Understanding the Context: Organizations as Critical Points of Intervention for Improving Homeless Service Outcomes

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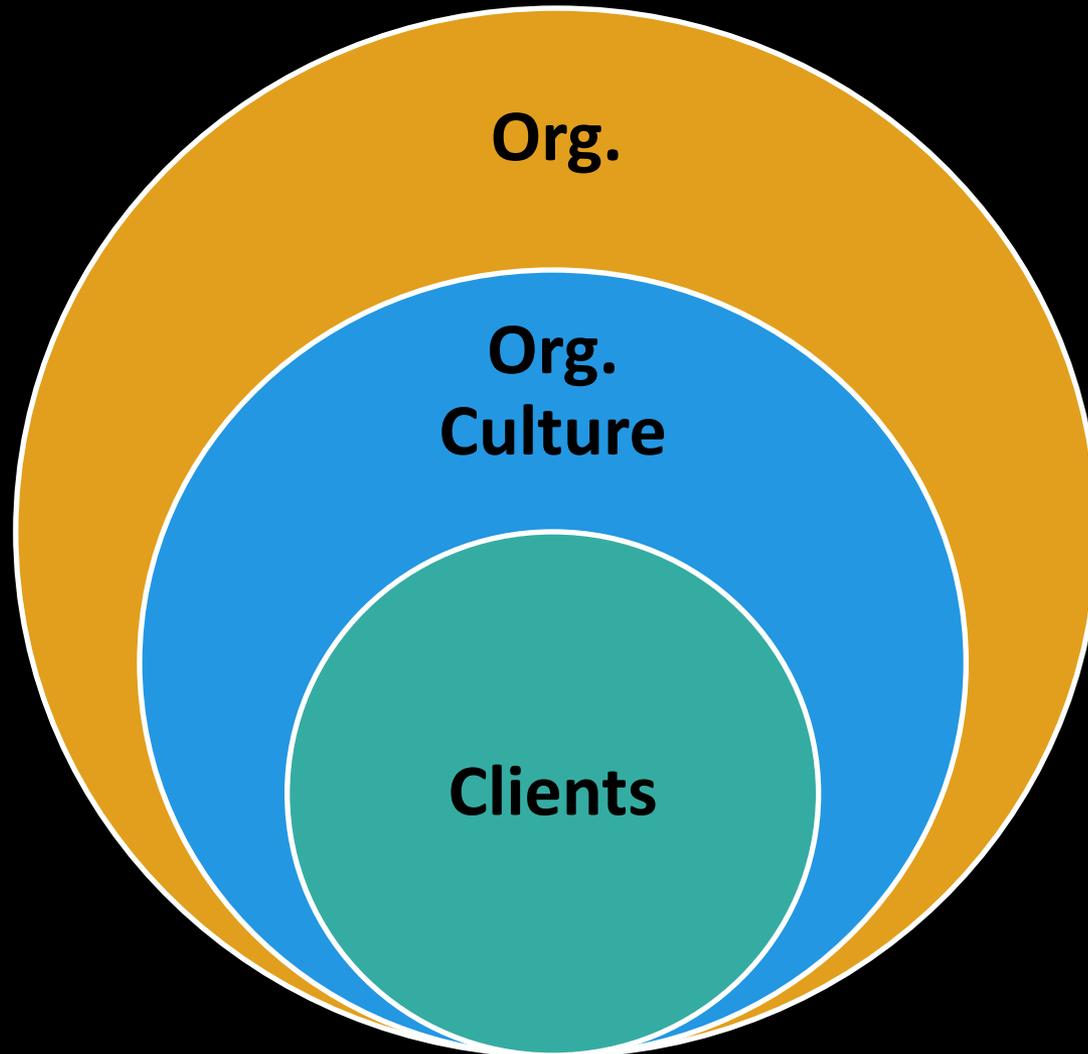
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Broad Concept

