders, and policy makers all have an interest in ensuring that higher education institutions can deliver quality student learning.

Accreditors want to see evidence of student learning as demonstrated by assessment. Prospective and current students want to know that beyond their grades, assessment has been done satisfactorily by the college or university so that the degree obtained has value to the student or prospect, future employers, and the public in general. The public has lately had a declining sense of worth in the value of a degree earned through public education and as such wants to know that tax dollars used to support public higher education is money well spent. Further, political leaders and policy makers are adamant that public institutions of higher education effectively demonstrate student learning and the value of the degree awarded. It is through these things, as a combination of efforts that colleges and universities are being pushed to develop a culture of assessment.

Efforts by colleges and universities to develop and foster a culture of assessment have often met with resistance, largely from faculty who are unconvinced of the efficacy and achievement of assessment (Anderson, 2013, Baas, Rhodes, & Thomas, 2016, Grunwald & Peterson, 2003). Further, the literature of assessment and assessment culture tend to review processes used to observe, enhance, or dissuade the development

of a culture of assessment. Also, the deployment of varied research methods as seen in the literature indicate a considerable number of unresolved issues remain. These unresolved issues range from the effects of a culture of assessment, both positive and negative. Also, the value of assessment is at times under question, as is the lack of an underlying or unifying theory regarding the culture of assessment, its development, and how to maintain this culture once established. Thus, it is difficult to determine how near to a culture of assessment higher education really is and the means for its further development or maintenance.

There is a further controversy as a result of different constituencies' perspectives on assessment, especially regarding the monitoring of progress due to attempting to develop a positive culture of assessment. Faculty base decisions on their circumstances and data indicates most faculty are receptive to the overall value of assessment, even if at an individual level assessment is not well received (Blackburn & Lawrence, 1995). For example, problems at Gonzaga University were sparked by a reprimand from the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities for failing to establish a systematic outcomes assessment methodology (Bubb, Herzog, Terry, & Geither, 2010). Ten years later, Gonzaga University had moved to a model of development of learning outcomes for assessment that are faculty led. In general, messaging that is consistent, coupled with reliable support from leaders and an emphasis on alignment between assessment goals, faculty, the institution, and understanding of assessment initiatives is imperative to monitor the progress of, and develop a culture of assessment at the same time within institutions of higher learning (Evans, 2011). This is further exemplified by surveys regarding faculty buy-in to institutional assessment, especially concerning resistance by

faculty to outcomes assessment (Fuller, 2011; Fuller, Henderson, & Bustamante, 2015; Fuller & Skidmore, 2014). Fuller (2011) expressed the idea that the study of faculty perceptions regarding outcomes-based assessment is primary to the development of positive cultures of assessment. Large-sample surveys, like *The Faculty Survey of Assessment Culture* based on empirical data, can produce accurate descriptions which are then able to be used for the development of a culture of assessment.

Background of the Problem

The *culture of assessment* is a relatively new idea within higher education. Banta and associates (2002) provided historical insights into the development of assessment through an examination of assessment's history and practice traditions. The study of student learning in college came first followed by the move to student retention and behavior. Next was the growth of evaluation and scientific management, and finally mastery learning. These ideas have formed the current framework for assessment in higher education. Suskie, (2009) provided a framework for assessment which includes four key elements. The first of which is the establishment of clear, measurable outcomes of student learning. The second element is ensuring students have enough opportunities to achieve those outcomes. Third, the systematic gathering, analyzing, and interpreting of evidence to determine how well student learning matches expectations. Fourth is the use of the resulting information to improve student learning. All this work has helped provide a definition of, and possible methods for assessment, yet offers no guidance for the development of a culture of assessment. Although Banta and Associates (2002) provided a seminal work on assessment, and other scholars followed with their own contributions as listed above, and there are some attempts that have been made at

defining a culture of assessment, to date there is no single work that has completely defined the culture of assessment and it is best said that the definition of a culture of assessment is still emerging.

The term culture of assessment can be construed to have multiple meanings. There is scant evidence of scholarship in this area beyond the development and possession of this type of culture (Fuller, 2013). Therefore, those charged with assessment and the development of a culture of assessment often have little idea on how to do so and are seldom given practical advice from scholarship. The past decade has seen an increase in scholarship about assessment (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Popham, 2008; Stobart, 2009) and faculty assessment is taken to be understood as key to localized and system-wide efforts to improvement of student learning outcomes (Murphy, 2009; Willis, 2010; Wilson, 2010). Yet with this focus, there is still little if any practical advice offered by the scholarship on how to achieve a positive culture of assessment.

One definition of a culture of assessment is that provided by Banta and Associates, (2002) and Banta (1997) that defines a culture of assessment as ‘the deeply embedded values and beliefs collectively held by members of an institution influencing assessment practices on their campus and those ‘values and beliefs which are held collectively by those who practice assessment within an institution (Fuller, 2013, p. 20). Therefore, the culture of assessment “is the system of thought and action that reinforces what ‘good’ conduct of assessment looks like” (Fuller, 2013 p. 48). The evolution of literature on the culture of assessment has gone from the macro view on development of foundations (Astin, 1991; Courts & McInerney, 1993), the early definitions (Bresciani, Zelna, & Anderson, 2004), to formulations of assessment practices that are reflective of

an institutions culture (Driscoll, de Noriega, & Ramaley, 2006; Maki, 2010; Weiner, 2009).

Whereas this scholarly work has provided foundational explorations, there is also a dearth of empirical studies confirming these foundations. Fuller, Henderson, and Bustamante (2015) found that the development of a positive culture of assessment must recognize and reshape any negative cultures present. Although acknowledging the process of identifying elements of a negative culture of assessment are often slow and difficult, these actions are necessary in moving towards a positive culture of assessment. One method for addressing negative cultural aspects and translating them into positive cultures of assessment is to address faculty and staff perceptions of assessment, accentuating positive facets of the culture wherever possible (Fuller, Henderson, & Bustamante, 2015).

Still, much more empirical research is needed regarding faculty members' perceptions of assessment. Faculty have been involved in assessment within higher education from the beginning and faculty involvement in an institution's assessment practices goes through numerous stages. These stages are a part of the process in the development of a culture of assessment and have been like those of Kubler-Ross' (1997) stages of grief: denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. Miller (2011) has used this analogy in her work on assessment comparing faculty and staff denial of the need for assessment, leading to anger that forces outside the institution were mandating assessment. This demand for accountability through assessment led to institutions bargaining with state legislatures and regional accreditors. The measurement of higher education in the Spelling's Commission report (2006) and the book *Measuring Up* (2008)

reflected poorly on higher education and caused in Miller's words "institutional depression" (Miller, 2011, p. 5). Further, the Kubler-Ross analogy is advanced as Miller says that "eventually, reluctantly, slowly, and unevenly, many institutions came to an acceptance of assessment and its role in higher education" (p.10).

Thus, institutional culture of assessment is determined by numerous factors, some of which are outside the control of faculty. For example, planning for assessment, selecting and designing methodologies, the reporting and use of assessment results, and assessment of the assessment program. The question of faculty impact on assessment and assessment culture within an institution of higher education, is key to the perception of the value of assessment. Faculty are the front line in assessment within an institution and are concerned with assessment practices. However, an understanding of their concerns and desires is lacking in published scholarship (Fuller & Skidmore, 2014)

There are indications (Skidmore, Hsu, & Fuller, 2018) that faculty care about meaningful assessment, yet the results of this survey reveal the methodology of assessment as currently conducted within many institutions does not support the development of a positive culture of assessment. There is also a gap in the current literature regarding the development of a positive culture of assessment in higher education. There is also little scholarly examination of the role of faculty and faculty perceptions regarding the culture of assessment within an institution. Despite this underdeveloped empirical foundation, scholars and practitioners have been quick to call for the necessity of getting faculty buy in for assessment (Banta & Associates, 2002; Laird, Haywood, & Shaw, 2010; Maki, 2010; Suskie, 2014; Walvood, 2004). Thus, the

assumption that faculty buy in for a culture of assessment will result in improved student learning has remained unexamined or tacitly addressed (Skidmore, Hsu, & Fuller, 2018).

Statement of the Problem

Faculty involvement in assessment has been touted as critical to the assessment process and the development of a culture of assessment within an institution (Barr & Tagg, 1995; Coates & Seifert, 2011; Grunwald & Peterson, 2003). Even further beyond faculty buy in and participation in assessment, there are those who acknowledge the role of senior faculty as critical partners in assessment and this assumption has gone unchecked. An examination of the literature has not shown any empirical examination of faculty members' perceptions of assessment that would allow for this claim. Therefore, this study will fill this gap regarding faculty perceptions of assessment based upon length of service in academe.

Palomba and Banta (1999) indicated six strategies deemed vital to the development of a culture of assessment; it is the gaining of faculty understanding for the significance and requirement for assessment of student learning that is essential (Schlitz et al., 2009). Assessment in institutions of higher education has been expanding for more than 20 years (Lane, Lane, & Rich, 2014). The reasons for this expansion are rooted in the development of assessment criteria. The first calls for assessment were generally associated with requirements for regional or professional accreditation. This work was typically done by administrators, involved the collection of secondary data, and served the needs of accreditors. The next phase of assessment development was again largely driven by accreditation. Although this new era of assessment planning involved program-level measurement of student learning, faculty involvement was often limited to

the review of plans developed by administrators. Assessment was followed by implementation of assessment plans for accreditation, with minimal participation on the part of faculty. Since the early 2000s, the terminology used for assessment activities broadened to include: student learning outcomes, assurance of learning, institutional effectiveness, and data driven continuous improvement (Lane, Lane, & Rich, 2014).

There are six vital strategies that make an effective assessment plan for an institution (Palomba & Banta, 1999). These are the (a) development of learning goals, (b) planning for assessment, (c) involvement of faculty, staff, and students in assessment, (d) selecting and designing methodologies, (e) the reporting and use of assessment results, and (f) assessment of the assessment program. Further, the question of how to sponsor collaboration between administrators and faculty to conduct and evaluate assessments and improve existing assessment efforts remains. With assessment in institutions of higher education ever expanding, there is a need to examine ways of developing, implementing, managing, and improving assessment. The question of what factors and how these factors impact faculty and their perceptions regarding assessment do remains largely unanswered.

“Faculty involvement lies at the core of developing any successful assessment program” (Hadden & Davies, 2002, p. 244). Assessment programs that are lasting require faculty involvement from conception to application. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (2000) indicated that on average faculty have been at their respective institutions 16 years. Compare this with the American College President Study which indicates the average length of time at the institution for Presidents is 6.5 years. Therefore, it would indicate that the faculty would have a larger ability to influence

institutional culture over time. Moreover, the stability and focus senior faculty bring to influencing institutional culture is touted a major factor in developing an institutional culture of assessment. There is also a body of research that indicates failure to include faculty in this manner offers a barrier to a program of assessment which is successful. Further, research indicates administrative mandates and other forms of top-down requirements in assessment often fail to achieve the desired results (Banta 1997; Crisp 2010; Ewell 1996; Steele 1996). Additionally, there is strong evidence which shows faculty are resistant to assessment when compelled to institute curricular changes and when faculty perceive assessment as a performance evaluation (Driscoll & de Noriega, 2006). As noted by Palomba and Banta (1999) faculty are disinclined to participate fully in assessment as “faculty view assessment as a threat to academic freedom” (p. 71). Although it is possible to collect and perform analysis on data without faculty involvement, it is problematic to utilize these results as “there is no way that one can hope to make a difference with assessment data without the involvement of faculty” (Astin, 1991, p.133). The success of assessment practices implementation differs significantly between institutions largely due to the requirement of faculty participation and engagement with assessment (Ewell, 2002).

Therefore, the lack of faculty participation in the assessment of student learning and the subsequent institutional response can lead to poor teaching, failure to meet learning outcomes, and poor institutional efficiency (Bers, 2008). As stated by Hutchings (2010), “the real promise of assessment depends on significantly growing and deepening faculty involvement” (p. 6). There are a limited number of studies which have been conducted regarding faculty attitudes, values, and motivations regarding assessment and

even fewer regarding faculty perceptions on assessment efforts (Emil & Cress, 2013). There is a significant and increasing demand for effectiveness, efficiency, and accountability within higher education and very little is understood about the factors which encourage or constrain faculty participation in assessment. This study attempts to address this vacuum through the examination of *Time as a Faculty Member* and variables which may relate to faculty perceptions regarding assessment culture within their institution. In the matter of assessment and faculty perceptions, there are several unchecked assumptions. One of these unchecked assumptions is that senior faculty members are supportive of assessment. Another is that, as a function of their seniority, they perpetuate an institutional culture. There are works (Anderson, 2013; Baas, Rhodes, & Thomas, 2016; Fuller & Skidmore, 2014; Grunwald & Peterson, 2003) wherein scholars call for the support of senior faculty to get buy in from others, and especially junior professors. However, this is an unchecked assumption since it is not known if faculty support assessment or not.

Purpose of the Study

The health of an academic community is determined, in large part, by faculty work life, which impacts students and campus communities (Gappa, Austin, & Trice, 2007). Today, higher educational institutions face many challenges and support for academics is a concern of educational leaders, especially in rethinking faculty roles and responsibilities. Given this, the role of faculty in assessment requires consideration.

Knowledge of faculty perceptions regarding curricular and program revision and the identification of motivational factors, which increase faculty participation in assessment must be understood for assessment to be meaningful. As demonstrated by

Emil and Cress (2013), faculty engagement in assessment is built upon the values and principles of education and learning, and provides additional support, structures, and rewards for faculty. If faculty involvement as knowledgeable experts are desired, mandates from administration will likely not bring this about. These measures may drive participation yet are not likely to bring about full participation or generative engagement as faculty may have other ambitions in their career related to teaching or research, for example. To achieve a more robust engagement, messaging that is consistent, coupled with reliable support from leaders and an emphasis on alignment between assessment goals, faculty, the institution, and understanding of assessment initiatives is required (Evans, 2011).

There is support for the design and implementation of systematic structures of assessment and the promotion of collegial collaboration that lead to the achievement of institutional assessment goals (Farmer, 1999). Last, faculty are largely autonomous and place great value on academic freedom, there is also a desire for effective leadership, which provides resources and a stable framework to aid in carrying out these responsibilities (Grunwald & Peterson, 2003). Therefore, this study examines the factor of *Time as a Faculty Member* and the variables regarding the use and sharing of data for assessment purposes, the structures of assessment, the messages surrounding assessment, and normative factors regarding assessment. This study is supported by and continues research done by Fuller and Skidmore (2014) and using *The Faculty Survey of Assessment Culture* dataset.

Assessment leadership which can be defined as an effective management that supports a balance between vision, support, and flexibility with faculty autonomy in

adapting programs and courses for assessment (Stefanie, 2011). When this style of leadership is used, a culture of assessment focused on iterative assessment rather than accountability results (Hutchings, 2010). Faculty make decisions based on their circumstances and data indicates most faculty are receptive to the overall value of assessment (Blackburn & Lawrence, 1995). Fuller and Skidmore (2014) have shown results that there are five key factors which influence a culture of assessment and influence faculty. These factors are (a) the use of data, (b) the sharing of data, (c) structures of assessment, (d) the messages surrounding assessment, and (e) normative factors.

There is a significant volume of work regarding the need for a culture of assessment (Driscoll, de Noriega, & Ramaley, 2006; Maki, 2010; Weiner, 2009). There is a large volume of work regarding the need for good assessment practices and faculty involvement in assessment (Barr & Tagg, 1995; Huba & Freed, 2000; Kember, 2008; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). There is an emerging section of work devoted to faculty and their role in assessment (Fuller, 2011; Fuller, Henderson, & Bustamante, 2015; Fuller & Skidmore, 2014). The question of how faculty and their perceptions of assessment impact an institution has not yet been addressed.

Assessment is focused on the measurement of student learning (Biggs, 2003; Brown & Knight, 1994; Bryan & Clegg, 2006; Gibbs, 2006a; Hernandez, 2012; Heywood, 2000; Ramsden, 2003; Rowentree, 1987). Further, there is a body of work indicating faculty have a fear or distrust of assessment (Gaff, 2007; Reich, Collins, & DeFranco, 2016). Additionally, the benefits of assessment are well known. Beyond the collection of data, assessment requires that data be used as clarification for goals and

objectives of student learning and improvement of educational programs. Ultimately, the purpose of assessment is to understand and gauge the effectiveness of educational programs. Assessment at its best is an iterative process in which learning goals are established, learning opportunities are established, assessment is done, and the assessment results are studied and evaluated. The process is cyclical and iterative with the results being used to determine and define new learning goals. Assessment leadership has been identified as a key component to successful assessment programs (Grunwald & Peterson, 2003; Hutchings, 2010). Finally, the use of assessment data and sharing of these results have been noted as a vital factor in the development of a positive culture of assessment (Black, 2010; Fuller, 2013; Fuller, Henderson & Bustamante, 2015; Fuller & Skidmore, 2014). Through examination of these factors the results could indicate whether there is a statistically significant effect on the culture of assessment within an institution based on faculty years of work.

Conceptual Framework and Researcher Subjectivities

The assessment movement began with the performance-based funding for public higher education institutions in the state of Tennessee (Bogue & Brown, 1982). The state of Tennessee decided that institutional funding would be based on student performance on standardized tests in 1979. This practice is still controversial, the effect of holding institutions accountable for student learning by public officials and policy makers began to be a focus of many states' policy discourses. Further, this action also motivated institutional administrators to begin looking at assessment as a variable response to demands for greater accountability (Ewell, 2002).

There has been a rapidly growing interest in regional accrediting agencies regarding assessment, focusing on improvement of outcomes assessment and accountability in higher education institutions (Ewell & Boyer, 1988). Additionally, there has been federal pressure on regional accreditors to place more emphasis on student learning outcomes rather than the process and procedures of assessment within an institution for more than a decade (Ewell, 2010; Spellings, 2006). There are indications that assessment is moving towards an outcomes-driven accreditation philosophy. As such, the need for a more complete understanding of assessment and how it can be advantageous to higher educational institutions is needed (Astin & Antonio, 2012). Despite current theorization, assessment is more than tests and surveys. It is a vital part of learner-centered teaching and is likely to influence courses, curricula, students, and institutions (Allen, 2004). As such, a major shift is required of faculty in the viewing of course and curriculum development with a focus on the learner instead of on the instructor. It is in this manner that assessment enables the ability to see which pedagogical methods work and for whom. Whereas there are several assessment methods—direct, indirect, traditional, performance measurement, and authentic assessment—there is yet no convincing or persuasive theory of assessment and how to develop a culture of assessment.

There is work that supports faculty empowerment in assessment as a part of teaching and learning. Therefore, it has been posited that faculty are necessarily those to lead assessment efforts. As stated by Hollowell, Middaugh, and Sibolski (2006), “First and foremost, assessment of student learning outcomes must be owned by the faculty” (p. 93). Further, there exists a tension between improvement and accountability that is

evident within institutions. Assessment must contribute to both administrative processes and have a close link with classroom processes (Banta & Palomba, 2015).

If institutions are to show a level of seriousness regarding student learning, knowledge of faculty and staff measurements of student performance at the program or department level is critical. It has been posited that if student learning is to improve, it will occur where faculty and staff have the most influence and leverage in their expertise in teaching and learning. As such, knowledge of the efforts of faculty and staff at the program and department level is required for an accurate understanding of student learning outcomes assessment (Ewell, Paulson, & Kenzie, 2011). Astin and Antonio come closest to a theory of assessment with work on the philosophy and logic of assessment. Assessment philosophy entails a focus on institutional goals and values, assessment and educational excellence, traditional views of excellence, talent development, and excellence and assessment (Astin & Antonio, 2012).

Given this, there is no relevant scholarly literature regarding the years of work by faculty and their perspectives on assessment. Numerous searches through the available scholarly research on assessment do not yield any works which account for time, or years of service by faculty, as a factor or the influence of how long faculty have been employed in the development of a culture of assessment. Further, what published research is available focuses on the possible methodologies for the development of a culture of assessment or the process of assessment itself. Therefore, because of interest in the length of time faculty have been employed and engaged in assessment, this study will be helpful to the body of scholarly knowledge on assessment indicating a less or more positive perception by faculty of assessment.

Bolman and Deal (1984) present the idea of four frameworks or approaches to managing an organization is presented. These four frameworks are (a) structural, (b) human resources, (c) political, and (d) symbolic. Whereas Bolman and Deal's entire model address my notion of a culture of assessment, the human resources and political frames are particularly germane in guiding my perspective on cultures of assessment. Argyris (1957) put forth the idea that people are predisposed to move from infant to adult and as such "bring unhealthy personality development". This idea is parallel to that of Maslow and his hierarchy of needs and that people move towards self-actualization unless lower level needs are not fulfilled. As such, organizations run the risk of creating situations that are against the needs of healthy humans. Argyris went further with this argument saying that if the conflict between the individual and the organization becomes severe enough, employees will resist in several ways. These include withdrawal from the organization, psychological withdrawal, restriction of output or deception, and attempts to climb the hierarchy, and they create groups to alter the power imbalance. Therefore, the human resources approach addresses the role of faculty and the time spent at an institution of higher learning.

It is the imbalance of power from the political approach that addresses the cultural elements examined in this study. The political frame sees an organization as "alive and screaming" (Bolman & Deal, 1984, p.109). The political perspective as it relates to culture can be distilled down to three elements. First, organizations are composed of individuals and interest groups. Second, both individuals and interest groups differ in many ways: especially values, beliefs, information, and perceptions of reality. These differences can be and often are enduring and slow to change. Last, due to scarce

resources and differences, power and conflict are the main features of life in an organization. Perhaps one of the best political views of an organization is that put forth by Baldrige (1971) in which he defines universities as “configurations of social groups with basically different life-styles and political interests” (p. 23). The political frame is uniquely different in that it does not see the organization as an authority structure, driven from the top down. Rather, the political frame depicts the organization as groups of individuals and interest groups. There are different objectives within the groups and bargaining is done to influence the goals of other individuals and the organization.

From this perspective, when one individual has the power to make decisions and another does not, there is a high likelihood the relationship is more satisfying for the empowered individual. Many theorists focus on ways to increase mutuality and collaboration in decision making with the hope that managers and workers can arrive at decisions which are mutually beneficial. When this occurs, a positive culture can develop. Without this form of political power sharing, the culture can and will not be positive. Therefore, the authorities in the organization have access to power yet they are only part of the power structure as each individual and group has access to different forms of power. As mentioned earlier, Bolman and Deal (1984) put forth the idea in the human resource framework that if the conflict between the individual and the organization becomes severe enough employees do resist. Therefore, the human resources approach addresses the role of faculty and the time spent at an institution of higher learning. The political framework put forth by Bolman and Deal (1984) suggests organizations are composed of individuals and interest groups and that these differ in many ways. It is these differences that are often enduring and slow to change.

Therefore, due to scarce resources and differences, power and conflict are the main features of life in an organization.

Research Question

This study focuses on the relationship, if any, between faculty member's length of employment and their perceptions of institutional cultures of assessment. Senior professors are often asked to support or endorse assessment as a means of securing buy in from their faculty colleagues. However, perceptions of faculty, at any rank or length of time, have not been empirically examined in prior scholarship. Therefore, the research question guiding this study was "How, if at all, does the number of years of work in higher education relate to faculty perceptions of assessment culture?" In this study, the years of employment in higher education as a faculty member served as the independent variable. Next, six dependent variables served as the dependent variables related to perceptions of institutional culture of assessment: (a) *Focus on Student Learning*; (b) *Fear or Distrust of Assessment*; (c) *Benefits of Assessment*; (d) *Clarity of Assessment Leadership*; (e) *Use of Assessment Data*; and (f) *Sharing Assessment Results*.

Though detailed further in Chapter III, linear regression was used to answer the research question. A linear regression is a way to model the relationship of scalar responses to explanatory variables. The values chosen for the dependent variables are from *The Faculty Survey of Assessment Culture* and depend upon the values of the independent variables. In this case, the dependent variables are representative of the outcome under study. The independent variables represent inputs and are highly unlikely to indicate any causation. Instead, the goal was to examine any established relationships between measures of institutional cultures of assessment and years of employment as a

higher education faculty member. Causative relationships are neither implied nor examined in this study.

Significance of the Study

Assessment in higher education is a factor which, is required by accreditors, legislators, the public, students, and prospective students. Given this, the role of faculty in assessment requires consideration. Knowledge of faculty perceptions regarding curricular and program revision and the identification of motivational factors, which increase faculty participation in assessment, must be understood for assessment to be meaningful. Faculty engagement in assessment is built upon the values and principles of education and learning, and must provide additional support, structures, and rewards for faculty (Emil & Cress, 2013). If faculty involvement as knowledgeable experts are desired, mandates from administration will not bring this about. Messaging that is consistent, coupled with reliable support from leaders and an emphasis on alignment between assessment goals, faculty, the institution, and understanding of assessment initiatives are all required to bring about good assessment (Evans, 2011). There is support for the design and implementation of systematic structures of assessment and collegial collaboration is the achievement of institutional assessment goals (Farmer, 1999). Faculty are largely autonomous and place great value on academic freedom. Yet, there is also a desire for effective leadership, which provides resources and a stable framework to aid in carrying out these responsibilities (Grunwald & Peterson, 2003).

There is a significant volume of work regarding the need for a culture of assessment (Driscoll, de Noriega, & Ramaley, 2006; Maki, 2010; Weiner, 2009). There is a large volume of work regarding the need for good assessment practices and faculty

involvement in assessment (Barr & Tagg, 1995; Huba & Freed, 2000; Kember, 2008; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Yet, there is, at best, emerging section of work devoted to faculty and their role in assessment (Fuller, 2011; Fuller, Henderson, & Bustamante, 2015; Fuller & Skidmore, 2014); ostensibly the most trusted mechanism for implementing a generative culture of assessment. The question of how faculty, based on their length of work at an institution and their perceptions of assessment impact an institution has not yet been addressed.

This study was conducted with multiple intentions by the researcher. The primary intention for this study was to contribute to the body of scholarly literature regarding the development of a culture of assessment (Anderson, 2013; Astin, 1991; Bers, 2008; Farkas, 2013; Haviland, 2014; Medlin, 2016). Additionally, this study contributes to the body of assessment literature through the examination of the perception of faculty based upon length of work. It is the intention of this researcher to further contribute to the general body of scholarly knowledge on assessment through a focus on several factors involving faculty perceptions of assessment. Specifically, this study examined how, if at all, the length of time a faculty member has been employed relate to perceptions of assessment; namely, perceptions of student learning, fear or distrust of assessment, benefits of assessment, clarity of assessment leadership, use of assessment data, and the sharing assessment results.

Finally, the researcher provided assessment professionals with an enhanced understanding of how years of work by faculty relate to their perception of assessment and allow for more informed decision making by faculty, staff, and administrators

involved in assessment practice (Andrade & Valtcheva, 2008; Benson & Dresdeow, 2014; Coates & Siefert, 2011; Payne & Miller, 2008; Reich, Collins, & DeFranco, 2016).

Definition of Terms

To provide clarity and greater understanding, the following terms were used in this study. These terms are defined through their relationship to their influence on assessment and the method of study used. The following terms are employed throughout the duration of this study and presented here in a narrative format. *Accountability* is one of the vital mechanisms to be put in place towards achieving the goals of the school and ensuring quality service delivery to the society (Usman, 2016).

Accreditation is a quality control process in which institutions or programs voluntarily engage in a rigorous review for the purpose of demonstrating compliance with a set of standards established by the accrediting organization. *Assessment methods* are defined as measures and processes used to collect data to determine whether a program has met its goals and outcomes, and/or a student has learned. *An Assistant Professor* is any tenure track faculty member possessing a terminal degree and for the purposes of this study, having zero to three years of faculty work. Assistant professors are not considered tenured for the purpose of this study. *An Associate Professor* is any tenure track faculty member possessing a terminal degree and for the purposes of this study, having three to six years of faculty work. Assistant professors are not considered tenured for the purpose of this study. *A Full Professor* is a tenured faculty member possessing a terminal degree and for the purposes of this study having more than 14 years of faculty work. *Culture of Assessment* refers to “the deeply embedded values and beliefs collectively held by members of an institution influencing assessment practices at their institution” (Fuller

and Skidmore, 2014, p.10). *Learning Outcomes* are defined, in the scope of this study, as statements of what students will be able to do, know, or believe as a result of participating in a learning activity which could be a class, a project, an educational program, or an individual interaction. *Program Evaluation* includes any process or activities designed to determine whether a program has achieved its stated objectives and intended outcomes; evaluation implies a judgment of merit and effectiveness. *Program Outcomes* are what the program is expected to provide; the desired aggregate impact of a program, a service, or an intervention that is more specific than a goal. *Years of work* is defined as the amount of time (academic calendar) that faculty have been employed in a teaching role.

Assumptions

The researcher made the following assumptions in engaging in this study. The first assumption was that assessment can be defined as the confluence of: (a) planning and analysis policy; (b) data and reporting; and (c) evaluation. The second assumption was that the heart of assessment is the use of data for change and continuous improvement. The next assumption made was that assessment in large is not clearly understood at the department level and by the faculty involved. Further, an assumption was made that good assessment practices are embedded from the perspective of faculty, chair, department, and dean. There was an assumption that the key question of assessment is: what are the values and perspectives of the faculty?

The researcher assumed that all data used from *The Faculty Survey of Assessment Culture* were correct and accurate. *The Faculty Survey of Assessment Culture* is a multi-year, longitudinal, nation-wide project that has been approved multiple times by the Sam

Houston State University Institutional Review Board, as well as many Institutional Review Boards from participating institutions. Assuming data are well managed and accurate is an assumption that all researchers must determine and make given the contexts in which the research is conducted. There was also an assumption made that participation in *The Faculty Survey of Assessment Culture* is an accurate reflection of an institution's culture of assessment. The researcher is assuming that a faculty participant in the study is being honest and forthright in his/her response. Moreover, the *Faculty Survey of Assessment Culture* is a respected, validated instrument that has been used by many institutions of higher education to reflect upon their institution's culture of assessment. Although a self-developed instrument could have been used, no other validated instrument focusing on higher education cultures of assessment has been made available. Finally, the statistical assumptions of multiple regression analyses will be described in Chapter III and offered in accordance with Field's (2013) guidelines. Results confirming the examination of these assumptions will be offered in Chapter IV.

Limitations

All investigative research has limitations. This section discusses the limitations that were present in the current study. The proposed quantitative study is limited in that the number of participants, although large enough to represent a substantial investigation into faculty perspectives, are neither representative nor generalizable to all faculty in the nation. Further, an additional limitation of this quantitative study is that colleges and universities represented in the archived dataset the *Faculty Survey of Assessment Culture* may not accurately reflect all U.S. colleges and universities. Institutions volunteer to participate in the *Faculty Survey of Assessment Culture* annually through the assent of

senior leaders such as the president, provost, director of assessment, or administrative vice presidents. An argument could be made that response bias could be present because institutions with a strong culture of assessment would be more likely to volunteer for participation in the survey. Though possible, the *Faculty Survey of Assessment Culture* has enjoyed stable results from year to year (Skidmore, Hsu, & Fuller, 2018) and has been used by many institutions of higher education to inform decision making. Response bias, though possible, is highly unlikely and is mitigated using a longitudinal database of all responses across a decade, rather than 1 single year. Similarly, the distribution of faculty participating in the study may affect the results. For example, overrepresentation of faculty in any stage of their career, if present, could influence results. To examine this, the independent variable will be investigated for similarities or differences in the number of faculty at specific ranks in comparison to national trends in employment for faculty.

Further, the sample for the *Faculty Survey of Assessment Culture* is not a sample of convenience. Instead, a stratified sample of institutions focusing on region, size, and type of degree offered was constructed prior to inviting institutions to participate. If institutions from all stratification cells were not represented in the final sample, institutions were randomly selected to be invited to participate in the study. Nonetheless, some stratification cells remained unfilled in two years of the survey's 13-year administration. Despite these efforts, limited data were collected and wider generalizations to the nation-wide population of faculty are unadvised and tenuous at best. The response rate for the survey across its entire 13-year history is 32.8% ($n = 3,509$) of the 10,698 respondents invited to participate. Nonetheless, the *Faculty Survey of Assessment Culture* represents one of the best sources of data and information on faculty

perspectives about assessment culture and a sufficient source of data for the present study.

Delimitations

The first delimitation in this study was the participants. The researcher chose not to examine elements of gender, race, or ethnicity in the study as this initial study was meant to provide a foundation for latter studies of this sort. Moreover, the study only examined faculty perceptions on assessment culture and did not look at the perceptions of administrators who also teach, or of administrators and student affairs staff. However, future research may be conducted using data from the *Administrators Survey of Assessment Culture* or the *Student Affairs Survey of Assessment Culture*. For the purpose of this study, the six constructs of faculty perceptions of assessment were the focus of the study. Validity and reliability statistics for these constructs were published by Fuller, Skidmore, Bustamante, and Holzweiss (2016). Also, the size of the institutions responding to the survey varied and could have had an influence on the availability of resources for assessment. However, for the purposes of this exploratory study, institutional size was not examined as a covariate or in any capacity in the linear model. The empirical limitations to this study were twofold. First, the quantitative archival data for the statistical analysis conducted in Chapter IV were limited to the time between 2005 and 2017. Second, the quantitative archival data used for statistical analysis conducted in Chapter IV were limited to 119 colleges and universities in the United States of America and some participants from countries outside the United States.

Conclusion

This study is organized into five chapters. Chapter I provides the introduction and consists of a background of the problem, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, a theoretical framework, research subjectivities, the research questions, significance of the study, definition of terms, assumptions, limitations, and delimitations. Chapter II reviews the literature relevant to the elements of this study. Chapter III is a description of the research design, selection of participants, the instruments used, procedures, variables, data analysis, and a summary. Chapter IV examines the results of the research questions used in the study and includes a description of data analysis procedures and a summary. Chapter V details the implications and proposed policy changes emanating from these results and provides a connection to the literature review. Implications for policy, practice, and future research are also offered in Chapter V.

Assessment in higher education has moved beyond a useful tool used for exploring student learning to a professional expectation within colleges and universities. During this evolution, the meaning of assessment has been surpassed by the process of assessment itself. Now the methods of assessment have overtaken questions that examine the meaning and value of assessment. In trying to answer questions regarding the meaning and value of assessment, there has been reflection by assessment leaders regarding the factors which underlie assessment. This examination of the culture of assessment is the focus of a new field of study. The culture of assessment as an idea within higher education is relatively new. The work of Banta and Associates (2002) provided an initial insight into the development of assessment through an examination of assessment's history and practice traditions. Beginning with the study of student learning

in college, moving to student retention and behavior, the growth of evaluation and scientific management, and finally into mastery learning these ideas have formed the current framework for assessment in higher education. Although there is a significant body of scholarly work regarding assessment practice, there has yet to emerge a cogent and cohesive theory of assessment.

This study is focused on the question: does the number of years of work in higher education relate to faculty perceptions of assessment culture? The study focuses on *Time as a Faculty Member* and variables related to faculty perceptions of assessment to understand possible existence of a relationship in the culture of assessment from a faculty viewpoint. Faculty face many challenges, the demand for their time is always prevalent with the model of teaching, research, and service. Assessment can appear to faculty as another unpaid job. However, a positive culture of assessment shows faculty ways to improve teaching, curriculum, and the value of assessment.

CHAPTER II

Review of the Literature

Introduction

The purpose of a literature review is two-fold. First is to defend the focus of a study. Second, is to provide a foundation for the methodological approach used with the study. Further, synthesis allows discrepancies in existing research to be addressed and cast light on contradictions which support the need for your study. Last, critical analysis is needed to explore the strengths and weaknesses of studies done recently in the field, principally as these studies help one to better understand and discuss the conflicts and inconsistencies that exist. Few relevant theories form the basis of institutional cultures of assessment. Yet, the theoretical foundations of cultures of assessment could be described as developing, emerging, or tacitly examined. However, common threads of a review of the literature revealed a lack of underlying theory regarding the development of a culture of assessment and developing notions of what a culture of assessment looks like. Further, the role of faculty involvement in assessment has been examined from several perspectives. However, there have been few comprehensive reviews of the role of faculty play in developing or sustaining a culture of assessment. Moreover, faculty involvement has been touted as a requirement for assessment culture development. Yet, empirical studies of faculty involvement in developing institutional cultures of assessment do not exist. This study will contribute to the scholarship on culture of assessment by offering an empirical examination of how a faculty member's length of service in higher education influences his or her perceptions of cultures of assessment.

Assessment has evolved from a useful tool for exploring student learning to a professional expectation in higher education. Assessment's meaning has been surpassed by the process of assessment itself. Methods of assessment and completion of accountability related processes have become the primary focus of assessment scholarship rather than examinations of the meaning and value of assessment. To understand what a culture of assessment is, one must ask what the underlying factors of an institution's assessment practices are. Literature regarding assessment within higher education has focused largely on the methodologies used to assess student learning. Scholars (Banta, 1997; Banta and Associates 2002; Bresciani et al. 2009; Fuller, 2013; Fuller, Henderson & Bustamante, 2015; Gardner & Hickmott 2009; Maki 2010; Suskie 2009; and Whitehurst, 2013) have provided information on institutional cultures of assessment and the possible development of a culture of assessment. However, the process for the implementation of a culture of assessment within higher education institutions are not well defined or documented.

This review of the literature focused on the roots of assessment and the foundations of the culture of assessment. Also, the attitudes and perceptions regarding the culture of assessment within an institution, the development of and promotion of a culture of assessment, and faculty and the culture of assessment. Further, this review of the literature examines the engagement of faculty regarding assessment. Synthesis is the process that allows discrepancies in existing research to be addressed and shows the contradictions which support the need for this study. This review of the literature has made clear there is a need for more research and study, especially qualitative work, in all areas relating to developing a culture of assessment within higher education institutions.

There is also a dearth of scholarship enhancing the development of a culture of assessment. Also lacking is research conducted from the perspective of faculty regarding a culture of assessment. Last, using critical analysis to explore the strengths and weaknesses of previous studies done in the field, as these studies help one to better understand and discuss the conflicts and inconsistencies that exist.