- Organizations are social processes.
- Client outcomes are partly a result of these social processes.
- Interventions designed to enhance these social processes improve client outcomes.
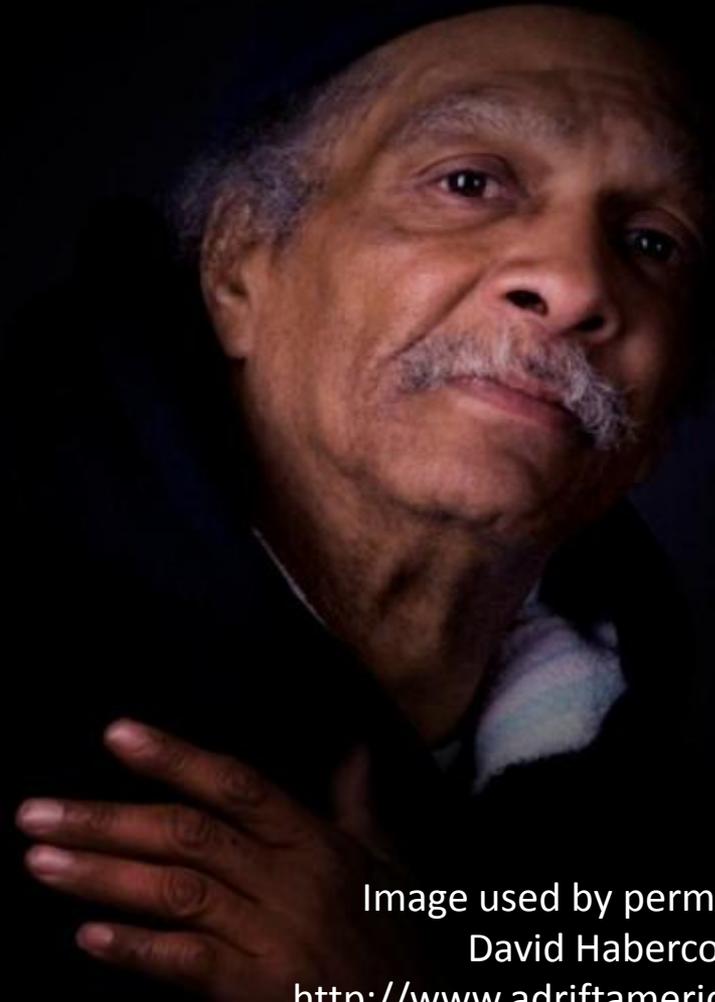
Critical Contextualization

Org.

Org. Culture

Clients

HOMELESSNESS

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http://www.adriftamerica.com/Home.html

Homelessness in Knoxville

- Since 2009
  - 9% increase in the number of children experiencing homelessness
  - 31% increase in the monthly average of new individuals experiencing homelessness in Knoxville
- From Jan. to Sept. 2010, 3251 individuals sought services for the first time in Knoxville.

First-time Homeless in Knoxville

- 14% were chronically homeless
- 31% were children
- 49% were either a single female head of household or a child in a family headed by a single woman
- 8% were U.S. military veterans

Homeless Services and Technology

- 1999 – HUD introduced HMIS nationwide
- 2001 – HUD began funding HMIS implementation
- 2004 – Knoxville Continuum of Care (CoC) implemented KnoxHMIS
- 2009 – 8 agencies actively participated in KnoxHMIS
- 2010 – 411 communities contributed HMIS data to the 2010 Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress (23% increase from 2009)

University of Tennessee at Knoxville

University of Tennessee at Knoxville

August 23, 2011

Mode: 🖼 Shadow
📅 Back Date
⚡ ART: Connected

📋 ClientPoint > Client Profile ⭐ ❓

▶ Last Viewed   Favorites

Home

ClientPoint

ResourcePoint

ShelterPoint

ActivityPoint

SkanPoint

GatherPath

▶ Reports

▶ Admin

Logout

Client - McTest, Quizz (25131)

🥤 McTest, Quizz (25131)

Release of Information: Ends 08/15/2013

-Switch to Another Household Member- ▲▼   Submit

Client Information   Service Transactions

| Summary | **Client Profile** | Households | ROI | Entry / Exit | Case Managers | Case Plans | SSOM | Activities | Assessments |

✏️ Client Record

Name	Quizz McTest
Alias	
Social Security	
SSN Data Quality	Don't Know or Don't Have SSN (HUD)
Age	6

Change   Clear

1 ▲▼ Issue ID Card

✏️ Client Demographics

Date of Birth	01/01/2005
Date of Birth Type	Approximate or Partial DOB Reported (HUD)
Gender	Male
Primary Race	American Indian or Alaska Native (HUD)
Secondary Race	Don't Know (HUD)
Ethnicity	Non-Hispanic/Non-Latino (HUD)

Last Viewed | Favorites

Home

ClientPoint

ResourcePoint

ShelterPoint

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SkanPoint

GatherPath

▶ Reports

▶ Admin

Logout

View Shelter Inventory

| Provider* | University of Tennessee at Knoxville (1) | Search | My Provider | Clear | | Check Unit Availability |
| Unit List* | Demonstration Shelter | | | | | Submit |

Shelter Inventory Information

Unit List - Demonstration Shelter

Display: All Beds   Sort By: Floor   Ascending   Sort

	Floor	Room	Bed	Hold	Client	Date of Birth	Gender	Group ID	Conf.	Codes/Notes
🔴	Blue: Level One	A	001		(25146) Test, Today				No	
🔴	Blue: Level One	A	002		(21788) Test, Testy		Female		No	
🔴	Blue: Level One	A	003		(24092) McTest, Testy	01/01/1950	Female		No	
🔴	Blue: Level One	A	004		(25131) McTest, Quizz	01/01/2005	Male		No	
🟢	Blue: Level One	A	005	Hold	EMPTY					
🟢	Blue: Level One	A	006	Hold	EMPTY					
🟢	Blue: Level One	A	007	Hold	EMPTY					
🟢	Blue: Level One	A	008	Hold	EMPTY					
🟢	Blue: Level One	A	009	Hold	EMPTY					
🟢	Blue: Level One	A	010	Hold	EMPTY					
🟢	Blue: Level One	A	011	Hold	EMPTY					
🟢	Blue: Level One	A	012	Hold	EMPTY					
🟢	Blue: Level One	A	013	Hold	EMPTY					
🟢	Blue: Level One	A	014	Hold	EMPTY					

Example of Data Collected in HMIS

Self-Reported Primary Reason for Homelessness by Gender
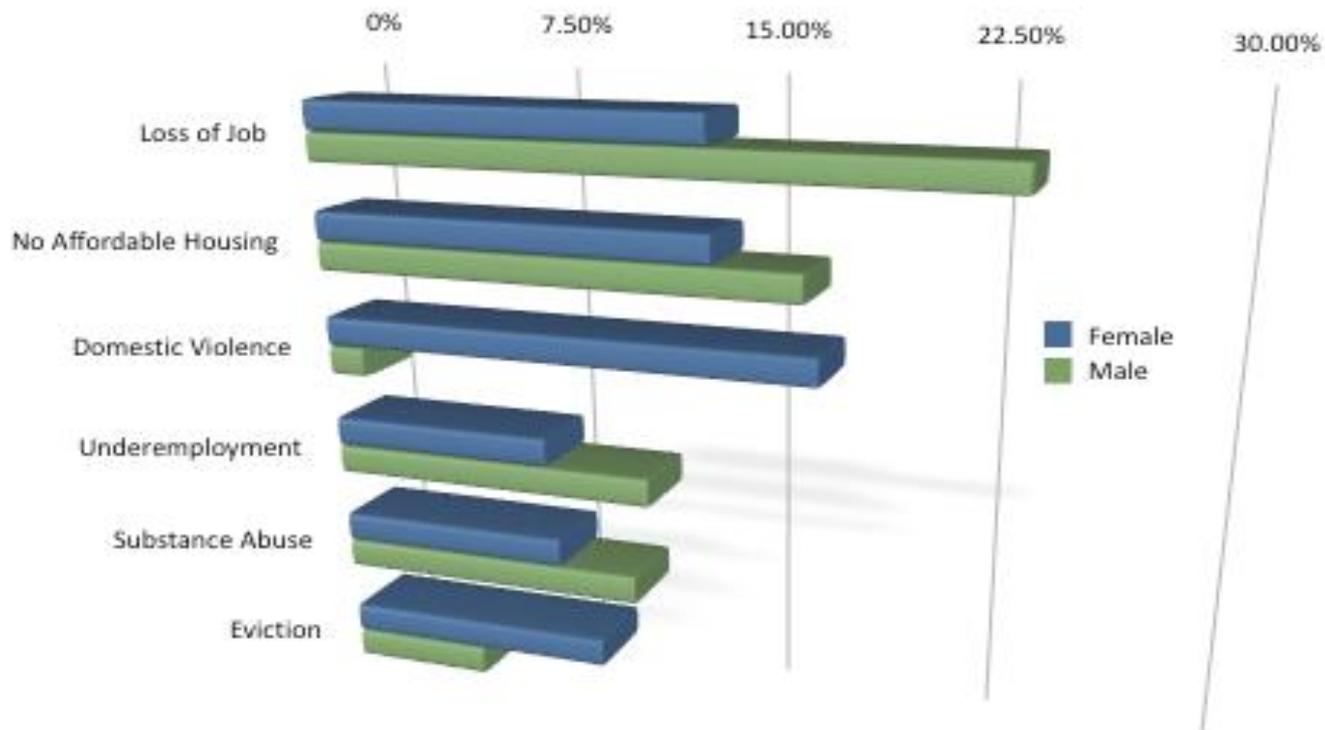
Researching Homelessness

Client Characteristics

Mental Illness

Without Work

Without Shelter

Organizational Services

Mental Health Services

Job Training

Shelter

Research Questions

- Do services (e.g. HMIS) vary across organizations ?

- If so, what influences these variations?