Search Description

The strategy used to search for literature regarding the culture of assessment was through a targeted keyword search of academic databases, a snowball search strategy. Databases used were *Education Source* and *Educational Resources Information Center* (ERIC). Key terms used in this search were chosen by reviewing *The Faculty Survey of Assessment Culture* instrument and used to reveal relevant literature. These terms were: *culture of assessment*, *foundation of culture of assessment*, *developing a culture of assessment*, *faculty*, and *culture of assessment*. Results from the *Education Source* database were limited as the match rate for search terms and key words in peer reviewed work published in scholarly journals within the last 10 years was low. Searches within ERIC using the same terms produced 37 matches, Additional searches within ERIC produced the following results: (a) *Assessment models* produced 70 matches with three being relevant, (b) *assessment practice* produced 224 matches with 32 being relevant, and (c) *change* and *culture of assessment* produced zero matches. Further searches within ERIC produced the following results. *Focus on Student Learning* produced 380 results of which 27 were relevant. *Fear or Distrust of Assessment* produced one result of which none were relevant. *Benefits of Assessment* produced 256 results of which four were relevant. *Assessment Leadership* produced 166 results of which four were relevant. *Use*

of Assessment Data produced 193 results of which four were relevant. *Sharing Assessment Results* produced two results of which none were relevant. All results included in this review of the literature were from peer reviewed scholarly journals, published within the last 10 years, and from the results, 30 articles were selected for this literature review regarding culture of assessment. The 30 articles selected were deemed most relevant based on the search terms, date of publication (most recent), and supporting arguments for this study.

The results of this literature review indicate several themes in the literature. Regarding the culture of assessment, scholars have directly addressed the lack of an underlying theoretical basis regarding its development (Hill, 2005; Murphy, 2009). Second, scholars have also questioned what a culture of assessment looks like and how it is indicated in practice (Andrade & Altoneva, 2008; Astin, 1991; Benson & Dresdow, 2014; Kezar, 2013). Finally, scholars and practitioners have widely advocated the importance of faculty buy-in and participation within assessment. Despite this call for faculty involvement, no relevant theories form the basis for developing cultures of assessment. Scholars (Fuller, 2013; Fuller, Henderson & Bustamante, 2015; Maki, 2010; Whitehurst, 2013) have examined the definition of culture of assessment include. Whereas these scholars provide research in assessment practice though a theory of assessment cultures has yet to emerge. Furthermore, there has been limited research done on the culture of assessment from the perspective of faculty. However, scholars (Clark & Scales, 2003; Fazio, 1985; Fuller, 2011, 2013, 2014; Shelton, 2011) have begun to examine the need for a comprehensive philosophy of assessment and are discussed in a latter section of this review of the literature.

The methodologies of previous studies, articles, and monographs neither advance nor deter the development of a positive culture of assessment. Previous studies support findings on the value and requirement of faculty participation in the development of a positive culture of assessment. Table 1 provides a summary of the findings for this review of the literature on the evidence of, development of, and promotion of a culture of assessment. Themes from the literature review include the following themes: (a) focus on student learning; (b) fear and/or distrust of assessment; (c) benefits of assessment; (d) clarity of assessment leadership; (e) use of assessment data; (f) sharing of assessment results; and (g) years of faculty work.

Table 1

Summary of Findings on Developing a Culture of Assessment

Findings	Author/Year
How the organizational context regarding the culture of assessment within institutions of higher learning relates to faculty	Guetterman & Mitchell, (2016)
Student Learning Outcomes as drivers of assessment and the culture of assessment within an institution of higher learning	Garfolo & L'Huillier, (2015)
Factors that support and hinder the development of a culture of assessment within institutions of higher learning	
Factors that support and hinder the development of a culture of assessment within institutions of higher learning	Farkas & Houk, (2014)
Using change management techniques to create a culture of assessment within	Lane et al., (2014)

institutions of higher learning

Process of building and developing a culture of assessment within institutions of higher learning Anderson, (2013)

Developing a culture of assessment within institutions of higher learning through faculty leadership Bubb et al., (2010)

The challenges in starting a culture of assessment within institutions of higher learning Duff (2010)

Examples of how to build a sustainable culture of assessment within an institution of higher learning Maki (2010)

Using Faculty Learning Centers (FLC) to develop a culture of assessment within institutions of higher learning Schlitz et al., (2009)

Steps in building a culture of assessment within a department at Northwestern University Hill, (2005)

Early theories on the development of a culture of assessment within institutions of higher learning Banta, (2002)

Conceptual or Theoretical Framework

As previously stated in Chapter I, assessment is currently theorized as a methodology rather than a theory or framework. It is for this reason that assessment has been maligned for the lack of theoretical focus. Assessment is generally thought to have begun with performance-based funding for public higher education institutions in the state of Tennessee (Bogue & Brown, 1982). The state of Tennessee based institutional funding on student performance on standardized tests. This is still a controversial practice today, in effect, holding institutions and their officers accountable for student learning. It was this action of scrutiny by politicians and policy makers that motivated institutional administrators to look at assessment as a means of improving student learning (Astin, 2012).

Regional accrediting agencies are also interested in assessment, focusing on improvement of outcomes assessment and accountability in higher education institutions (Ewell & Boyer, 1988). There is also a strong and growing pressure from the federal government on regional accreditors to emphasize student learning outcomes instead of the process and procedures of teaching (Ewell, 2010). This shift in focus indicates assessment is moving towards an *outcomes-driven accreditation philosophy*. Therefore, there is a need for a more complete understanding of assessment and how assessment can be advantageous to higher educational institutions (Astin, 2012).

Assessment is a vital part of learner-centered teaching and is much more than tests and surveys. It has been touted as likely influencing courses, curricula, and institutions though this assumption has not been empirically examined (Allen, 2004). To meet this new demand, faculty must develop course and curricula with a focus on the

learner rather than the instructor (Huba & Freed, 2000). By doing so, assessment provides an ability to measure and understand which pedagogical methods work best to enhance student learning and for whom. Although there are several assessment methods and enough scholarship examining their application, there is still no convincing or persuasive theory of assessment.

Assessment can be viewed as an empowering facet of faculty life. The notion that faculty are necessary to lead assessment efforts is well document in the scholarship. For example, Hollowell, Middaugh, and Sibolski (2006) stated that, “First and foremost, assessment of student learning outcomes must be owned by the faculty” (p. 93). Also, there is a tension between improvement and accountability that is evident within institutions. Assessment must contribute to both administrative processes and have a close link with classroom processes (Banta & Palomba, 2015). Serving both administrative and pedagogical demands has imbued assessment with tension that has only recently been examined by educational researchers (Baas, Rhodes, & Thomas, 2016; Skidmore, Hsu, & Fuller, 2018).

If student learning is important within institutions, knowledge of faculty and staff measurements of student performance at the program or department level is critical (Allen, 2004; Gaff, 2007; Kelley, Tong, & Choi, 2010; Shelton, 2011). The argument can then be made that if student learning is to improve, it occurs when faculty and staff have the most influence and leverage in their approach to teaching and learning. As such, the efforts of faculty and staff at the program and department level are required for accurate understanding of student learning outcomes assessment (Ewell, Paulson, & Kenzie, 2011).

Astin and Antonio (2012) come closest to a theory of assessment with their work on the philosophy and logic of assessment. Their work focuses on developing a philosophy of assessment, complete with axiological, ontological, and epistemological foundations. A philosophy of assessment relies on goals and values of higher education, traditional and innovative views of educational excellence, talent development, and educational epistemology and ontology notions (Astin & Antonio, 2012). Even with Astin and Antonio's work, there is no relevant scholarly literature regarding the years of work by faculty and faculty perspectives on assessment. Therefore, this study will contribute to the scholarship by examining the relationship, if any, between faculty members' *Time as a Faculty Member* and their perceptions of assessment cultures. Situating this study in the contexts of prior literature will aid scholars and practitioners in developing assessment programs that are palatable to faculty members at various stages of their career.

The Roots of Assessment and the Foundations of the Culture of Assessment

Banta and Associates (2002) provided insight into the development of a current definition of assessment used in higher education through examination of assessment history and practice traditions. The beginning of the current practice of assessment started with the study of student learning in college. Next, it moved to student retention and behavior and was followed by the growth of evaluation and scientific management practices. Finally, assessment has evolved into mastery learning and these ideas have formed the current theoretical framework for assessment in higher education. This work by Banta and Associates (2002) further defined assessment through development of "a terminological consensus that focused on use of multiple methods for program

improvement” (p. 37). The most current definition of assessment in the literature reviewed is that by Suskie (2009): The establishment of clear, measurable outcomes of student learning. Ensuring that students have enough opportunities to achieve those outcomes. Systematically gathering, analyzing, and interpreting evidence to determine how well student learning matches our expectations. Using the resulting information to improve student learning (p. 17). So this leaves the reader with an unclear starting point.

Evidence of a Culture of Assessment

Accreditation agencies have had requirements for assessment for use in initial and reaffirmation accreditation (Lane, Lane, Rich, & Wheeling, 2014). As such, institutions have prepared and developed plans for accreditation. Beginning with assessment to prove value to state legislatures (Bogue & Brown, 1982) and carrying through to the requirements of assessment for accreditation (Driscoll, de Noriega & Ramaley, 2006; Garfolo & L’Huillier, 2015; Suskie, 2014).

Ownership of assessment has also changed in the last 20 years (Driscoll, de Noriega, & Ramaley, 2006). Originally, assessment was the realm of chairs, deans, and other administrators. This amounted largely to the collection of secondary data. Secondary data in the sense that it was collected by administrators and reported by administrators. It was said then, that, “Yes, we are doing assessment in the department”. Next, accreditors required plans for the measurement of student learning. It is only in the last phase of the development of assessment that faculty were involved, and this involvement was minimal (Evans, 2011; Grappa, Austin & Trice, 2007; Hutchings, 2010; Lane et al., 2014).

Organizational Culture within Higher Education

The culture of an organization is inherently stable, resistant to change, and epitomizes the amassed learning of a group (Lakos & Phipps, 2004). Much of organizational culture is not self-evident (Anderson, 2013; Farkas, 2013; Hill, 2005). The values, beliefs, and principles which form a culture may be hidden within the structure of the organization itself (Duff, 2010). However, an organization's cultural strength can be measured by how the group manages external adaptation and internal integration (Fuller, Skidmore, 2014; Schlitz, O'Connor, Pang, Stryker, Markell, Krupp, Byers, Jones, & Redfern, 2009). Therefore, to bring about change, organizations must accept that there is a threat to survival or a strong positive external pressure which demands adaptation and the integration of new methods (Schein, 1984).

Having a Culture of Assessment

Several higher education scholars (Banta & Associates, 2002; Bresciani et al., 2004, 2009; Brown, 2004; Walvoord & Anderson, 2010) have developed the notion that institutions possess cultures of assessment. Others (Anderson, 2006; Maki, 2010; Weiner, 2009) have offered listings of institutional structures, practices, or factors influencing the way an institution practices assessment. However, these definitions, structures, and practices have remained untested and are largely conjecture or strongly advocated practices. Despite calls for further exploration (Kuh & Ikenberry, 2009; Ndoye & Parker, 2010), there are few studies calling upon empirical data to explore the existence or nature of a culture of assessment as its own issue of interest. Instead, most scholars hypothesize what a culture of assessment might look like and how this culture might be changed, arguing such practices are indeed good practice. These scholars also

posit the notion that an institutional culture of assessment might also result in improved student learning. Perhaps more so than any other U.S. scholars, Palomba and Banta (1999) and Banta and Associates (2002) advanced the notion of an institutional culture of assessment by defining the environmental and contextual factors exhibited in a theoretically positive culture of assessment. Banta (1997) defined culture as deeply embedded values and beliefs collectively held by members of an institution having a positive or negative impact on assessment. One useful, yet largely theoretical, framework—one describing a culture of assessment as a form of cross-organizational commitment—is Maki’s (2010) *Principles of an Inclusive Commitment*. Maki’s Principles describe the structure of institutional partnerships, which, when operating efficiently, indicate a commitment to a culture of assessment committed to student learning. Section 2.4 Theoretical Perspective and Assumptions addresses a variety of assumptions taken in preparing for this study. Finally, Whitehurst (2002) and Wright (2002) detail extensive benefits to operating under a culture of evidence and assessment, arguing that with such a culture, institutions cannot adapt to changing contexts, respond to competition, or capitalize on the benefits of cultural exchange. From its earliest conception in the scholarly literature, a culture of assessment, however defined, has been touted as a beneficial institutional condition worth pursuing at exhaustive measure.

Developing a Culture of Assessment

The development of a culture of assessment had foundations in many works, especially that of Astin (1977) using the model of value-added assessment combined with a longitudinal research to determine the impact of the college environment on its students. This model was introduced and used to develop a means of demonstrating the

effectiveness of higher education and continued by others, notably Bresciani, Gardner, and Hickmott (2009). From this point the development of a culture of assessment is examined further.

Farkhas and Houk (2014) performed a survey of 1,604 universities in 2013 selected from the Carnegie Basic Classifications and sent a questionnaire of 63 questions to library directors or the person responsible for assessment. The response rate for the survey was 42% with no respondent answering more than 47 questions. The survey intended to show the factors that help establish a culture of assessment regarding student learning within academic libraries, or that may hinder such.

Notable results from the survey included two of the three most common responses regarding assessment were beyond the control of the library. First, there was a presence of an institution wide emphasis on assessment. Second, this emphasis on assessment was uniformly to meet the requirements for accreditation. Further, the survey indicated no single factor or group of factors was associated in a significant manner with a culture of assessment. The results of this survey did not produce prescriptive measures for attaining a culture of assessment. However, the results do tend to indicate certain factors are related to others regarding the attainability of a culture of assessment.

Lack of Culture of Assessment Scholarship

Although there are case studies on cultures of assessment there is no professional standard due to the lack of scholarship that clearly articulates what a culture of assessment is. Therefore, we are left with separate and distinct case studies, which are often easily dismissed because they are so specific to institutional contexts. This hampers the development of a culture of assessment by preempting its development. The example

of developing a culture of assessment presented by Anderson (2013) reports of an accreditation failure at Bluefield State College, a Historically Black College or University. The School of Arts and Sciences in preparation for regional accreditation examined their assessment data and deemed various data to be lacking after review by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association. The failures centered on six questions deemed fundamental to assessment: (a) Are the stated student learning outcomes appropriate to the mission, programs, degrees, and students? (b) What evidence is there that students achieve the stated learning outcomes? (c) In what ways are the evidence of student learning analyzed and used? (d) How is the responsibility shared for student learning and assessment of student learning? (e) How are evaluations and improvements of effectiveness made to assess student learning? (f) How are the public and other stakeholders informed about the students learning?

To facilitate answering these questions and developing solutions, the dean of the School of Arts and Science and the director of Instructional Research worked with faculty to review student learning outcomes, creating matrices to identify student learning outcomes, assessed courses, assessment tools, performance goals, and developed a timetable for implementation. Within the School of Arts and Sciences, there were both early adopters, and those who would not participate. To ease transition to this new model a faculty member from the School of Arts and Science was appointed associate dean of Assessment in Arts and Science.

This individual worked with reluctant faculty to achieve compliance and see that individual plans for assessment of programs were completed in Arts and Sciences. The next step was to merge these plans with the other schools on the campus into an

institutional assessment plan. This had the benefit of providing a clear view of the reporting and analyses structure of assessment for the entire institution. Bluefield State College weathered the accreditation crisis and has learned that when faculty are included in the development process of assessment and provided guidance, tools, and support from the administration, a culture of assessment can be achieved.

Development of a culture of assessment is problematic within many schools as demonstrated by Duff (2010) regarding the process of developing a culture of assessment at Columbian College within George Washington University. Assessment of student learning came into focus as a result of the Middle States Commission on Higher Education accreditation report in 2008 that recommended “the development of a comprehensive, organized and sustained process for the assessment of student learning outcomes, including evidence that assessment results are used for improvement” (Duff, 2010, p.20).

Beginning in the fall semester of 2008 and running through the end of the academic year in 2010, Columbian College established an ad hoc working group composed of faculty, staff, and administrators chosen by the dean to establish the beginnings of an assessment program. Members chosen represented the senior faculty, those knowledgeable of assessment, newly tenured faculty, an associate dean of the college and the university’s Chief Academic Officer. The working group produced a report that provided a descriptive and simple format for use by all departments in articulating their learning outcomes and strategies for assessment. Additionally, an implementation timetable was included suggesting course syllabi have designated student learning outcomes for the beginning of the 2009 academic year, each department submit

a complete assessment plan by October 15, 2009, and all departments implement the plan before the end of the 2009–2010 academic year.

To achieve this aggressive timetable, outside experts were brought in to assist with the development of the tools, resources, and plans required to meet the timetable. Working closely with faculty, administrators, and staff, these goals were brought to fruition. Recognition by faculty that the common element was the shared cohort of students and the desire to see goals met in the assessment of student learning which, brought about the rapid acceptance of this new culture.

Moving from a college to a department level, Hill (2005) provides a critique of the development of a culture of assessment with the Political Science department at Northeastern Illinois University showing this type of culture cannot be created in a short time frame and must be based on trust and confidence in the process. From 1993 – 2015, the Political Science department at Northeastern Illinois University undertook the task of developing meaningful assessments. The faculty, administration, freshman, and graduating seniors all participated in the development of, and ongoing change to, assessment within the department. Hill (2005) states four conditions which must be met to achieve a viable culture of assessment: (a) overcoming distrust and fear of how the assessment will be used, (b) making the assessment tractable, (c) building commitment, and (d) developing a subgroup of “fixers” (Hill, 2005, p. 35). Despite the lack of unified standards regarding the goals of a liberal arts education within the discipline, the department has shown steady and consistent progress over the 23 years they have used assessment of student learning outcomes. The plan in use changes as needed and is

recognized as imperfect, although showing the work done by the department to be successful.

Attitudes and Perceptions Regarding the Culture of Assessment

As an attempt to gain greater understanding into the attitudes and perceptions regarding the culture of assessment, a study was done to examine possible theoretical underpinnings and practical approaches this culture (Fuller, Henderson, & Bustamante, 2015). This study in the development of a culture of assessment within an institution conducted a Delphi study of 10 assessment leaders at various universities. From an initial survey of 1,500 subscribers to the Assessment in Higher Education (ASSESS) list serve, 35 responses generated a list of 10 nominations. These 10 nominations, consisting of five men and five women, participated in the study. The participants consisted of three assessment leaders at the director level for academic programs, four in institutional assessment in administrative roles, and three at the provost or president level. The participants' experience within assessment ranged from two to more than 30 years. Through an iterative process, Fuller et al. (2015) asked four questions to identify elements of the institutional culture of assessment and its sustainability. The questions asked in the study were for descriptions of positive and negative institutional cultures of assessment, how the leaders shaped assessment within their settings, and what leadership theories and models were used by the leaders in developing a culture of assessment within their own institutions.

The development and creation of a positive culture of assessment focusing on student learning is a time-intensive, evolutionary process (Fuller et al., 2015). This process involved the identification of negative or punitive cultures of assessment and

further, that the process of assessment cultural transformation was slow and difficult.