Organizational Culture

- Shared values, beliefs, and expectations in the social environment guide employee behavior (Schein, 1992)
- Three layers
  - Artifacts – furniture, dress codes
  - Articulated values and beliefs – mission statements
  - Unarticulated values and beliefs – unspoken, and implicit assumptions about how to behave

Layers of Organizational Culture

Artifacts

Explicit Values

Implicit Values
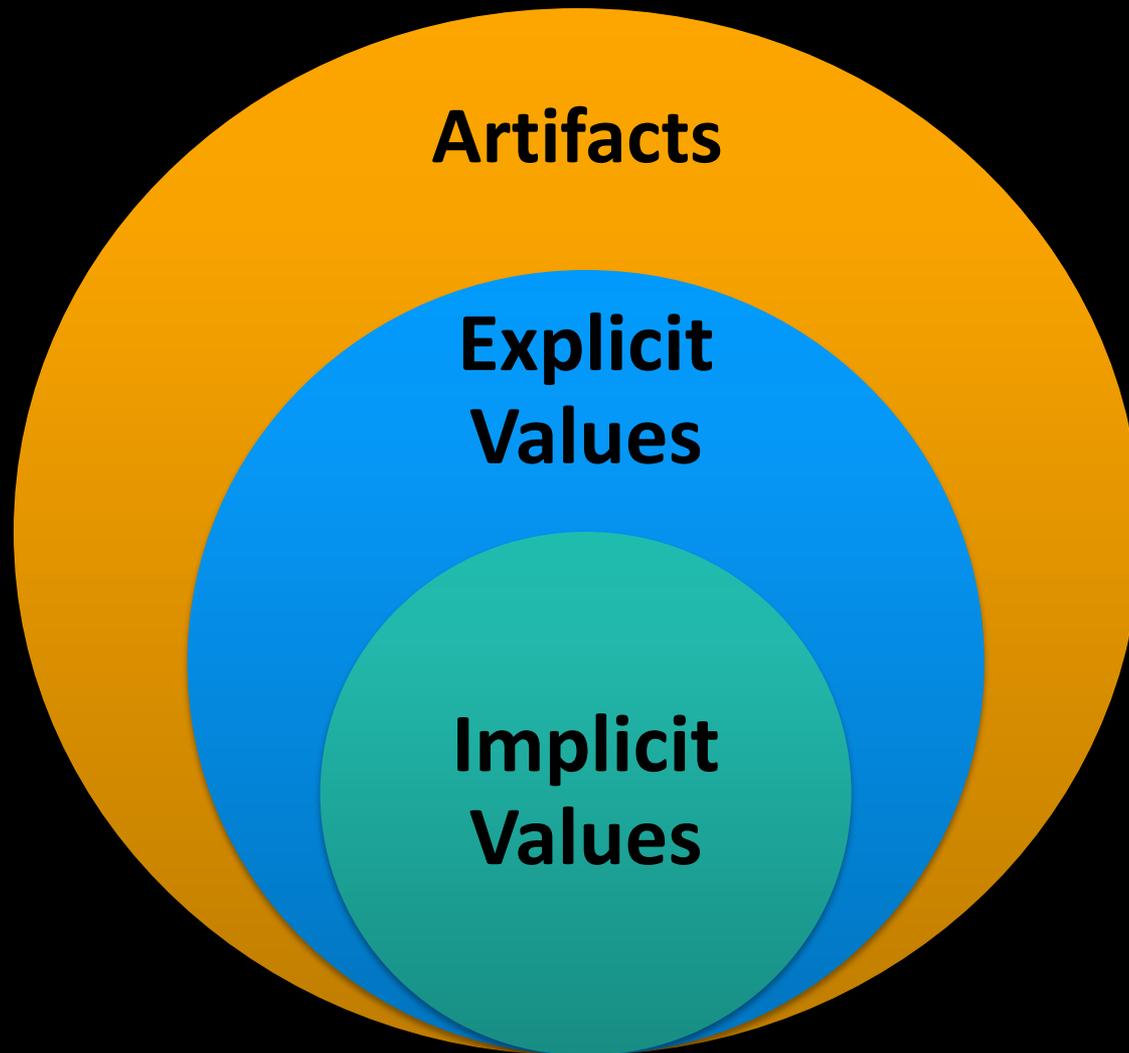
Cultural Domains

- **Proficient** - valuing staff competency and providing high quality services
- **Rigid** – maintaining clear and consistent policies and procedures
- **Resistant** – discouraging change and innovation

Hypothetical Example:
Google vs. General Motors
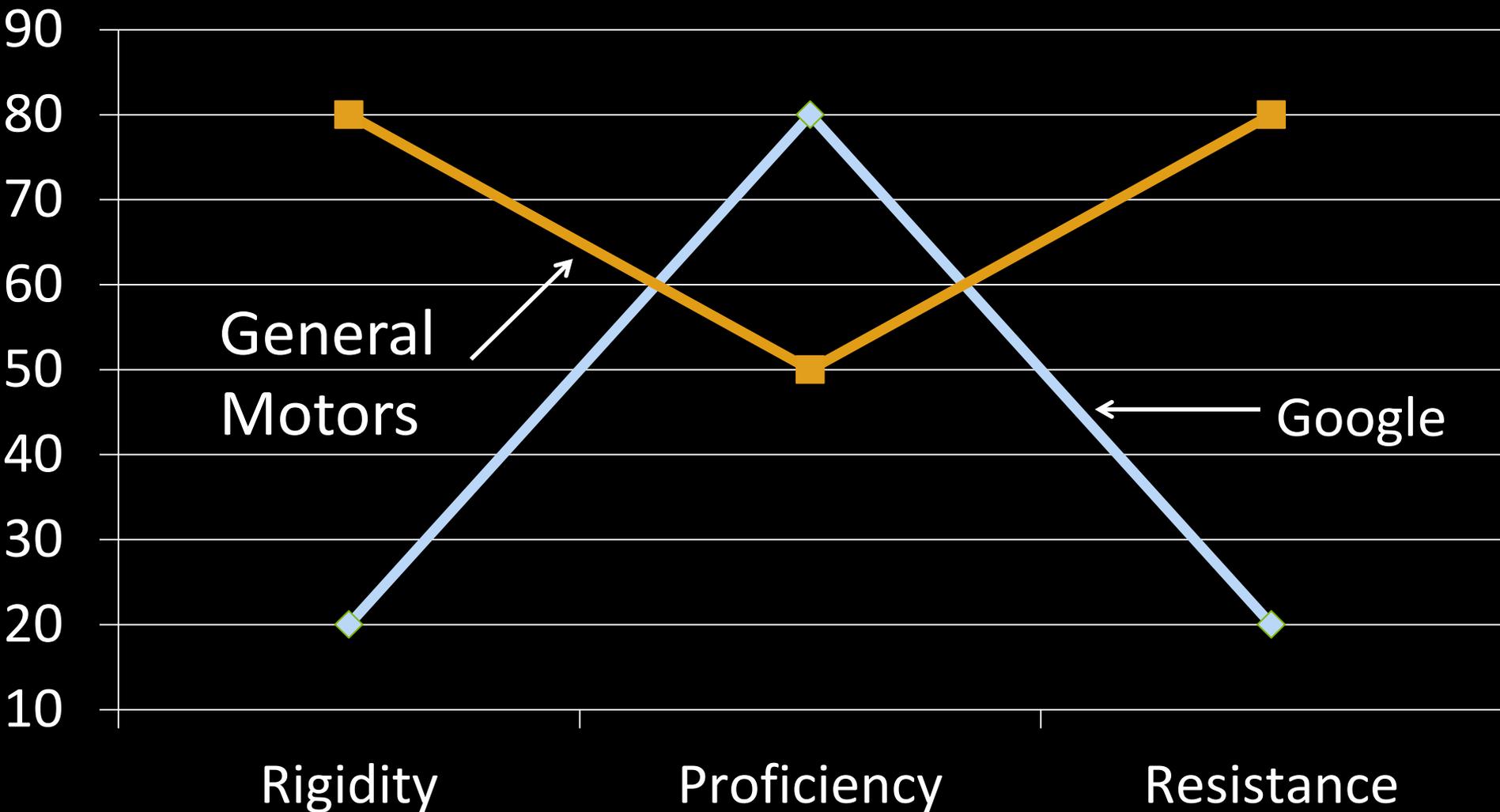
Hypotheses

- Organizational culture (rigidity, resistance, and proficiency) is related to staff members' use of an HMIS within organizations.

- Individual characteristics (gender) interact with organizational level characteristics to influence staff members' use of an HMIS.

Steps to Study

- 2005 – Began working on HMIS implementation in Knoxville, TN
- 2005-2008 – Observed variability in implementation as well as organizational environments
- 2007 – Applied for and received Early Doctoral Student Research Grant (EDSRG) from HUD to conduct pilot study
- 2009 – Applied for and received Doctoral Dissertation Research Grant (DDRG) from HUD to expand study

METHODS

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Design

- Primary data collection
- Multi-site
- Cross-sectional
- 26 organizations
- 144 staff members (78% female)

Measures

- Outcome – number of times that staff member attempted to log on to the HMIS during a one-year period
- Organizational culture
  - Organizational Social Context (OSC) Questionnaire (Glisson et al., 2008)
  - Self-report from staff members
  - Individual responses aggregated to organizational level

Analysis

- Hierarchical linear model (HLM) (Raudenbush & Bryk, 2002)
  - HMIS users nested within organizations
  - Lack of independence among organizations
- Negative binomial model
  - Dependent variable – count

RESULTS

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Results: Log On Attempts

	M (s.d.)	Median	Min	Max
Individual total log on attempts	111.7 (140.36)	47	2	719
Organization total log on attempts	660.92 (952.1)	255	5	3688