Further, Fuller et al. (2015) revealed that the assessment leaders participating, as a group, did not have any theoretical frameworks they used to assist in developing a positive culture of assessment within their respective campuses. Additional work on the development of a culture of assessment also supports the lack of a theoretical underpinning (Anderson, 2013; Duff, 2010; Farkas, 2013; Farkas & Houk, 2014).

Therefore, it is apparent that studies by several scholars have produced consistent results when examining the roots of a culture of assessment within an institutional context and their results consistently fail to find a theory or even theoretical underpinnings of a culture of assessment (Fuller et al., 2015).

Faculty and the Culture of Assessment

Although the process of developing a culture of assessment within institutions is not yet well developed or understood fully, there are several works which highlight the importance of faculty involvement and support for assessment if it is to be meaningful and worthwhile (Bubb, Herzog, Terry, & Geithner 2010; Guetterman & Mitchell, 2016; Schlitz et al., 2009). Schlitz et al. (2009) examined the process of developing a culture of assessment using a faculty learning community (FLC). In this instance, the FLC was defined as an interdisciplinary group assembled to explore a topic-based issue common to all. The FLC in this report was assembled for the purpose of integrating technology into the curriculum. The FLC was focused on the enhancement of student assessment and at the same time the development of improved feedback mechanisms to students. This FLC is an example of how faculty define and develop a culture of assessment within an institution.

The FLC participants consisted of six faculty, one male, and seven females, with ages from 33 to 60, from the Colleges of Business, Liberal Arts, and Education at a midsized University in the Midwest. The participants' experience with teaching ranged from one to 26 years. The FLC was established and together during the spring and fall 2008 and spring 2009 academic years. Each participant was given a mini-grant to develop a web-based, rubric driven, performance evaluation schema for their courses. The FLC was originally developed to incorporate the adoption of technology into the assessment of classroom learning. The participants discovered the work done with rubrics was instrumental in data collection for the purposes of accreditation as well as university-wide assessment. This insight led to the development of a culture of assessment within the FLC that grew beyond the initial goals of the program. The results of the FLC program were distributed to a wider audience within the institution and led to the cultivation of a culture of assessment within the university. Schlitz et al. (2009) concluded the development of a campus-wide culture of assessment was achievable when faculty led, especially with FLC and when the FLC focus is on specific assessment goals.

Further support for the idea of faculty leadership in the development of a culture of assessment comes from Budd et al. (2010) in a report from Gonzaga University. Gonzaga had been deemed deficient by its accreditors, the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NCCU) in 1994 for failing to have outcomes assessments that were process driven and systematic. The NCCU returned in 2004 and noted little progress had been made to address these specific deficiencies and as such, Gonzaga was given two years to make substantive progress. Gonzaga responded by placing responsibility for campus-wide assessment under the Coordinator of Outcomes

Assessment (COA) based in the Office of Institutional Research. The COA helped produce a systematic process, led by faculty, in the development of Student Learning Outcomes which are shared through an annual half day work session. One of the noted benefits of this methodology was the use of rubrics and the framing of assessment in terms that were accomplishable. Budd et al. (2010) attributed the success to the role of the COA and integration with faculty, administration support, and the free flow of information and feedback to faculty. In the case of Gonzaga, the transition to a culture of assessment was not easy. Each department moved at different rates and with varying degrees of progress. What Budd et al. (2010) determined was that the apparent key to success was the engagement of the faculty such that faculty leadership, involvement, and interest were foremost. Further, faculty became more engaged when the process showed demonstrable results within the classroom. Budd et al. (2010) indicated the most likely keys to this cultural development were cooperation between faculty and administration, constant administrative support for faculty work, a multi-pronged approach to assessment, and that the goal is progress not perfection. Although developing a culture of assessment that is positive and useful is difficult, it is achievable and requires planning and ongoing work.

In further examination in the role of faculty in the development of a culture of assessment, Guetterman and Mitchell (2016) conducted a mixed methods study focused on the factors linked to organizational context and how faculty leaders are committed to assessment and the subsequent use of assessment data. The study participants were 26 faculty members from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln who taught a general education course. All colleges of the university participated in this study and the study

was conducted during the 2013 – 2014 academic year. The study focused on a single research question, “How does the institution’s organization for assessment affect faculty members and their efforts to assess student learning outcomes?” (Guetterman & Mitchell, 2016, p. 45). The quantitative aspect of this study focused on the relationship between leadership, culture, and policies of the university. The qualitative aspect of the study examined best practices that encouraged the use of assessment by faculty. The mixed methods element of this study examined results from the qualitative and quantitative aspects regarding process, context of the organization, knowledge, and implementation of assessment.

The quantitative portion of Guetterman and Mitchell’s (2016) study was conducted using three instruments with a 70% completion rate for both pre-and post-results. The qualitative element of this study was from three items: open-ended surveys and narratives, and poster presentations outlining the participants overall progress during the study process. Guetterman and Mitchell (2016) concluded through their studies that faculty leadership is important in the assessment process. Further, four best practices concerning the development of a culture of assessment were put forth. The development of faculty communities to exchange ideas and collaborate was determined to be a best practice as was the requirement to define culture within specific disciplines and the institution. Additional best practices recommended were to help the faculty understand the value of and connection to assessment for the purposes of accreditation, both institutional and professional. Additionally, communication to all involved in the assessment process is key and the policies regarding assessment need to be determined with regards to both the institution’s culture and current leadership.

Tools for Developing a Culture of Assessment

Garfolo and L'Huillier (2015) take the point of view that when done well, the development of a culture of assessment provides meaningful information that should be a part of all institutional decisions and operations. Knowledge gained through assessment is useful and an effective instrument to affect continuous improvement in assessment. Student learning outcomes assessment is required by all accreditors yet is often misunderstood by those being accredited (Garfolo & L'Huillier, 2015).

At the minimum, assessment involves: (a) having clear, explicit, and transparent expectations for both the student and the institution, (b) setting the criteria for learning at an appropriate level to demonstrate quality of learning, (c) gathering, analyzing, and reflecting on the evidence in a systematic way to determine if student learning has occurred to the depth and breadth stated, (d) using the information gathered to document, explain, and elevate student learning (Garfolo & L'Huillier, 2015 p.158).

To achieve these assessment ends, accreditation agencies now require the development of tools to assess student learning prior to academic assessment. Institutions must also review and analyze program data and develop effective assessment processes. Definition of various institutional leaders' roles in assessment processes are also important. A detailed look at assessment methodology is provided through identification and examination of a revised version of Bloom's taxonomy (1956) of objectives and goals of education and offers a comprehensive guide to the assessment

process. Thus, the basis for all educational assessment begins with the establishment and definition of student learning outcomes (Garfolo & L'Huillier, 2015).

Assessment and Definition by Accreditation

Recently assessment has been redefined by the accreditation agencies to include the expectation of evidence that not only is assessment being done, but that the information gained in assessing student learning outcomes is being analyzed and used to improve curriculum within programs. In using change management techniques to further develop a culture of assessment, the degree of success in implementation depends on leadership that is supportive of assessment. These same leaders must also provide specific expectations for assessment. Further leadership must fund faculty development and training and provide the incentives and rewards for participation in assessment. Leadership also must promulgate clear responsibilities for faculty and staff. Last, leadership must allow assessment to be a process that driven by a faculty led process (Lane, Lane, Rich, & Wheeling, 2014). Although progress has been made in assessment overall, these processes for faculty led assessment are not yet fully institutionalized.

Change Theory and Assessment

Several scholars who attempted to drive the formation of a culture of assessment report their research and findings. The institutions involved were Missouri Western State University, Emporia State University, and Montana State University Billings. The process of institutionalizing a culture of assessment via Kotter's approach (1996) were described by Lane et al. (2014)

Kotter (1996) outlines the following eight steps in the process of change management: (a) establishing a sense of urgency, (b) forming a powerful guiding

coalition, (c) developing a vision and strategy, (d) communicating the vision, (e) empowering others to act on the vision, (f) planning for and creating short-term wins, (g) consolidating improvements and producing still more change, and (h) institutionalizing new approaches. Each of the above steps are further expanded here. First, establishing a sense of urgency is defined as examining the market and competitive realities. Also identifying crises, potential crises, and major opportunities.

Second, the formation of a powerful guiding coalition. This is seen as an assembly of a group with enough power to bring about change and encouraging this group to work together as a team. Third, is the creation of a vision. The creation of a vision helps to lead the change effort and allows the team to develop strategies to achieve the vision. Fourth, is communicating the vision. This means using all possible means to communicate the new vision and strategies and teaching new behaviors by the example of the guiding coalition.

Fifth, is the empowerment of others to act on the new vision. This involves removing the obstacles to change. Changing systems or structures which undermine the vision. And the encouragement of risk-taking and non-traditional ideas, activities, and actions. Sixth, is the planning for and creation of short-term wins. This means planning for visible performance improvements and the creation of those improvements. Also, in this step is the recognition and rewarding of the employees involved in these improvements.

Seventh, is the consolidation of improvements and producing even more change. This allows for the increased use of credibility to change systems, structures, and policies which do not fit the new vision. Also, in this step is the hiring, promotion, and

development of employees who can implement the vision. The reinvigoration of the process with new projects, themes, and change agents.

Eighth and last, is the institutionalization of new approaches. This means an articulation between new behaviors and institutional success and development of the means to ensure leadership development and succession (Kotter, 1996, p. 61) Through the use of this approach at their respective institutions, Lane et al. (2014) reported success in implementing a culture of assessment.

Literature and Culture of Assessment

Literature regarding assessment within higher education has focused largely on the technological aspects and methodologies used to assess student learning. There are scholars (Astin & Antonio, 2012; Banta and Associates, 2002; Bresciani, Gardner, & Hickmott, 2009; Fuller, 2013; Fuller, Henderson, & Bustamante, 2015; Maki 2010; Suskie, 2009) that have provided treatises on institutional cultures of assessment and the subsequent development of assessment culture yet the implementation of this culture within higher education institutions is not well documented. Research again indicates there are no definitive or overwhelmingly accepted theories regarding the development of a positive culture of assessment. There is some research into the development of a culture of assessment that considers faculty. Clark and Scales (2003) conducted a Delphi study examining assessment areas and practices in engineering and technical graphics education. The focus of this Delphi study was assessment practices for the grading of introductory courses. The outcomes of this Delphi study provided a list of the major categories for assessment and content objectives which the study experts felt needed to be addressed as a part of the assessment process. The study focused on the

assessment practices best used in the grading of introductory courses. Outcomes generated in the study include a listing of major assessment categories with content objectives that the authors feel need to be addressed in the assessment process. The study concludes with a model for assessment (taxonomy) (Clarke & Scales, 2003). The methodologies of previous studies neither support nor oppose the work of this researcher regarding the development of a positive culture of assessment. Previous studies support the findings of this researcher on the value and requirement of faculty participation in the development of a positive culture of assessment.

Definition of Culture of Assessment

As noted by Trudy Banta (1993, 2002), a culture of assessment, refers to the deeply embedded values and beliefs collectively held by members of an institution influencing assessment practices on their campus (Banta & Associates, 2002; Banta, et al., 1996). Further, a culture of assessment is the primary system underlying assessment practice in higher education institutions. A culture of assessment is the system of thought and action reinforcing what is thought to be good assessment practice. Another definition of a culture of assessment is “the extent to which the predominating attitudes and behaviors that characterize the functioning of an institution support the assessment of student learning outcomes” (Weiner, 2009, p. 1). Because Weiner’s model of assessment is focused on undergraduate education, it presumes that student learning is the reason for assessment. Assessment occurs in higher education for many reasons such as accreditation, accountability, institutional politics, or control. Looking at this another way, by neglecting the exploration of these other forms of assessment does not count the primary contrasts to the assessment of student learning nor allow for assessment

practitioners to make meaningful changes on their respective campuses (Fuller, 2011).

A broader attempt at a definition of a culture of assessment is Maki's (2010) *Principles of an Inclusive Commitment*. Wherein Maki describes the structure of institutional partnerships, that when operating efficiently, indicate a commitment to assessment of student learning (Maki, 2010, p. 9). The forces that give assessment meaning in a variety of institutional cultures are varied. These can include but are not limited to, accountability, accreditation, reputation, acquisition of financial resources, and questioning what students learn. All these can give meaning to assessment given the large number of institutions and the respective contexts (Maki, 2010). A culture of assessment is defined as the overarching ethos that is both an artifact of the way assessment is done and simultaneously a factor influencing and augmenting assessment practice (Fuller, 2011, p. 4). Looking at what and how an institution of higher learning chooses to assess reflects the institutional values and assumptions regarding learning and are therefore strong guides to an institutions culture of assessment.

Context of a Culture of Assessment

There is a large amount of literature regarding the culture of assessment and its relationship to assessment practice is either unexplored or explained implicitly. Literature on assessment strongly supports the development and advancement of a culture of assessment extending benefits of this advancement. However, there is almost no indication in the literature of how the fundamental logic of a culture of assessment exactly effects student learning. Most of the literature regarding a culture of assessment however it is contextualized, imply there will be enhanced student learning. This implicit postulation has not been studied in either detail or through examination of illustrative

work of practitioners of assessment. There are a significant number of authors (Astin, 1991; Gunzenhauser, 2003; Mentkowski et al., 1991; Peterson & Vaughan, 2002; Postman, 1995) who support and encourage further investigations and studies into the logic and philosophy of assessment.

Until there is a more wide-ranging the model of a culture of assessment is likely to continue in a standard philosophy. That is, a philosophy rooted in an occurrence due to the lack of another definition if the philosophy is incomplete or undefined (Gunzenhauser, 2003). There is a question of the means and mechanisms in which a culture of assessment influences student learning. There are other questions needing to be addressed when contextualizing a culture of assessment. Some of these questions are regarding the strength and weakness of a culture of assessment in an institution. The question of how an institutions culture of assessment can be supplemented and with what effect is yet unanswered. It is these questions which, are at the center of why a culture of assessment is thought to be so powerful, yet largely are unexamined. These questions are thought-provoking and call for reflection by practitioners of assessment and although there has been a call for this type of reflection, there yet have been little understanding into what other researchers and colleagues are doing and the development of a culture of assessment.

Conclusion

The purpose of this literature review was to examine the culture of assessment. Specifically, an examination of the roots of assessment culture and its foundations. The evidence of culture of assessment was examined in this literature review. The development of a culture of assessment was addressed as were subsequent attitudes and

perceptions regarding assessment. Additionally, faculty and the culture of assessment were examined, especially how cultures of assessment develop, and tools for developing a culture of assessment. In this review of the literature change theory and assessment were examined as well. Also, the definition of a culture of examination was examined as were the contextualization of a culture of assessment. This review of the literature surrounding the study done by the researcher questions indicate more research and study, especially quantitative work, is needed in all areas of developing a culture of assessment within higher education institutions and especially with a focus on the tool sets, methods, and best practices.

CHAPTER III

Methods

Introduction

This study fills an important gap for the research question regarding the length of *Time as a Faculty Member* and perceptions of assessment culture. The research design, procedures, characteristics of the participants, and data analysis plan are included here in Chapter III and the process and procedures used with the instrumentation are outlined. Results were examined via standard linear regression analysis procedures to understand and explain the relationship, if any, between a professor's length of service in higher education and their perception of cultures of assessment. Chapter III includes the following sections: (a) introduction, (b) research question, (c) null hypothesis, (d) alternative hypothesis, (e) research design, (f) selection of participants, (g) instrumentation, (h) procedures, (i) data analysis plan, (j) statistical assumptions of a linear regression and, (k) summary.

Research Question

This study addressed the following research question: How does the number of years of faculty work in higher education relate to faculty perceptions of assessment culture? In this study, the researcher established *Time as a Faculty Member* as an independent variable and examined six factors or constructs as dependent variables: (a) *Focus on Student Learning*; (b) *Fear or Distrust of Assessment*; (c) *Benefits of Assessment*; (d) *Clarity of Assessment Leadership*; (e) *Use of Assessment Data*; and (f) *Sharing of Assessment Results*. The dependent variables were chosen as these are all factors found during the review of the literature and indicated as being relevant to a

culture of assessment. Moreover, the dependent variables have also been validated as measured constructs on the *Faculty Survey of Assessment Culture* (Fuller, Skidmore, Bustamante, & Holzweiss, 2016).

Null Hypothesis

The null hypothesis suggests that there is no statistically significant relationship at the conventional 5% level (i.e., $p \geq .05$) between the selected dependent variables and *Time as a Faculty Member*, the independent variable. This null hypothesis was presumed to be true until nullified by statistical evidence from an alternative hypothesis. The null hypothesis maintains that there was no significant prediction of (a) *Focus on Student Learning*; (b) *Fear or Distrust of Assessment*; (c) *Benefits of Assessment*; (d) *Clarity of Assessment Leadership*; (e) *Use of Assessment Data*; and (f) *Sharing Assessment Results* by *Time as a Faculty Member* and perception of assessment. If the null hypothesis was supported, the results suggested no relationship between the independent and dependent variables is present.

Alternative Hypothesis

The study examined an alternative hypothesis in case the null hypothesis failed. The alternative hypothesis suggests that there is a statistically significant relationship at the conventional 5% level (i.e., $p < .05$) between the selected dependent variables and *Time as a Faculty Member*, the independent variable. This alternative hypothesis is presumed to be true until nullified by statistical evidence from an alternative hypothesis. Following examination of alternate hypotheses, results would be offered to inform the extent to which the dependent variables affected the independent variable.

Research Design

The purpose of this non-experimental study was to determine what, if any, influence *Time as a Faculty Member* has on perceptions of assessment culture. A non-

experimental approach is acceptable as there was no manipulation of the independent variable, no random assignment to an experimental or control group, and only observations and inferences as to the relationship between independent and dependent variables were made (Johnson & Christensen, 2014).

This study was also cross-sectional with annual administrations of the survey occurring each year since 2011, though not necessarily to the same faculty annually. A cross-sectional study does not track participants' perspectives across a span of time and instead focuses on a single point in time (Johnson & Christensen, 2014). The cross-section of time examined was 2011-2018, representing seven years of data. Therefore, this was an acceptable design to use when comparing *Time as a Faculty Member* with the six dependent variables and observing the relationships to faculty perception of assessment. When trying to infer causal relationships between variables, experimental research offers more capacity for this. However, it should be noted that trying to determine causal relationships in non-experimental research is difficult, if not impossible. Given the inability to manipulate educational variables or reproduce laboratory situations, educational studies often are dependent on non-experimental research designs (Johnson & Christensen, 2014). Therefore, significant effort was devoted to not implying causal relationships or implications between *Time as a Faculty Member* and the six dependent variables related to faculty perceptions of cultures of assessment.

Selection of Participants

Data selected for this quantitative study were collected using the *Faculty Survey of Assessment Culture*, conducted by Dr. Mathew B. Fuller, Principal Investigator of the *Faculty Survey of Assessment Culture*. Faculty participants in these surveys are volunteered for participation by an institutional research leader, assessment leader, or

senior leader on their campus. This administrative leader typically volunteers the institution for participation in the *Faculty Survey of Assessment Culture*. Then, all instructors teaching a credit generating course during the semester of survey administration are included in the population file for the invitation and reminder to participate in the survey. One invitation is sent electronically with three reminder emails sent to non-responding participants at two-week intervals following the invitation. Participants have eight weeks to complete the survey, which takes an estimated 18 minutes to complete. The nation-wide response rate ranges from 19% to 56%, annually. Respondents to the *Faculty Survey of Assessment Culture* represent a diverse range of faculty across multiple institutional types.