Regular, Proportionate HMIS Use
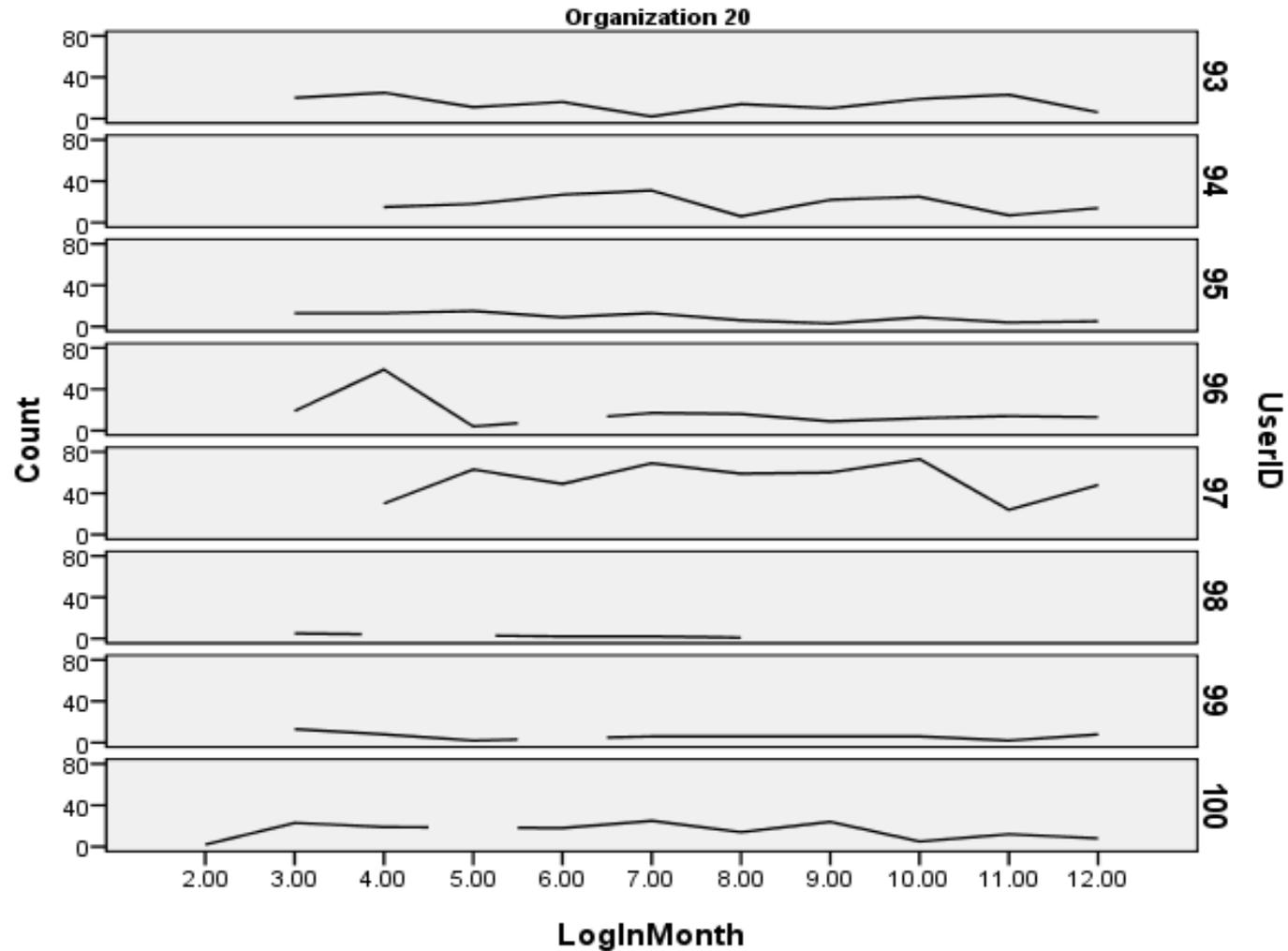
Irregular, Disproportionate HMIS Use
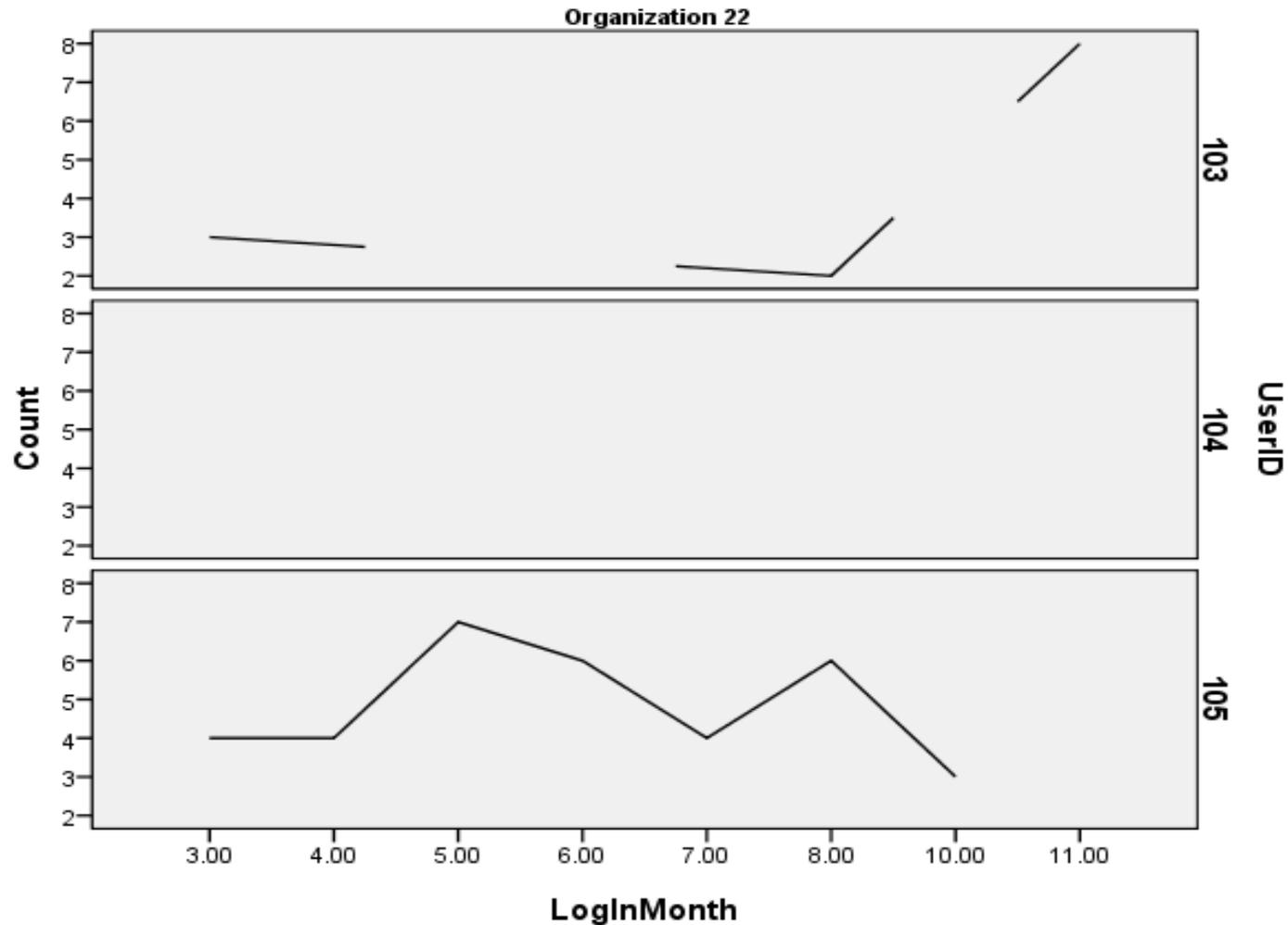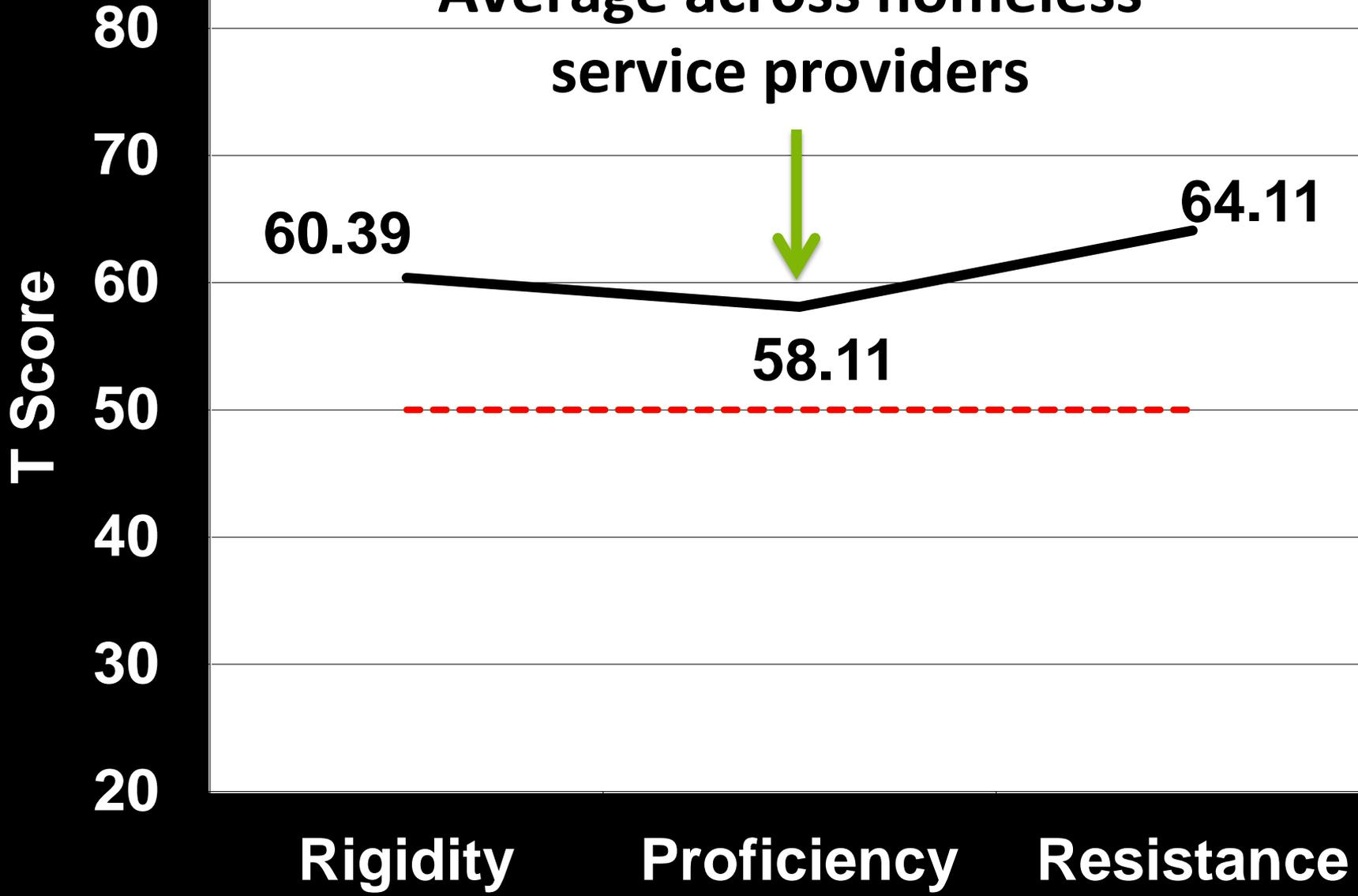
Extreme Organizational Culture Profiles