Instrumentation

In this non-experimental, cross-sectional study of archival data from *The Faculty Survey of Assessment Culture*, data were used to attempt to understand what difference if any, exist between the *Time as a Faculty Member* in higher education and their perceptions of assessment culture. Archival data are appropriate for cross-sectional studies with data being stored over time and used to explore policy implications at a moment in time (Johnson & Christensen, 2014). The archival data used in this study included lengths of service and responses to the questions on the *Faculty Survey of Assessment Culture*. The conceptual framework has guided the development of the instrument used in the study. There has been a focus on improving assessment outcomes and accountability in institutions of higher education (Ewell & Boyer, 1988) and pressure from the federal government on regional accreditors calling for the placement of assessment emphasis on student learning outcomes (Ewell, 2010; Spellings, 2006). There

are indications that assessment is moving towards an outcomes-driven accreditation philosophy. As such, the need for a more complete understanding of assessment and how it can be advantageous to higher educational institutions (Astin & Antonio, 2012).

Given this, there is no relevant scholarly literature regarding *Time as a Faculty Member* and their perspectives on assessment. Numerous searches through the available scholarly research on assessment do not yield any works which account for time, or years of service by faculty, as a factor or the influence of how long faculty have been employed in the development of a culture of assessment. Further, what published research is available focused on the possible methodologies for the development of a culture of assessment or the process of assessment itself. Therefore, because of interest in the length of time faculty have been employed and engaged in assessment, this study is helpful to the body of scholarly knowledge on assessment indicating a less or more positive perception by faculty of assessment.

The instrument in this study was designed to bring an empirical base to an otherwise non-empirically examined issue. It is made up of 48 questions. Most of the survey is in the Assessment Culture Scales and these questions are on a 6-point Likert-type scale with 6-Strongly agree, 1-Strongly disagree. These questions were derived from a major literature review which was done by a team of faculty. There are also qualitative, open ended questions. Finally, there are demographic questions and one of the main questions collected in this section is the years of service in higher education.

Procedures

Before statistical analyses were performed, approval was obtained from the Sam Houston State University Institutional Review Board (IRB). Dr. Matthew Fuller is the

Principal Investigator on the *Faculty Survey of Assessment Culture* and submitted an amendment to the original IRB application that was used for Human Subjects Consideration (Protocol Number 2013-08-11722). The amendment letter to the IRB asked that the researcher be added as an investigator to the *Faculty Survey of Assessment Culture*. Clearance from the IRB was obtained per standard protocol regarding research and publishing this dissertation. The researcher worked with Dr. Matthew Fuller to compile the database of all participants from 2011-2018. Next, the dataset was prepared for analysis.

Data Security

Data were downloaded in Microsoft Excel and the file was password protected. Further security was provided by storing data on a physical drive that was encrypted and password protected. The physical drive was stored under lock and key as an added measure of security.

Data Analysis Plan

Basic descriptive statistics were run to determine mean, median, mode, skewness, and kurtosis. This was followed by a linear regression in which the independent variable is *Time as a Faculty Member*, as measured in academic years (fall through spring semesters) with the range being < 1 year to 51 years. The dependent variables are (a) *Focus on Student Learning*; (b) *Fear or Distrust of Assessment*; (c) *Benefits of Assessment*; (d) *Clarity of Assessment Leadership*; (e) *Use of Assessment Data*; and (f) *Sharing of Assessment Results*. This was the appropriate design for this study in comparing length of service (time) with the dependent variables.

As stated previously, this study fills an important gap in the existing literature through an examination of the independent variable, *Time as a Faculty Member* and the dependent variables (a) *Focus on Student Learning*; (b) *Fear or Distrust of Assessment*; (c) *Benefits of Assessment*; (d) *Clarity of Assessment Leadership*; (e) *Use of Assessment Data*; and (f) *Sharing of Assessment Results*. Data preparation procedures were conducted in accordance with standard educational research procedures. First, only data for fully completed participants—those that fully completed the *Faculty Survey of Assessment Culture*—were included in the present analyses, removing missing data from the dataset. Next, scale items that were negatively worded were reverse coded to ensure that all scale items were properly directioned. This effort is in accordance with data preparation procedures offered by Fuller, Skidmore, Bustamante, and Holzweiss (2016) and Skidmore, Hsu, and Fuller (2018). Next, descriptive statistics for the independent and dependent variables were examined. These included mean, median, mode, range, skewness, kurtosis, standard deviations, and standard error of means for all independent and dependent variables. Skewness and kurtosis statistics were checked against generally accepted conventions (i.e., ± 3 , Onwuegbuzie & Daniel, 2002). A correlation matrix was produced for all independent variables and dependent variables and reported in Chapter IV along with standard descriptive statistics. In this study, p values were reported and interpreted for statistical significance, effect sizes (R^2) were reported and used to assist in determining whether data are useful beyond statistically. Such an approach is supported by scholars such as Hill and Thompson, 2004; Kirk, 1996; and Lipsey, Puzio, Yun, Herbert, Steinka-Fry, et al., 2012.

Next, linear regression was conducted to examine the relative influence *Time as a Faculty Member* in higher education may have had on perceptions of institutional cultures of assessment. A table detailing regression results was produced. Both unstandardized and

standardized beta slopes were reported given whichever result is interpretable following the results. The linear regression equation's *t-test*, corresponding significance level, degrees of freedom, *F* statistic, and the percentage of variance explained (both overall and in stepwise-fashion) are reported in Chapter IV. Following the analysis and interpretation of these results, implications for practice are examined in Chapter V. Analyses were conducted using SPSS version 25.

Statistical Assumptions of a Linear Regression

A stepwise linear regression was used to determine if the independent variable predicts the dependent variables. Linear regression analyses are dependent on six key assumptions. First, both independent and dependent variables must be interval/ratio data. All data selected in the present study were assumed to be interval/ratio data within the boundaries of typical educational research practice. Second, a linear relationship must exist in some capacity between the independent and dependent variables. The existence of a linear relationship between the independent and dependent variables is confirmed through scatterplots and initial hypothesis testing functions in the linear regression procedures for SPSS. Third, linear regression is dependent upon the presence of a normal distribution of data. Q-Q Plots are produced to aid in determining if a multivariate normal distribution of data are present. Fourth, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test is run to determine the presence of a normal distribution of data. If a normal distribution is found, additional parametric analyses (i.e., linear regression) can proceed; if a normal distribution of data are not observed, non-parametric analyses are considered. However, given the relative size and dispersion of data, a normal distribution of data are expected. Fifth, linear regression requires an assumption of no or little multi-collinearity between the independent variables. To examine the issue of multi-collinearity, the correlation

matrix was reviewed by examining the relationship between all independent variables. Independent variables with a Pearson correlation coefficient less than 1 are assumed to have little or no collinearity. Moreover, since faculty were assigned to one of the three mutually exclusive pathways, collinearity is anticipated to be non-existent.

The sixth assumption of linear regression is the lack of autocorrelation in the data. Autocorrelation occurs when residual effects are dependent upon each other or a prior measurement of a variable also included in the model (Field, 2013). According to Field (2013), this assumption of linear regression is not inviolable and should not prevent linear regression analyses from preceding. Still, autocorrelations will be examined through scatterplots and Durbin-Watson's d test. Although Durbin-Watson's d can assume values between 0 and 4 to exhibit little autocorrelation, values around 2 indicate no autocorrelation. As a rule of thumb values of $1.5 < d < 2.5$ show that there are sufficiently low levels of autocorrelation in the data (Field, 2013). Again, as autocorrelations are expected, analyses can proceed as warranted.

An additional assumption of linear regression relates to homoscedasticity, which is examined through scatterplots. If a scatterplot exhibits potentially homoscedastic data, the Goldfeld-Quandt Test is utilized to confirm the presence of homoscedastic data. If confirmed, a linear correction of data will be considered. Following the examination of all these assumptions and confirmation or explanation, linear regression analyses can proceed.

Summary

Through testing via standard linear regression analysis procedures an attempt to understand and explain the relationship, if any, between *Time as a Faculty Member in*

higher education and their perception of cultures of assessment was undertaken. The following research question was addressed: How does the number of years of faculty work in higher education affect relate to faculty perceptions of assessment culture?

Using *Time as a Faculty Member* as an independent variable, and examining six constructs as dependent variables: (a) *Focus on Student Learning*; (b) *Fear or Distrust of Assessment*; (c) *Benefits of Assessment*; (d) *Clarity of Assessment Leadership*; (e) *Use of Assessment Data*; and (f) *Sharing Assessment Results*; does the independent variable predict any of the dependent variables? The dependent variables were chosen due to their presence in the literature review and indicated as being relevant to a culture of assessment. Further, the dependent variables have also been validated as measured constructs on the *Faculty Survey of Assessment Culture* (Fuller, Skidmore, Bustamante, & Holzweiss, 2016).

Data were taken from the *Faculty Survey of Assessment Culture* a multi-year survey of faculty in public and private four-year institutions. The researcher examined the six assumptions of a stepwise linear regression for validity and the results to see if the results indicated a linear relationship between the variables. This survey and instrumentation were an attempt to determine if it is possible to predict the dependent variables value based upon the independent variable's values.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

In this chapter, the researcher presents the research findings to address the overarching research question related to how the number of years of faculty work in higher education influence faculty perceptions of assessment culture. *Time as a Faculty Member*, as measured in years of employment in higher education, was the independent variable. There were six dependent variables: (a) *Focus on Student Learning*; (b) *Fear or Distrust of Assessment*; (c) *Benefits of Assessment*; (d) *Clarity of Assessment Leadership*; (e) *Use of Assessment Data*; and (f) *Sharing Assessment Results*; each measured through the use of the *Faculty Survey of Assessment Culture*. These variables were entered into sequential linear regression models wherein the independent variable was used to predict each dependent variable distinctly.

Research Findings

Chapter III described data analyses, including the description of the independent and dependent variables, sequential linear regression analyses, the testing of null and alternative hypotheses, and checking of theoretical assumptions. The null hypothesis posited that *Time as a Faculty Member* was not a statistically significant predictor of the six dependent variables related to *Culture of Assessment*. The alternative hypothesis posited that there was a statistically significant relationship at the conventional 5% level ($p < .05$) between the six dependent variables and *Time as a Faculty Member*. The null hypothesis was presumed to be true until nullified by statistical evidence favoring the alternative hypothesis. Further, effect sizes (R^2) were also produced to examine the extent to which a statistically significant relationship had a practical influence on faculty

members' perspectives about *Culture of Assessment*. This data analysis plan was developed by the researcher to better examine the variables of interest.

Accordingly, the null and alternative hypotheses were tested in this study. The following six research hypotheses guided this study, assuming the p values computed by regression analysis were continuous variables that could not be subjectively dichotomized. The smaller the p value computed by regression analysis, the greater the statistical compatibility of the survey data with the model specified in the research hypothesis.

Hypotheses

H1: *Time as a Faculty Member* is a predictor of *Fear or Distrust of Assessment*;

H2: *Time as a Faculty Member* is a predictor of *Focus on Student Learning*;

H3: *Time as a Faculty Member* is a predictor of *Faculty Perceptions of Benefits of Assessment*;

H4: *Time as a Faculty Member* is a predictor of *Clarity of Assessment Leadership*;

H5: *Time as a Faculty Member* is a predictor of *Use of Assessment Data*;

H6: *Time as a Faculty Member* is a predictor of *Sharing of Assessment Results*.

Although p values were reported and interpreted, and focused more on interpreting statistical significance, effect sizes (R^2) were also produced. Effect sizes are a quantitative representation of the magnitude of one variable's influence on another and are concerned with whether data are useful and meaningful in pragmatic applications, particularly in the context of educational and psychological measurement. Such an approach is supported by scholars such as (Hill and Thompson, 2004; Kirk, 1996; and Lipsey, Puzio, Yun, Herbert, Steinka-Fry, et al., 2012). Therefore, statistical significance

was measured using p values and practical significance was measured using effect sizes, which reflected the relative strengths of the observed relationships between the independent and dependent variables. Large effect sizes may imply that observed relationships have important practical implications, including the making of decisions and the development of new policies in educational settings. However, small effect sizes may imply that results—even if found to be statistically significant—may have limited or no practical significance since the overall magnitude of the relationship between the variables is slight (Balow, 2017; Hill & Thompson, 2004; Lipsey, Puzio, Yun, Herbert, Steinka-Fry, et al., 2012; McMillan & Foley, 2011).

The results of each regression analysis were interpreted mainly by interpretation of the effect size, specifically the R^2 statistic, measuring the percentage of the variance in the dependent variable explained by the independent variable, and by confirming statistical significance using p values. The interpretation of the R^2 statistic adopted the criteria recommended by Ferguson (2009) for research in social science as follows: $R^2 < .04$ indicated that the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable was negligible; R^2 from .04 to .24 reflected a statistical relationship with the minimum level practical significance; R^2 from .25 to .63 reflected a moderate effect size; and $R^2 > .64$ reflected a strong effect size.

Findings

The findings are presented in eight sections below and follow the data analysis plan provided in Chapter III. The first section considers the assumptions of regression analysis. The second section presents the descriptive statistics. The next six sections present the statistical evidence using regression analysis to test six stated research

hypotheses. In this section, both statistical significance and effect sizes are presented and Ferguson's (2009) qualitative descriptions of effect size are provided for each modeled relationship.

Testing of Assumptions

Regression analysis assumes that the sample size is large enough to provide adequate statistical power to identify a compatible relationship between the dependent and independent variables (Tabachnik & Fidell, 2013). As a rule of thumb, the minimum sample size should be at least $N = 50$ to achieve adequate statistical power if there is one dependent variable and one independent variable in a model (Van-Voorhis & Morgan, 2007). The sample size of participants who provided a complete set of data for both the independent variable and the six dependent variables in this study was at least $N = 3,270$ for any given variable. Therefore, the sample size was more than adequate to achieve a high level of power for the purpose of regression analysis.

Normality Testing

Regression analysis requires the dependent and independent variables to both be normally distributed. Therefore, tests for the normality of the dependent and independent variables (e.g., Q-Q plots, Kolmogorov-Smirnov, and Shapiro-Wilk statistics provided by SPSS) were produced. Q-Q Plots were visually inspected and suggested the relationship of a normal distribution for all variables. Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests were run for all variables and indicated a normal distribution was plausible for all variables: (a) Fear or Distrust of Assessment: $D(3,270) = 0.079$, $p \leq 0.001$, (b) Focus on Student Learning: $D(3,270) = 0.082$, $p \leq 0.001$, (c) Faculty Perceptions of Benefits of Assessment: $D(3,270) = 0.118$, $p \leq 0.001$, (d) Clarity of Assessment Leadership: $D(3,270) = 0.075$, p

≤ 0.001 , (e) Use of Data: $D(3,270) = 0.094$, $p \leq 0.001$, (f) Sharing of Assessment Results: $D(3,270) = 0.49$, $p \leq 0.001$, and g) Time as a Faculty Member: $D(3,270) = 0.10$, $p \leq 0.001$. Shapiro-Wilk tests are also often used to confirm normal distributions. However, it should be noted that Shapiro-Wilk's statistics are particularly susceptible to errors when used to examine large datasets of greater than two thousand data points (Royston, 1995). For this reason, Shapiro-Wilk tests were not produced. Moreover, scholars advocate the use of the Durbin-Watson statistic to examine autocorrelation in regression modeling (L'Esperance & Taylor, 1975). Autocorrelation may occur in a regression model if the measurements collected at one time are correlated with or dependent on the measurements collected at a previous or latter time. Because the dependent variables in this study were collected at one time in a cross-sectional survey, tests for autocorrelation were not produced. Thus, visual inspection of Q-Q plots, histograms, and Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests all suggest that normally distributed data were present, autocorrelation is unlikely, and the planned analyses could proceed.

Descriptive Statistics

The skewness and kurtosis statistics provided by SPSS were all within normal (± 3 , Onwuegbuzie & Daniel, 2002). The participants reported a wide range of professional experience, ranging from 0 to 51 years employed in higher education ($M = 15.00$; $SD = 9.90$). Table 3 presents the descriptive statistics for the six dependent variables in decreasing order of magnitude of the mean scores.

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics for the Dependent Variables

Variable	Min	Max	M	SD
<i>Faculty Perceptions of Benefits of Assessment</i>	1	6	4.05	0.94
<i>Focus on Student Learning</i>	1	6	3.99	1.16
<i>Clarity of Assessment Leadership</i>	1	6	3.77	1.16
<i>Use of Assessment Data</i>	1	6	3.74	1.15
<i>Sharing of Assessment Results</i>	1	6	3.44	1.12
<i>Fear or Distrust of Assessment</i>	1	6	3.28	1.13

The participants endorsed the full width of the 6-point measurement scales (from 1 = strongly disagree to 6 = strongly agree) for each dependent variable. The highest mean scores were for *Faculty Perceptions of Benefits of Assessment* ($M = 4.05$) and *Focus on Student Learning* ($M = 3.99$). The scores close to 4.0 implied that the participants tended to agree with these two assessment issues. The lowest mean scores were for *Sharing of Assessment Results* ($M = 3.44$) and *Fear or Distrust of Assessment* ($M = 3.28$). The scores closer to 3.0 implied that the participants tended to agree less with these two assessment issues. The standard deviations ($SD = 0.94$ to 1.16) were similar in magnitude, reflecting the homogeneity or equality of variance of the dependent variables.

Testing of Hypotheses

The six stated research hypotheses were tested using simple linear regression analysis as follows:

Fear or Distrust of Assessment

Table 4 presents the simple linear regression model to predict *Fear or Distrust of Assessment*. The table of statistics includes the unstandardized regression coefficient (b);

the standard error of the unstandardized regression coefficient (SE); the standardized regression coefficient (β); the two tailed t -test statistic (where $t = b/SE$); and the p value of the t -test statistic. In terms of statistical significance (i.e., the low p value = .002) the results were compatible with the model specified in H1, because *Time as a Faculty Member* appeared to be a predictor of *Fear or Distrust of Assessment*.

The unstandardized regression coefficients are interpreted because they were measured in the same units as the 6-point measurement scales. The standardized regression coefficients (scaled from - 1, through 0, to +1) were equivalent to Pearson's correlation coefficients, measured in standard deviation units. The model in Table 4 predicted that when *Time as a Faculty Member* was zero years, the theoretical mean score, indicated by the constant, was 3.124. The positive unstandardized regression coefficient indicated that for every year that the faculty member was employed in education, the mean score for *Fear or Distrust of Assessment* increased by .006. In terms of effect size ($R^2 = .003$) *Time as a Faculty Member* had a negligible effect on *Fear or Distrust of Assessment*. Moreover, the proportion of the variance in *Fear or Distrust of Assessment* explained by *Time as a Faculty Member* (0.3%) was also very small. Thus, the practical significance of the model wherein time is a predictor of faculty perceptions was limited, because the proportion of the variance in the dependent variable explained by the independent variable (0.5%) was negligible.

Table 4

Fear or Distrust of Assessment

Predictors	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	R^2
Constant	3.124	.034		92.37	<.001	.003
Time	.006	.002	.053	3.08	.002	

Focus on Student Learning

Table 5 presents the simple linear regression model to predict *Focus on Student Learning*. In terms of statistical significance (the low *p* value <.001) the results were compatible with the model specified in H2, because *Time as a Faculty Member* appeared to be a predictor of *Focus on Student Learning*. The model predicted that when the *Time as a Faculty Member* was zero years, the theoretical mean score, indicated by the constant, was 4.122. The negative unstandardized regression coefficient indicated that for every year that the faculty member was employed in education, the mean score for *Focus on Student Learning* decreased by -.009. In terms of effect size ($R^2 = .007$) the practical significance of this model was limited. The proportion of the variance in *Focus on Student Learning* explained by *Time as a Faculty Member* (0.7%) was not statistically significant. Also, the practical significance of the model wherein time is a predictor of faculty perceptions was limited, because the proportion of the variance in the dependent variable explained by the independent variable (0.5%) was negligible.

Table 5

Focus on Student Learning

Predictors	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>R</i> ²
Constant	4.122	.036		114.45	<.001	.007
Time	-.009	.002	-.081	-4.72	<.001	

Faculty Perceptions of Benefits of Assessment

Table 6 presents the simple linear regression model to use *Time as a Faculty Member* to predict *Faculty Perceptions of Benefits of Assessment*. In terms of statistical significance (i.e., the low *p* value < .001) the results were compatible with the model specified in H3, because *Time as a Faculty Member* appeared to be a predictor of *Faculty Perceptions of Benefits of Assessment*.

Table 6

Faculty Perceptions of Benefits of Assessment

Predictors	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>R</i> ²
Constant	4.166	.028		149.32	<.001	.005
Time	-.006	.002	-.068	-3.94	<.001	

The model in Table 6 predicted that when the *Time as a Faculty Member* was zero years, the theoretical mean score, indicated by the constant, was 4.166. The negative unstandardized regression coefficient indicated that for every year that the faculty member was employed in education, the mean score for *Faculty Perceptions of Benefits of Assessment* decreased by -.006. In terms of practical significance, the practical significance of the model wherein time is a predictor of faculty perceptions was limited, because the proportion of the variance in the dependent variable explained by the independent variable (0.5%) was negligible. Moreover, the effect size of *Time as a Faculty Member* predicting *Faculty Perceptions of Benefits of Assessment* was negligible

($R^2 = .005$). Therefore, although the overall effect was statistically significant and *Faculty Perceptions of Benefits of Assessment* did decrease as *Time as a Faculty Member* increased, the practical significance of this model may be limited given the small effect of the relationship between these variables.

Clarity of Assessment Leadership

Table 7 presents the simple linear regression model to predict *Clarity of Assessment Leadership*. In terms of statistical significance (i.e., the high p value = .432 for *Time as a Faculty Member*) the results were not compatible with the model specified in H4, because *Time as a Faculty member* did not appear to be a predictor of *Clarity of Assessment Leadership*.

Table 7

Clarity of Assessment Leadership

Predictors	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>R</i> ²
Constant	3.820	.036			<.001	.000
Time	-.002	.002	-.014	-0.79	.432	

The model in Table 7 predicted that when *Time as a Faculty Member* was zero years, the mean score, indicated by the constant, was 3.820. The negative unstandardized regression coefficient very close to zero ($b = -.002$) indicated that for every year that the faculty member was employed in education, the mean score for *Clarity of Assessment Leadership* did not change. In terms of effect size ($R^2 = .000$), this model had no practical significance because the proportion of the variance in the dependent variable explained by the independent variable was approximately zero.

Use of Assessment Data

Table 8 presents the simple linear regression model to predict *Use of Assessment Data*. In terms of statistical significance (the low p value = .002), the results were compatible with the model specified in H5, because *Time as a Faculty Member* appeared to be a predictor of *Use of Assessment Data*. The model in Table 8 predicted that when *Time as a Faculty Member* was zero years, the theoretical mean score, indicated by the constant, was 3.870. The negative unstandardized regression coefficient indicated that for every year that the faculty member was employed in education, the mean score for *Use of Assessment Data* decreased by -.006. In terms of effect size ($R^2 = .003$), the model had limited practical significance because the proportion of the variance in the dependent variable explained by the independent variable (0.3%) was negligible. Also, the practical significance of the model wherein time is a predictor of faculty perceptions was limited,

because the proportion of the variance in the dependent variable explained by the independent variable (0.5%) was negligible.

Table 8

Use of Assessment Data

Predictors	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	<i>t</i>	<i>P</i>	R^2
Constant	3.870	.036		107.10	<.001	.003
Time	-.006	.002	-.053	-3.05	.002	

Sharing of Assessment Results

Table 9 presents the simple linear regression model to predict *Sharing of Assessment Results*. In terms of statistical significance (i.e., the high *p* value = .351) the results were not compatible with the model specified in H6, because *Time as a Faculty Member* appeared not to be a predictor. The model in Table 9 predicted that when the *Time as a Faculty Member* was zero years, the theoretical mean score was 3.511, indicated by the constant. The unstandardized regression coefficient very close to zero (*b* = -.003) indicated that for every year that the faculty member was employed in education, the mean score for *Sharing of Assessment Results* changed only by the slightest of terms. Regarding effect size ($R^2 = .001$), this model wherein time in the profession predicted *Sharing of Assessment Results* had limited practical significance because the proportion of the variance in the dependent variable explained by the independent variable (0.1%) was negligible. Also, the practical significance of the model wherein time is a predictor of faculty perceptions was limited, because the proportion of the variance in the dependent variable explained by the independent variable (0.5%) was negligible.

Table 9

Sharing of Assessment Results

Predictors	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>R</i> ²
Constant	3.511	.036		98.88	<.001	.001
Time	-.003	.002	-.026	-1.50	.135	

Conclusion

The researcher examined the relationship between *Time as a Faculty Member* and six variables related to faculty perceptions on cultures of assessment. Following analyses, the findings included indications that *Time as a Faculty Member* does influence several of the dependent variables tested in sequential linear regression models, but only to a slight degree. Tests for normality and assumptions of linear regression were conducted prior to proceeding with the planned analyses. Further, descriptive statistics were used to validate data for normality. The null and alternative hypotheses were developed, presented, and tested to examine the nature of the relationships between these variables.

The results of these analyses indicate that *Time as a Faculty Member* are predictive of *Fear or Distrust of Assessment*, but only with a slight magnitude. Of the dependent variables tested, this one had the strongest support for statistical significance and effect size. Each of these findings indicates that as faculty members' service lengthens, the *Fear or Distrust of Assessment* grows. Further, *Time as a Faculty Member* are predictive of *Focus on Student Learning*, with modest statistical significance and effect size being recorded. As a faculty members move from early-career to latter-career, there is a slight increase in their *Focus on Student Learning*. These two dependent variables had the strongest statistical significance and effect sizes. The dependent

variable *Benefits of Assessment* was also affected by *Time as a Faculty Member* in that time was a predictor of the *Benefits of Assessment*. Although the results of this portion of the linear regression showed a small effect size, *Time as a Faculty Member* did influence the perceived *Benefits of Assessment* with a slightly negative influence. Concerning the variable *Use of Assessment Data*, the independent variable *Time as a Faculty Member*, was a predictor of this dependent variable. However, the effect size was small or negligible. There were, however, enough strength in the effect size and significance results to suggest that *Time as a Faculty Member* influenced perceptions of the *Use and Sharing of Assessment Data* in a positive manner.

Unlike the preceding dependent variables, *Clarity of Assessment Leadership*, was not affected by the independent variable *Time as a Faculty Member*. The result of testing was not statistically significant and, therefore, did not have a significant effect size. Based on these analyses, as faculty accrue more time at their institution, it makes less difference if assessment is led by administrators or other faculty members. Similarly, *Sharing of Assessment Results* is not predicted by the independent variable, *Time as a Faculty Member*. The results of testing were not statistically significant and had small effect sizes, indicating this variable was not affected by *Time as a Faculty Member*.

With the six dependent variables tested against the independent variable *Time as a Faculty Member*, the results indicate that the independent variable does predict four of the six dependent variables: (a). *Fear or Distrust of Assessment*, (b) *Focus on Student Learning*, (c) *Benefits of Assessment*, and (d) *Use and Sharing of Assessment Data*. Further, this independent variable has no effect on two dependent variables: (a) *Clarity of Assessment Leadership* and (b) *Sharing of Assessment Results*. The last test result

indicates the independent variable did not predict two of the dependent variables.

Therefore, one can conclude that although at times the statistical significance is small and the effect size may not be large, the independent variable, *Time as a Faculty Member*, could be said to predict faculty perceptions of assessment to a limited extent.

Considering these findings, implications for practice and future research are offered in Chapter V.

CHAPTER V

FINDINGS, DISCUSSION, and SUGGESTIONS for FUTURE RESEARCH

As demonstrated in Chapter IV, the results of all statistical analyses indicated a small effect size on four of the six dependent variables and no effect size on two dependent variables. Because the results are not overwhelming statistically and there is certainly room for future research, the results do speak to the research question and are suggestive for improvements in assessment's practice and future research. The results are indicative that the amount of *Time as a Faculty Member* influenced faculty perceptions of assessment. It is clear from the preceding statistical analyses that elements from the study effect faculty and the development of a culture of assessment. This result was shown by both the p values and the R^2 sizes of the dependent variables when compared to the independent variable, *Time as a Faculty Member*. The next sections detail possible improvements in practice and future research opportunities regarding cultures of assessment.

Brief Review of Findings

The range of *Time as a Faculty Member* was from 0 to 51 with a mean of 15 years of service. This descriptive statistic indicates those responding to the survey have, on average, been in academia for some time. In evaluating the mean scores of the dependent variables, both *Faculty Perceptions of the Benefits of Assessment* and *Focusing on Student Learning* are both relatively high ($M = 4.05$ and $M = 3.99$, respectively) compared to the other dependent variables. Further, the mean scores for *Sharing of Assessment Results* and *Fear or Distrust of Assessment* are lower ($M = 3.44$ and $M = 3.28$, respectively) than other dependent variables. These mean scores for dependent

variables are indicative of what is possibly required for a culture of assessment to develop at an institution of higher learning. Organizing the dependent variables in order of highest and lowest levels of response could help assessment leaders who have measured these dependent variables on their campus in prioritizing desired changes in these specific areas. Moreover, researchers looking to gain a greater understanding of cultures of assessment in higher education could use this study to focus on the dependent variables of greatest or least concern.

The study results indicated that *Faculty Perceptions of the Benefits of Assessment* and *Focus on Student Learning* are predicted by *Time as a Faculty Member*, these dependent variables are also elements of a culture of assessment as previously discussed in Chapter II. Additionally, *Fear or Distrust of Assessment*, and *Sharing of Assessment Results*, and are predicted by *Time as a Faculty Member* and are somewhat lower scores and as such divert from efforts to establish a culture of assessment as discussed in Chapter II. Further, *Use of Assessment Data* and *Clarity of Assessment Leadership* have, respectively, little and no bearing as shown by the test results. As such, *Time as a Faculty Member*, does not effectively predict *Use of Assessment Data* and *Clarity of Assessment Leadership* as a dependent variable.

Therefore, when looking to establish a culture of assessment and more specifically, to determine if faculty perceptions of assessment are influenced by *Time as a Faculty Member* in higher education, several things have been made clear as a result of this study. First, *Time as a Faculty Member* are a predictor of four of the six dependent variables: (a) *Fear or Distrust of Assessment*; (b) *Focus on Student Learning*; (c) *Benefits of Assessment*; and (d) *Use of Assessment Data*. The dependent variable *Clarity of*

Assessment Leadership is not forecasted or impacted by the independent variable.

Further, analysis of the last dependent variable, *Sharing of Assessment Results* may have an effect; however it is small if present at all and as such, was not greatly influenced by the independent variable *Time as a Faculty Member*.

These findings suggest the need for future empirical research in cultures of assessment. It is perhaps one of the greatest ironies that a branch of academe focused on the development of evidence-based decision-making processes has very little evidence to guide its own development. Considerations for supporting faculty at various points in their career could emerge from this and future empirical studies of cultures of assessment in higher education. Additionally, general ideas for improving or sustaining cultures of assessment within academe could be developed as well. Accordingly, implications for practice and future research are discussed in the following sections.

Discussion

As evidenced in Chapters I and II there is a significant disagreement among scholars concerning the details of assessment culture. Many scholars agree on the need to develop, establish, and maintain a culture of assessment, yet there is no framework or guide on how to accomplish this. Instead many scholars have detailed the practices in developing a culture of assessment on various campuses. Findings from the present study illustrate the need for a synthesized body of literature on cultures of assessment beyond institutional case studies. By drawing upon a long-running, coordinated, nationwide study of faculty perceptions of cultures of assessment this study begins to address one of the major flaws with current scholarship on assessment cultures; the lack of a profession-wide focus. By examining cultures of assessment across United States and even

international contexts, scholars are better situated in describing how cultures of assessment take root and are sustained in higher education systems rather than single institutions. Case study methods will still play a role in future research. However, the use of *Survey of Assessment Culture* data to examine topics of concern enhanced the scholarship on cultures of assessment considerably.

Very few scholarly publications have relied on an empirical base to examine the development of a culture of assessment. Prior research on a culture of assessment has largely been qualitative examinations of what has and has not worked on a campus, with little attention paid to the influence of these implemented changes on an institution's culture. Although qualitative work has its place, there is a great need for additional quantitative research of empirical data to be conducted in this area.

Assessment practitioners have been criticized for the lack of quantitative work in the field. These criticisms also come from within the field as evidenced by David Eubanks and his discussion on the lack of scientific rigor in assessment practices (Eubanks, 2019). Further, research that is qualitative in nature tends to be exploratory research. For example, qualitative research methods have been employed to examine causal reasons for relationships, to develop hypotheses for quantitative research, and generate data for statistical analyses (Baas, Rhodes, & Thomas, 2016). Further, quantitative research can generalize results from a larger population. This type of research can also lead to the evidence of patterns. For the last 20 years most of the research conducted in the field of assessment has largely been of a qualitative effort which is based on impressions, opinions, and views as compared to quantitative research which is structured and statistical.

This critique of the literature on cultures of assessment is not a critique of qualitative methods. Indeed, well-authored qualitative studies have contributed to the scholarship on cultures of assessment. Moreover, scholarship that is poorly executed does not advance scholarship or practice regardless of the methodological form. A significant portion of the scholarship on cultures of assessment appears to be lacking rigor, a concern echoed by Eubanks (2019). Baas, Rhodes, and Thomas (2016) have also called for empirical examinations of cultures of assessment. Fuller, Skidmore, Bustamante, and Holzweiss (2016) expressed similar concerns. However, the primary limitation of current assessment scholarship is only partially described as lacking rigor. The lack of rigor in assessment scholarship is compounded by the fact that, as a functional area of higher education, assessment asks faculty to use rigorously-collected and analyzed data to improve decision making. To lack this methodological rigor in its own practice and examinations leaves many faculty with a feeling that the assessment field is hypocritical (Skidmore, Hsu, & Fuller, 2018). Assessment scholars are working to examine the field of assessment and assessment practice with the same commitment to methodological rigor they expect of faculty (Eubanks, 2019).

The *Review of the Literature* in Chapter II examined several areas regarding a culture of assessment. These areas ranged from the roots and foundations of the culture of assessment, evidence of a culture of assessment, an examination of organizational culture within higher education, and the development of a culture of assessment. Attitudes and perceptions regarding a culture of assessment, faculty, and their views and perceptions on this matter, tools for the development of assessment culture, and assessment by accreditation agencies were also reviewed. Each of these areas was

examined in such a way that helped to understand and define a culture of assessment.

Additionally, subsequent attitudes and perceptions regarding a culture of assessment were examined from the viewpoint of faculty. Faculty input on the development of a culture of assessment was studied along with the tools for developing a culture of assessment.

Again, the need for additional work in all areas of development of a culture of assessment with a focus on the tool sets, methods, and best practices is apparent.

As a result of this study and its findings, there are several recommendations that could be made regarding higher education assessment. First and foremost, it is made clear by this study that over time faculty become more pessimistic about assessment. Clearly, assessment leaders face a significant challenge in how assessment is presented and delivered to faculty, especially latter-career faculty as they are more inclined to be pessimistic regarding assessment. As such, there is an implication that assessment leaders may benefit from this study. Seeing that early-career faculty are more open to assessment, the manner, and methods in which assessment training is conducted indicates there needs to be careful consideration of the audience for whom assessment training is developed and delivered. For example, the development and deployment of rubrics within a program might be a much more detailed training session for early-career faculty as opposed to that for latter-career faculty. Certainly, assessment leaders should ensure that they know their audience in developing training sessions that are catered to faculty members' needs and abilities. Doing so shows faculty a willingness on the part of assessment leaders to adjust assessment practices such that they are not rigid or inflexible in their applications. Arguably, this sort of flexibility enhances assessment's appeal to

faculty who are looking for it to be a process that suits their needs rather than administrative concerns (Fuller, 2019).

Currently, assessment training is largely done for all faculty regardless of their needs or area of focus. As the results of this study illustrated, training for early-career and latter-career faculty needs to be differentiated due to their perceptions of assessment. Early-career faculty may benefit from training in the basics of assessment and its benefits. Such a program of learning could be as simple as the development of materials, training on the language of assessment, and frequently used methods in assessment processes. Many newer faculty struggle with the development of student learning outcomes statements and assessment methods that lead to actionable evidence (Driscoll, de Noriega, & Ramaley, 2006; Maki, 2010). Training sessions on creating, refining, and measuring student learning and program effectiveness outcomes at various levels (student and course levels, for example,) could be augmented to support the unique needs of faculty at various levels of their career. Many early-career faculty are not trained or skilled at project management or assessment methods and therefore would benefit from training catered to their unique needs. Furthermore, the use of rubrics for assessment purposes are likely to be a new concept to early-career faculty and provide assessment leaders another opportunity for specialized training. Because these items represent a small part of assessment, they are indicative of what can be done with early-career faculty to foster and promote favorable perceptions towards assessment.

With longer serving faculty, their perception of assessment is more negative and pessimistic than that of early-career faculty. Therefore, training for longer serving faculty should be differentiated compared to sessions serving early-career faculty. Those

faculty who have served for some time are familiar with the basic concepts and methods of assessment and need no training in these. What might be appropriate for these latter-career faculty would be training on more advanced assessment methods, e.g. longitudinal studies, program evaluation rather than student or course evaluation, general education assessment, and the development of compelling narratives for accreditors. Each of these areas requires faculty already familiar with assessment and longer serving within their respective institutions to be effective.

Consideration must be given to what constitutes an early- and latter-career faculty. In the current study, the mean number of *Time as a Faculty Member* was 15 years. Interesting trends are noted in Chapter IV regarding the relative influence of number of years of service as a faculty member on faculty perceptions of cultures of assessment. In many instances, when the average number of years of service are modeled on the theoretical mean for *Time as a Faculty Member*, the mean score for a dependent variable is either slightly higher (*Fear or Distrust of Assessment* and *Focus on Student Learning*) or slightly lower (*Benefits of Assessment* and *Use and Sharing of Assessment Data*) than the respective overall means. The establishment of a national mean for *Time as a Faculty Member* within the present study is perhaps a theoretical or research-based argument. Instead, institutions and assessment should develop strategic measures of their own to aid in deciphering a timeline for when an early-career faculty member transitions to a latter-career faculty member. Such determinations should be informed by institutional data and promotion, tenure, and human resources policies.

Moreover, assessment leaders might consider the development of behaviors indicative of a faculty members' transition to latter-career stages. A clear understanding

and articulation of behaviors exhibited by latter-career faculty could aid assessment leaders in identifying faculty who are ready and willing to support the advancement of assessment practices in faculty groups. Articulating these behaviors might also help assessment leaders in identifying the needs of faculty as they transition through career progressions and would assist in contextualizing involvement in assessment as a natural facet of academics' career paths.

Recommendations for Fear or Distrust of Assessment

Results of each dependent variable are examined in the following sections to provide suggestions for possible improvements in assessment practice. The dependent variable *Fear or Distrust of Assessment* is effected by *Time as a Faculty Member* with the longer a faculty member served influencing *Fear or Distrust of Assessment's* increase. The literature and many assessment leaders' experiences are rife with examples of faculty being penalized for perceived failures with assessment. Assessment leaders would do well, based on the results of this study, to insure all faculty—especially latter-career faculty—understand assessment was not designed or deployed to create problems or additional work. Rather, at its best, assessment is designed to improve student learning. This core belief can galvanize faculty, staff, and administrators together and assessment is a means of faculty banding together in support of enhanced student learning.

Further, latter-career faculty may have reasons to be fearful or distrustful of assessment. One of the most frequent complaints regarding assessment from this cohort is the loss of academic freedom. Indeed, participants in the *Faculty Survey of Assessment Culture* indicated concerns over the use of assessment as a means of controlling faculty autonomy and academic freedom. This perception is something assessment leaders can

easily address using jointly developed or faculty developed assessment tools and processes. Moreover, if assessment is designed and implemented by faculty, there can be no infringement on academic freedom.

When assessment leaders are working with early-career faculty, the opportunity to prevent *Fear or Distrust of Assessment* is presented. When measured results with this group of faculty are less than desired or stated, it is incumbent on assessment leaders to show that the failure to achieve the desired results is not likely the fault of faculty. Rather, the failure to achieve these results is more likely due to poor instrumentation, small sample sizes, methodological challenges, process concerns, or other problems. To develop an assessment environment where *Fear or Distrust of Assessment* is not present, it is imperative that assessment leaders make failure an acceptable option and a source of information for learning. By viewing a missed goal as an opportunity to learn and improve processes, a culture of assessment may possibly be developed.

Recommendations for Focus on Student Learning

An argument can be made that academic freedom allows student learning to occur. In the context of the present study, the dependent variable *Focus on Student Learning* should be interpreted for its influence on the collegiate experience. *Focus on Student Learning* was influenced by *Time as a Faculty Member*. Therefore, how assessment leaders approach both early-career and latter-career faculty is important. Early-career faculty were shown in this study to be less pessimistic about assessment. Therefore, assessment leaders would have an easier time in placing the focus of assessment on student learning. Early-career faculty are demonstrably more willing to receive guidance regarding assessment and comply with assessment leader's requests.

However, with latter-career faculty, the level of pessimism is higher and therefore assessment leaders might need to take a different approach when the subject is *Focus on Student Learning*. Assessment leaders should approach this topic and group after considerable reflection. Assessment leaders should remember the goal of higher education assessment is to show evidence of student learning. The latter-career faculty have a wealth of experience and assessment leaders can make use of this experience. These faculty can offer insights on methods, challenges, and opportunities in assessment practices. Working together with this faculty group, assessment leaders could possibly make gains in the *Focus on Student Learning* as it relates to assessment within higher education.

Recommendations for Benefits of Assessment

Early-career faculty are less pessimistic about the *Benefits of Assessment* and as such are more inclined to listen to assessment leaders when they describe the benefits. Largely the *Benefits of Assessment* are improvement generally in what is being assessed, and greater results in the area of student learning. Should assessment leaders choose to focus on this area with early-career faculty it is possible gains can be made here due to the lack of pessimism early-career faculty demonstrate. When dealing with latter-career faculty, demonstrating the *Benefits of Assessment* may not be as easy.

Latter-career faculty have been shown to be pessimistic regarding assessment and as such are less open to the *Benefits of Assessment*. Assessment can be divided into five distinct areas: (a) individual student learning within a course; (b) individual student learning across courses; (c) assessing courses; (d) assessing programs; and (e) assessing institutions. Assessment leaders should remember that latter-career faculty are likely

familiar with at least three of these four areas and therefore a consultative approach will possibly yield rewards in developing or sustaining institutional cultures of assessment.

The use of a consultative approach by assessment leaders is marked by the solicitation of inputs, opinions, and knowledge of those constituting the team, group, or committee.

Further, the consultative leadership or management style is marked by a focus on the end-result and places emphasis on the tasks associated with the project.

Unlike early-career faculty, latter-career faculty have experience with assessment as it has been done at their own and possibly other institutions. This experience can be useful to assessment leaders when trying to increase the *Benefits of Assessment*, especially when using a consultative leadership approach. The *Benefits of Assessment* are often dependent upon one's role in higher education. In discussing this topic with faculty, it is incumbent on the assessment leader to highlight and stay focused on the ultimate goal of assessment; student learning. With the focus and emphasis on student learning, improvement can be made in the way students learn, program effectiveness, and ultimately within the university. Assessment leaders have an opportunity with assessment training to guide faculty into self-reflection regarding goals at the level of class, course, and program. Further, faculty can review how these goals meet the needs of students and allow for evaluation of the student's work product to determine if the original learning outcomes have been met. Additionally, this study determined that faculty do see the *Benefits of Assessment*, as such, assessment has been shown as required for improvement in learning. Done well, assessment training allows for and provides information on the knowledge and skills students need to acquire in the completion of

courses and programs. It is through this lens that assessment leaders must view faculty training on assessment and the *Benefits of Assessment*.

Recommendations for Use of Assessment Data

Concerning *Use of Assessment Data*, the advantage assessment leaders have in working with early-career faculty is that these faculty are largely from a data driven generation. These faculty are often used to readily available information and data and are therefore more inclined to have it inform their work than some latter-career faculty. The *Use of Assessment Data* to inform progress, be it at the student, course, or program level is often easier for early-career faculty for this reason. Also, when data are used for improvement rather than other means, faculty often naturally support data-informed decisions. When early-career faculty are trained on the background and basics of assessment as well as good assessment methodologies and practices, (i.e., those that produce reliable and usable data), these faculty are much more inclined to use data-driven assessment. Those faculty who are familiar with empirical research as a part of their discipline have less difficulty seeing the use of this type of data for assessment purposes. Additionally, empirical data and its use by nature require a certain rigor not found in other means of data collection and some types of assessment. This empirical, data-driven type of assessment is likely to be appealing to early-career faculty. For latter-career faculty, encouragement regarding the *Use of Assessment Data* may also be accomplished with the use of empirical data for assessment and the associated rigor that comes from using this type of data. Further, latter-career faculty having likely experienced assessment at the class and course level are better suited through their experience to conduct assessment at higher levels such as programs. Using data for assessment that is

seen by latter-career faculty as good or substantial rather than something that was created to fill an administrator's checklist supports the *Use of Assessment Data* and may work to help foster a culture of assessment.

Latter-career faculty may be pessimistic in general about assessment and *Use of Assessment Data*. Largely, this pessimism could be due to having spent time as faculty member at an institution and observed the results of assessment programs. Assessment leaders have not always been successful with assessment programs over the last 20 years and the *Use of Assessment Data* has been both helpful and harmful. If using assessment data are cause for punitive measures, then faculty, especially latter-career faculty will not participate in assessment. However, latter-career faculty can and will use assessment data for improving assessment, refining the way assessment is conducted, and to meet the needs of accountability (Fuller, 2015). Another option for the engagement of latter-career faculty is in the process known as "closing the loop". This practice is where the assessment data is brought together, analysis is done, and conclusions are made. Latter-career faculty have the experience, training, and understanding for this part of assessment that is not often found in early-career faculty. These items are also elemental in the development and improvement of a culture of assessment. Therefore, *Use of Assessment Data* has been shown through several surveys to be the major factor in establishing a *Culture of Assessment*.

Recommendations for Clarity of Assessment Leadership

The one dependent variable in which *Time as a Faculty Member* had no effect on the dependent variable was *Clarity of Assessment Leadership*. For both latter- and early-career faculty, *Time as a Faculty Member* had no influence on *Clarity of Assessment*

Leadership. A variety of reasons for the lack of a statistically significant or large effect size relationship are possible. First, participants, regardless of length of service in academe, may have clear expectations regarding assessment leadership. *Clarity of Assessment Leadership* could be of little concern to participants in this study, though this would be unlikely given the nation-wide focus of the study. Rather, the model of assessment leadership is changing to a shared leadership role in which those individuals with skills and experience are called upon to participate. Further, shared leadership gives multiple perspectives on assessment rather than from a single body (Kezar & Holcombe, 2017). In a shared leadership environment, the focus is on the skills and experience of the participants and less on their role within the institution. As such, leadership matters less than in a shared governance system where faculty control some elements and administration controls other elements within the university.

Recommendations for Sharing of Assessment Results

The last dependent variable, *Sharing of Assessment Results*, is marginally impacted by *Time as a Faculty Member*. Assessment leaders have an opportunity to impact this variable with faculty through greater transparency. Some faculty perceive assessment as being done to complete checkboxes for accreditation or other administrative reasons. When the results of assessment work are shared within group, department, college, and institutional levels, assessment is often seen as more transparent. Further, this provides assessment leaders with actionable assessment results which can then be shared with relevant faculty. This sharing process often leads to better improvements because a wider cross section of faculty become involved in results interpretation and recommendation formation. Though not drastically influenced by

Time as a Faculty Member, such *Sharing of Assessment Results* does indeed influence favorable faculty perceptions of a culture of assessment (Skidmore, Hsu, & Fuller, 2018).

As to early-career faculty, although still somewhat pessimistic, the earlier in their careers they are able to see transparency related to *Sharing of Assessment Results* the more likely this group of faculty are to participate in assessment. Assessment leaders should remain cognizant of the idea that many faculty view assessment with a certain degree of suspicion. Working to reorient assessment to the noble focus of improving student learning is important and can be accomplished by openly and widely sharing assessment data as possible. This data sharing is all the more true for early-career faculty who may view such openness as an important hallmark in their relationship with assessment leaders. Additionally, the opportunity to establish the precedent for the *Sharing of Assessment Results* is important as this group of faculty will age and over time take their perceptions of assessment with them as they spend more time in academia. Further, the opportunity to establish trust and confidence between this group of faculty and assessment leaders is worth the effort that *Sharing of Assessment Results* takes.

General Recommendations for Assessment Leaders

Clearly from the results in Chapter IV that faculty view assessment differently based on *Time as a Faculty Member* with latter-career faculty being more pessimistic than early-career faculty. How each cohort of faculty views assessment is likely to be different and specific to institution- and discipline-level norms. Assessment leaders must learn these cultural mores in order to better contextualize assessment for faculty from across disciplines. They should also learn the unique needs and styles of early- and late-career faculty on their campus to best serve their needs through a flexible assessment

system. The tendency to think about and respond to faculty as a monolith is a real concern for many assessment leaders. Instead, results from the present study suggest it may be more beneficial if assessment leaders consider the unique needs of early- and late-career faculty. Similarly, similar findings could be found if faculty from different regions, disciplines, ranks, or institutional types were examined. With this need for future research still apparent, assessment leaders in the interim could devote time in their daily routines to getting to know faculty and their needs when it comes to assessment. This would constitute the foundation of assessment practiced through a servant leadership frame.

There is a tendency for early-career serving faculty to be more open to assessment as shown in Chapter IV. Further, latter-career faculty exhibited more pessimistic views towards assessment. Due to these different levels of openness and pessimism, it is incumbent on assessment leaders to carefully consider a variety of training and professional development types for faculty. Given the slight influence of *Time as a Faculty Member* on dependent variables, clearly a one size fits all training and professional development model is insufficient. Assessment training models are influenced by many factors. The type and size of the institution determines much about the level and quality of assessment and associated training. Also, the mean length of service of the faculty has a significant impact on how assessment is perceived within an institution, with latter-career faculty having slightly less support and enthusiasm for assessment than early-career faculty. Therefore, the training and professional development provided by assessment professionals to latter-career faculty should be different. Because of the differences in the training and professional development are

potentially huge, the simple view would be that assessment of programs and other higher-level assessment be done by latter-career faculty with more assessment experience. Additionally, these latter-career faculty would likely be used to train early-career faculty on the more basic elements of assessment.

Elements of Effective Assessment Training

Professional wisdom and experience can inform the characteristic of effective assessment training. Assessment leaders should determine what forms of training are necessary for faculty and staff on their campuses. All training begins with a mission. Without a clear, straightforward mission, it is not possible to deliver effective training. A mission is simply a statement of what the group or organization does, how it is done, and why it is done. This mission statement drives all the organization and its sub-parts do, especially training and professional development efforts. The mission statement is followed by a vision statement. This statement indicates where the group or organization is going and what the desired end state is to be. Given these two key pieces of information, a structure to support the mission and vision can be determined. Another important element of effective assessment training is the establishment of an assessment committee. The committee needs to be large enough to represent the community and small enough to be effective. One of the key goals of the assessment committee is to be a body of representatives that exchanges ideas on assessment and strategies for improving institutional effectiveness. This committee also provides leadership in the building of a culture of assessment and offering ideas for important training efforts that should occur. The last duty of the assessment committee is to conduct evaluations of assessment

activities, including trainings. These characteristics are the foundations of effective assessment training and the minimum required for the same.

Early-career faculty have specific needs regarding assessment trainings. Most early-career faculty have not had formal assessment training. The most basic elements of assessment training would comprise project planning. Next, the vocabulary of assessment are also required training elements. Additionally, early-career faculty likely need exposure to or training in the development and use of assessment tools. These tools can range from direct and indirect survey methods, surveys, rubrics, effectiveness and learning outcomes, success criteria, and other effective measurement tools and techniques.

Latter-career faculty likely possess experience with assessment and as such do not need the level of detail in assessment training early-career faculty require. Latter-career faculty are more suited to being trained in assessment of programs, pursuing the development of a culture of assessment at the institution, and with areas of assessment that may be more critical, especially to regional accreditors. Further, latter-career faculty are best positioned to conduct periodic assessment reviews in which the questions of what is working, what does not work, what can be done differently, and how can what was developed and discussed be carried forward. Finally, latter-career faculty could serve as peer presenters for a variety of assessment trainings with other faculty as the audience. Such efforts would showcase effective assessment processes implemented on campus and aid in the growth of a culture of assessment.

Current Challenges in Assessment

There is much within higher education regarding assessment and the development of a culture of assessment that might be done differently. The body of this discussion is devoted to the current problems with assessment and the development of a culture of assessment and what changes can be made within higher education. What follows is an examination of the details of the biggest challenges facing assessment and the development of a culture of assessment in higher education institutions as seen by the researcher in conducting this study. These recommendations to address the current challenges in assessment are based upon the researchers experience and the results of this study. As always, there is room for change in how assessment is presented, training conducted, and delivered within higher education.

Understanding

The Merriam Webster dictionary defines assessment as: “the evaluation or estimation of the nature, quality, or ability of someone or something”. From the standpoint of institutions of higher education, assessment today means a process or way to improve. Further, assessment when practiced well, is ongoing and drives continuous improvement. There are times that higher education in general does not demonstrate an understanding of assessment or its practice, especially regarding the aspect of continuous improvement.

This study’s findings underscore that as faculty accrue more time in academe, their understanding and perceptions of assessment may change slightly across their career. Assessment leaders should remain cognizant of this shift and develop assessment systems that are flexible and allow multiple forms of involvement and leadership in

assessment. However, findings in this study indicate that there is slight, if at all, measurable change across time. Clearly there is an opportunity for assessment leaders to shift the approach of assessment to working with early-career faculty to develop deeper and richer understanding regarding assessment.

Speed

Next, institutions of higher education often change more slowly than other sectors of society. It is this slowness that complicates assessment and the development and deployment of a culture of assessment. Within academia, as opposed to the private sector, there is no prize for first place. Also, it is within higher education that the attitude of examination and experimentation exists. Therefore, it is often seen that by the time a plan of action is developed, the implementation is often tabled as there has been a reorganization, a change in management, or some other shift that precludes implementation. Stated differently, assessment often takes considerable time and resources to conduct. Under current conceptions of assessment—ones that situate change as the conclusion of a cycle—little energy is left to implement changes, even if sound evidence is collected. Therefore, assessment leaders should consider the precision and deftness of assessment processes as they are advising faculty on the development of assessment. To implement an assessment system that will take years to complete and require countless hours of work and resources only fuels the pessimism noted by many faculty.

Execution

Additionally, within higher education, assessment is poorly executed in general. One need to look only as far as the regional accreditation agencies websites for a list of

institutions with findings or more severe problems. Additionally, there is work that reflects poor assessment techniques such as too small a sample of work to represent general abilities (Brown, 1994). It has also been noted that direct observation and portfolio assessment can be not only time consuming but also poorly executed (Kohler, 2017). There is a trend showing interest in having accountability improved beyond the accreditation practices currently in use. There is a push for quantitative measures of performance, such as graduation and default rates being used to assess institutional performance. One problem with this trend is how these new measures would fit with existing accreditation efforts (Klasik & Hutt, 2018). Assessment is currently largely qualitative work and one of the main reasons for poor performance is that assessment practitioners are not professionals within a recognized discipline, and there is no recognized terminal degree for an assessment professional.

All of this leads to assessment being done poorly, often piecemeal, and with no comprehensive, overarching plan. If there is a good plan in place it is quite possible those assessment professionals tasked with the plan's implementation are not skilled with project planning, delivery methods, or management skills necessary in leading groups or organizations. Thus, assessment leaders could benefit considerably from an understanding of effective leadership and management theories. Fuller (2019) detailed the importance of effective leadership in assessment practice and described several theories assessment leaders can use to improve their leadership of higher education assessment. At minimum, a familiarity with a series of leadership theories is critical to leading in a clear and effective manner. Unfortunately, Fuller, Henderson, and

Bustamante (2015) detailed the dearth of leadership theories that guide how assessment leaders engage in their challenging work.

Further, many assessment managers are generally not masters of process and other functions related to change management. Kezar (2013) is a specialist in the field of organizational theory and has done research which supports the claim that faculty and assessment leaders are not highly skilled with change management practices.

Additionally, the work of Kezar has demonstrated how colleges and universities change and what it takes to manage this change (2013).

Even when known methods and practices are adopted from the private sector, the skills and expertise required for implementation are often lacking within higher education staff. Leadership is a skill learned across time, often taking years to perfect. Deftness with leadership takes mentorship, risks, challenges, trial and error, and reflection.

Although the results of the study indicate there is little influence on faculty perceptions across their time in higher education, effective assessment leadership could influence the degree to which faculty perceptions of assessment are influenced. Therefore, a concerted effort to view assessment leadership as a learned skill throughout a career could be beneficial to assessment leaders and the practice of assessment. Establishing networks and methods for coaching assessment leaders in the development of their craft of leadership or leadership philosophies might also prove beneficial.

Proven Methods

Similarly, there is a strong reluctance within higher education to adopt methods—even proven methods—from private practice (Ewell, 2002). By using known, proven leadership or management methods from outside of academia, these methods would sully

the academies' reputation for independent thought. Vocabulary found and frequently used in the private sector is seldom used in higher education. When, for example, was the last time terms such as Return on Investment (ROI) or Cost Benefit Analysis (CBA) were used outside a business course on a campus? There are any number of faculty within an institution's business school or other disciplines that can perform said analyses, and it is taught every semester to students in a variety of disciplines. Yet, such terms could not be used on a university campus regarding assessment as academics are not in the private sector and the measurements and standards from the private sector do not apply to institutions of higher education. Many faculty revile at the use of such terms and bemoan the import of market- or business-driven functions in academe. Yet, to speak of assessment as if it has no connection to market- or business-driven discourses is to deny an aspect of assessment that must be addressed. Doing so neglects contexts of modern assessment processes and leaves faculty with suspicions of assessment. Instead, assessment leaders should be transparent with the intended uses of assessment, even if the intended uses conflict with standard academic discourses.

Because this study has demonstrated that *Fear or Distrust of Assessment* and *Use of Assessment Data* are predicted by the *Time as a Faculty Member*, this is similar to the use of methods proven to be successful in the private sector and the reluctance of faculty to use these methods. Latter-career faculty are less likely to employ or want to use methods from outside the academy as they are pessimistic to assessment in general and become more pessimistic over time. Further, many faculty are hesitant to try new methods of assessment (*Fear or Distrust of Assessment*) as the results may not be well understood by participants and assessment leaders, giving way to unpredictable results

concerning assessment. Therefore, assessment leaders should work to make the unpredictable qualities of assessment predictable. Such efforts may indeed be their most important contributions to the assessment process.

Process Improvement

Process improvement is one of the key elements behind assessment. Process improvement can be described as the use of data to understand processes and then make changes in the process for improvements (Deming, 1993). The redesign of processes can lead to improvements, especially in throughputs, reduction of costs, and customer satisfaction. However, there exists a body of scholarly literature that indicates when academics attempts process improvement, the result leaves much to be desired and often ends in failure. This failure is often the result of a lack of experience in process improvement projects, lack of familiarization with current management literature, and due to the ambiguity regarding the needed data and information to successfully analyze a process (Mazz & Kumar, 2012). Further, there have been numerous advances in the field of process improvement in the last ten years (Koehler, 2016). Some of these advances are complicated for the private sector, and more so for academe. Even those involved in process improvement may struggle with its effective use and implementation (Vanwersch, Shazad, Vanderfeesten, Grefen, Pentelon, Mendling, van Merode, & Reijers, 2016). Assessment leaders must remain abreast of management and process improvement literature to effectively lead organizations.

This is not to say that all attempts within higher education at process improvement are doomed to failure. There have been some notable exceptions: Georgia State University, California State University at Sacramento, and Indian River State College

(FL) all are noted for using data driven methodologies to inform and drive continuous improvement. North Carolina State University is another institution known for assessment and using a processes and resources approach. James Madison University is also well known for being a leader in higher education assessment. Given that there are approximately 5,300 colleges and universities that make up the United States higher education system, it is shocking to see the lack of a culture of assessment, which many scholars insist is needed (Anderson, 2013; Duff, 2010; Farkas, 2013; Lane et al., 2014).

In examining these institutions that are exemplars of successful process improvement, the following characteristics were noted as common across all institutions. Although each institution has developed different methodologies for process improvement and implementation, there are similarities. First, all of the aforementioned exemplar institutions have developed a common language for assessment. Common languages for assessment are widely advocated in assessment literature (Bresciani, Zelna, & Anderson, 2004; Maki, 2010; Suskie, 2014). These tools serve as a framework wherein all faculty can relate to the language of assessment and develop meaning for a variety of terms that are relatable across disciplinary lines. Whether in the form of a handbook, assessment dictionary, website, list of definitions, or thesaurus; all exemplar institutions shared a common language.

Next, these institutions have some form of a “how to” manual or guide for assessment. These guides articulate the ways in which assessment is conducted at these institutions and serve as useful tools for supporting faculty involvement in and leadership of assessment. These guides are often developed, approved, or reviewed by faculty and are shared widely across departments and colleges.

Further, exemplar institutions develop and share an established calendar for assessment campus wide. Such calendars have multifaceted effects on the development of a culture of assessment. Pragmatically, they make the management of assessment practices easier and predictable. They also require a team effort to develop a true campus-wide calendar of upcoming assessments. Often, engaging in campus-wide discussions to develop an institutional approach to assessment sustains involvement in a culture of assessment.

Exemplar institutions also carry the expectation that assessment will be done and done well throughout the organization, indicating a culture of assessment. Often these expectations are discussed by campus-level assessment committees. They may also emerge through faculty discussions about quality education. Working to facilitate peer-to-peer expectations about the quality of education and assessment may be a high impact practice many assessment leaders should consider.

After reviewing what each of the above institutions of higher education had in common regarding assessment, it was clear that some of the processes addressed elements of this study. All the institutions placed a significant effort in achieving a *Focus on Student Learning* and the *Use of Assessment Data*. Many also have designed practices to share assessment data widely and engage faculty in leadership of assessment. Further, there was a clear understanding of the *Benefits of Assessment* to drive process improvement at each of these institutions. Assessment leaders can learn from these and many other exemplary assessment programs. Resources shared regularly from the National Institute of Learning Outcomes Assessment often provide useful information for assessment leaders.

Leadership

Another problem area within assessment and a significant obstacle to the development of a culture of assessment is a lack of leadership at the top of the institution (Farkas, 2013; Kotter, 2012). As institutional leaders, the president, provost, and vice presidents must set institution wide performance metrics and then hold direct reports accountable. When data from these performance metrics are used to inform or make decisions, a level of institutional transparency has been established as a result of this leadership. For assessment and the culture of assessment to thrive, this type of culture must be developed at the executive leadership level along with improved performance at all levels.

There is also a need for connecting institutional operations to student success. It is important to make the distinction between a culture of evidence and one of improvement. With a culture of evidence, evidence is of value and typically acted on when possible. A culture of evidence usually starts with claims that are made. These claims are followed by collecting evidence to examine these claims. Finally, some form of assessment tools or activities are used to validate the original claims made. Therefore, the institution may have evidence of value yet not act or implement changes due to cost or other factors.

With a culture of improvement, it is the use of metrics to continually improve performance through lowering costs, increasing efficiency, improving effectiveness, and thereby increasing value to students. A culture of improvement entails a constant view and review of processes to determine if improvements can be made. Often, these improvements are made using metrics. These metrics can be tied to funding or simply to

being more effective and efficient. A culture of improvement requires action once problems are identified and then checks the outcomes or results to determine if further improvement can be made. With a culture of improvement not seeking solutions to problems is unacceptable.

As seen in Chapter IV, the *Use of Assessment Data* and *Sharing of Assessment Results* are both affected by the *Time as a Faculty Member*. As time in a faculty role increases, there is a slight effect on each of these two dependent variables. When comparing the results to a culture of evidence and a culture of improvement, it is easy to see that a culture of evidence can show the need for change without leading to change. However, a culture of improvement seeks out change as its primary goal. Each of these cultures is determined and brought to campus by executive leadership working in partnership with faculty and administrators. By helping faculty realize the difference between a culture of evidence and the value of a culture of improvement, executive leaders are developing expectations about how assessment should be conducted. These expectations have long-lasting and pervasive effects on institutional cultures and operations.

Effective Assessment and the Development of a Culture of Assessment

Effective assessment supports student success and programs through the development, implementation, and examination of learning outcomes, methodologies, and effective use of data that have been clearly communicated throughout the institution. To see the real possibilities and benefits of assessment, a culture of assessment, and what continuous improvement can provide within an institution it is imperative that assessment becomes a part of everyone's daily work at the institution. When the question of how is

assessment making something better, or how is this going to improve a process, then continuous improvement and a culture of assessment have taken root. When the questions of how is it known if an outcome is successful, has a process improved, or is an improvement worth the time, effort, and expense are asked regarding everything, then a culture of assessment can be said to have been achieved. Assessment skills should be developed within faculty departments and administrative units alike. Skills in research methodologies, gathering data, analysis, interpretation of results, and reporting the same should be developed. To leave these tasks to a single person is risking overwhelming employees and may cause inefficiencies or burnout. If assessment is being done in a culture of improvement, there is an understanding that there will be change. When assessment is done well, the result is an informed decision. For assessment to have value, it should align with the goals of the institution, and when data collection aligns with the goals of the institution, value is then being added by the assessment process.

This was shown in this study when the dependent variables *Use of Assessment Data* and *Sharing of Assessment Results*, are compared with the independent variable, *Time as a Faculty Member*. *Time as a Faculty Member* was shown to have a small effect on *Use of Assessment Data* and *Sharing of Assessment Results*. As such, these are elements of effective assessment and the development of a culture of assessment.

Suggestions for Future Research

Although this research study entailed a series of simple linear regression analyses with one independent variable and six dependent variables, there is a need for additional research. There are many combinations and permutations that could be examined in further research. Indeed, this examination of a faculty member's time in the profession

may inform the inclusion of the element of time in future models examining faculty perceptions of a culture of assessment. Although *Time as a Faculty Member* was not a major influencer on the dependent variables, additive or moderating effects could be noted if *Time as a Faculty Member* is included in future models and with other variables. Thus, future researchers may find it useful to include *Time as a Faculty Member* in models as they examine cultures of assessment.

Further research could be done with *Time as a Faculty Member* broken down by rank, discipline, institutional type, or with an accounting for work with assessment committees. All variables are readily available in the *Faculty Survey of Assessment Culture* data. For example, future researchers could examine faculty perceptions of assessment by discipline. A variety of findings could result in meaningful changes to assessment practice. Further, there are other assessment populations that could be examined such as administrators and student affairs staff. Time could be applied as a variable to these populations for comparative results. Additionally, there is a large amount of qualitative data that could be examined for attitudinal differences in faculty across time or other factors. There is also room for longitudinal studies to be conducted regarding assessment and the various populations within this field. Another possible study would be the examination of these results in comparison to the *Administrators Survey of Assessment Culture*.

Beyond studies focused on faculty, data are also available through the *Administrators Survey of Assessment Culture* and the *Student Affairs Survey of Assessment Culture*. Variables related to time in respondents' respective fields are available in these studies as well. Researchers studying the relative effects of time

employed in various functional areas of higher education on perceptions of assessment could employ the current study as a baseline for comparison. All the *Surveys of Assessment Culture* offer tremendous opportunities for future researchers to examine topics of concern in this area.

Because this study was a linear regression with one independent variable, there are other models of statistical testing that could yield further results. For example, a MANOVA could be used in future studies to examine interaction or moderating effects and collinearity. A MANOVA would also allow for analysis of data and hypothesis testing that involves one or more independent variables on more than one dependent variable. Researchers seeking guidance on research methods might keep this suggested analysis in mind.

As suggestions for future research have so far focused on additional quantitative research, there has been some qualitative data collected in all the *Surveys of Assessment Culture*. As such, this offers the possibility that perceptions of faculty toward assessment may change based on time or another perspective and only additional research can make this clear. Holzweiss, Bustamante, and Fuller (2016) have initiated studies examining how qualitative data inform administrators' perceptions on institutional cultures of assessment and Fuller (2016) has detailed a variety of metaphors faculty use to describe assessment. Questions from the *Survey of Assessment Culture* were used in these studies and could inform future qualitative examinations.

Further, the possibility of a longitudinal rather than a cross-sectional survey to expand research in this area is a possibility. Using a longitudinal survey may allow for detection of changes in the faculty surveyed that might not be as evident with continued

cross-sectional surveys. Several institutions have used the *Survey of Assessment Culture* in this manner and the possibility of a longitudinal database for institutions has been realized on many campuses. Similarly, many institutions have used the *Faculty, Administrators, and Student Affairs Surveys of Assessment Culture* to draw useful comparisons across these groups. In doing so, researchers should be cautioned that such comparisons should be done with the intention of resolving unique differences rather than further dividing these groups along boundaries of professional norms and jargon. Still, nation-wide comparisons of these groups are possible.

With all research, the researcher must make certain decisions in structuring the study. For this study, the researcher chose not to account for elements of gender, race or ethnicity, primarily as this study was designed to be foundational for latter studies of this sort. Moreover, this study does not examine perceptions of administrators who also teach, or of administrators and student affairs staff. Future researchers may find value in such studies and are encouraged to examine results with these variables in mind. A wide array of possibilities exist when using the *Surveys of Assessment Culture* to inform assessment practice.

Studies of uniqueness and similarities across institutional type, size, and region are also of importance for future research on assessment culture. The present study did highlight uniqueness between early- and latter-career faculty, though such differences were at best only slightly a function of *Time as a Faculty Member*. Therefore, it could be argued that the present study dispelled a persistent myth that latter-career faculty are very different from early-career faculty regarding their perceptions of assessment. Similarly, future studies could dispel many persistent myths about institutions of differing size,

scope, mission, or region. For example, Nunley, Bers, and Manning (2011) have argued there are indeed differences between community college and university-level assessment programs. Analyses using the *Surveys of Assessment Culture* could confirm or refine these suppositions. Further, there are questions of how assessment is perceived at public and private institutions, professional institutions, religious institutions, and institutions beyond the U.S. These questions and the development of additional research questions would allow for further research. Clearly, there is room for and a need of additional quantitative research in this area using available data.

Conclusion

The findings from the study demonstrated a small yet significant effect on four out of six dependent variables. These findings are suggestive of a small effect and not a wholesale influence of *Time as a Faculty Member* on perceptions of assessment culture. Therefore these findings are generally suggestive of a slight amount of pessimism of faculty as they accrue *Time as a Faculty Member*. Based on this analysis of data, administrators should not make wholesale assumptions of faculty on either end of the career length spectrum. No assumptions—indeed, no quantitative analysis—could outweigh the importance of forming relationships with faculty and staff involved in assessment. This is perhaps the most important implication for assessment leaders from the present study. Knowing institutional constituents and their needs are critical to assessment's ability to live up to its fullest potential.

Assessment leaders discussing assessment with faculty should personalize communication and training efforts to support the unique needs of early-career and with latter-career faculty. There is a clear indication that faculty perceive a benefit to

assessment and that assessment is focused on student learning. The use of data regarding assessment is important to faculty, however it appears as if this information is not broadly shared. Additionally, the sharing of assessment results and the fear or distrust of assessment have the least importance in this study results. Although this study is not comprehensive regarding faculty perceptions of assessment, it fulfilled the objectives stated previously. There is always room for additional study and improvement of institutional cultures of assessment. This improvement must be informed by future research and implemented using the professional wisdom and sound judgement of assessment leaders who serve academe's faculty and staff.

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APPENDIX

Institutional Review Board
Office of Research and
Sponsored Programs
1831 University Ave, Suite 303,

Huntsville, TX 77341-2448

Phone: 936.294.4875

Fax: 936.294.3622

irb@shsu.edu

<http://www.shsu.edu/dept/office-of-research-and-sponsored-programs/compliance/irb/>



DATE: January 22, 2019

TO: Matt Fuller

FROM: Sam Houston State University (SHSU) IRB

PROTOCOL TITLE: *Survey of Assessment Culture*

PROTOCOL #: 2013-08-11722*

SUBMISSION TYPE: RENEWAL 2019-2020

ACTION: APPROVED

APPROVAL DATE: January 19, 2019

EXPIRATION DATE: January 19, 2020

REVIEW TYPE: EXPEDITED

REVIEW 7

* This submission will be transferred to Cayuse IRB as a Legacy submission; if

The Sam Houston State University (SHSU) IRB has APPROVED your submission. This approval is based on an appropriate risk/benefit ratio and a project design wherein the risks have been minimized. All research must be conducted in accordance with this approved submission.

Please remember that informed consent is a process beginning with a description of the project and insurance of participant understanding followed by a signed consent form. Informed consent must continue throughout the project via a dialogue between the researcher and research participant. Federal regulations require each participant receive a copy of the consent document.

Please note that this committee must approve any revision to previously approved materials prior to initiation. **Please submit a Modification Submission through Cayuse IRB for this procedure.**

All UNANTICIPATED PROBLEMS involving risks to subjects or others and SERIOUS and UNEXPECTED adverse events must be reported promptly to this office. Please submit an Incident Submission through Cayuse for this procedure. All Department of Health and Human Services and sponsor reporting requirements should also be followed.

This letter has been electronically signed in accordance with all applicable regulations, and a copy is retained within Sam Houston State University IRB's records

Institutional Review Board
Office of Research and Sponsored
Programs
1831 University Ave, Suite 303,

Huntsville, TX 77341-2448

Phone: 936.294.4875

Fax: 936.294.3622

irb@shsu.edu

<http://www.shsu.edu/dept/office-of-research-and-sponsored-programs/compliance/irb/>



Based on the risks, this project requires continuing review by this committee on an annual basis. **Please submit a Renewal Submission through Cayuse IRB for this procedure. Your documentation for continuing review must be received with sufficient time for review and continued approval before the expiration date of January 19, 2020. When you have completed the project, a Final Report must be submitted through Cayuse IRB in order to close the project file.**

Please note that all research records should be retained for a minimum of three years after the completion of the project.

If you have any questions, please contact the Sharla Miles at 936-294-4875 or irb@shsu.edu. Please include your protocol number in all correspondence with this committee.

Sincerely,

VITA**(Robert) Blake Tritico****EDUCATION**

Doctor of Education in Higher Educational Leadership Sam Houston State University,
December 2019

Master of Arts in History with a minor in Political Science, Sam Houston State
University, August 2013

Bachelor of multidisciplinary Studies, *summa cum laude*, University of Texas at El Paso,
December 2011

ACADEMIC EMPLOYMENT

Assistant Director, Institutional Assessment, University of Houston Downtown, October
2018 - present

Lecturer, Departments of History and Political Science, Sam Houston State University,
August 2013 – August 2018

Graduate Teaching Assistant, Department of History, Sam Houston State University,
January 2011 – August 2013.

PUBLICATIONS

Sechelski, A. N., Alsakran, R. I., Tritico, R. B., Boyd, C. D., Flores, B. R., Ingram, K. R.,
(2017, March). Experiences of select higher education doctoral students who
persisted to graduation. Paper presented at the annual conference of the Southwest

Educational Research Association (SERA) in San Antonio, TX. Recipient of the Dean's Award.

Tritico, R. B., John Dewey, pragmatism, and its lasting effects on education and curriculum theory. Presented at the Louisiana State University Curriculum Camp, February 2018.

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIP

Association for the Assessment of Learning in Higher Education

American Educational Research Association

American Historical Association

Southern Historical Association