Organization A
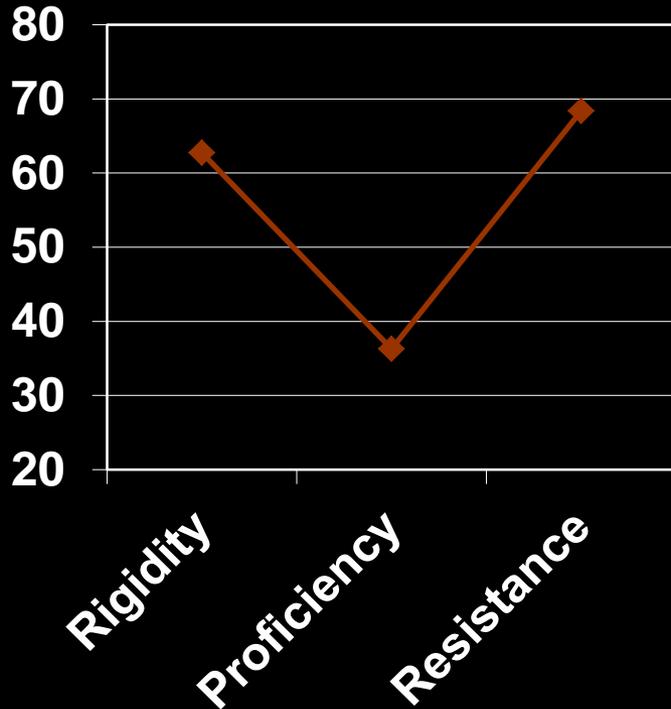
Organization B
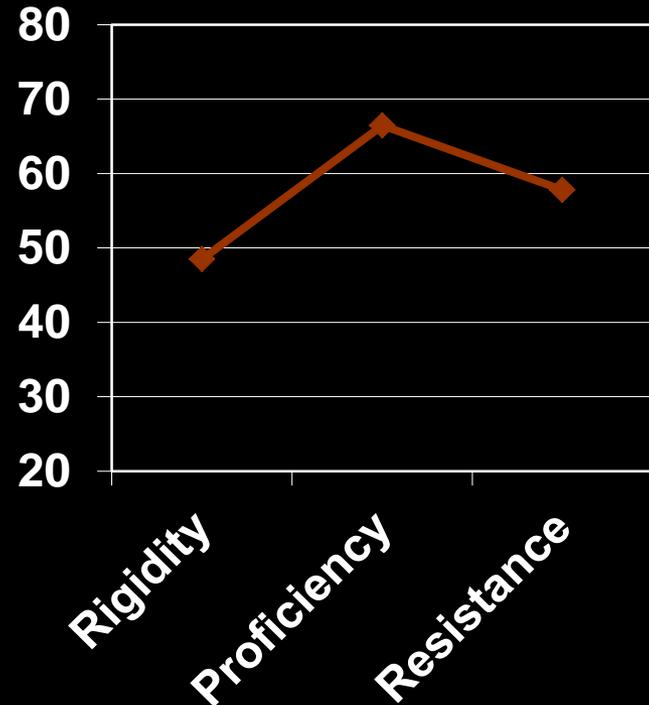
Gender X Proficiency
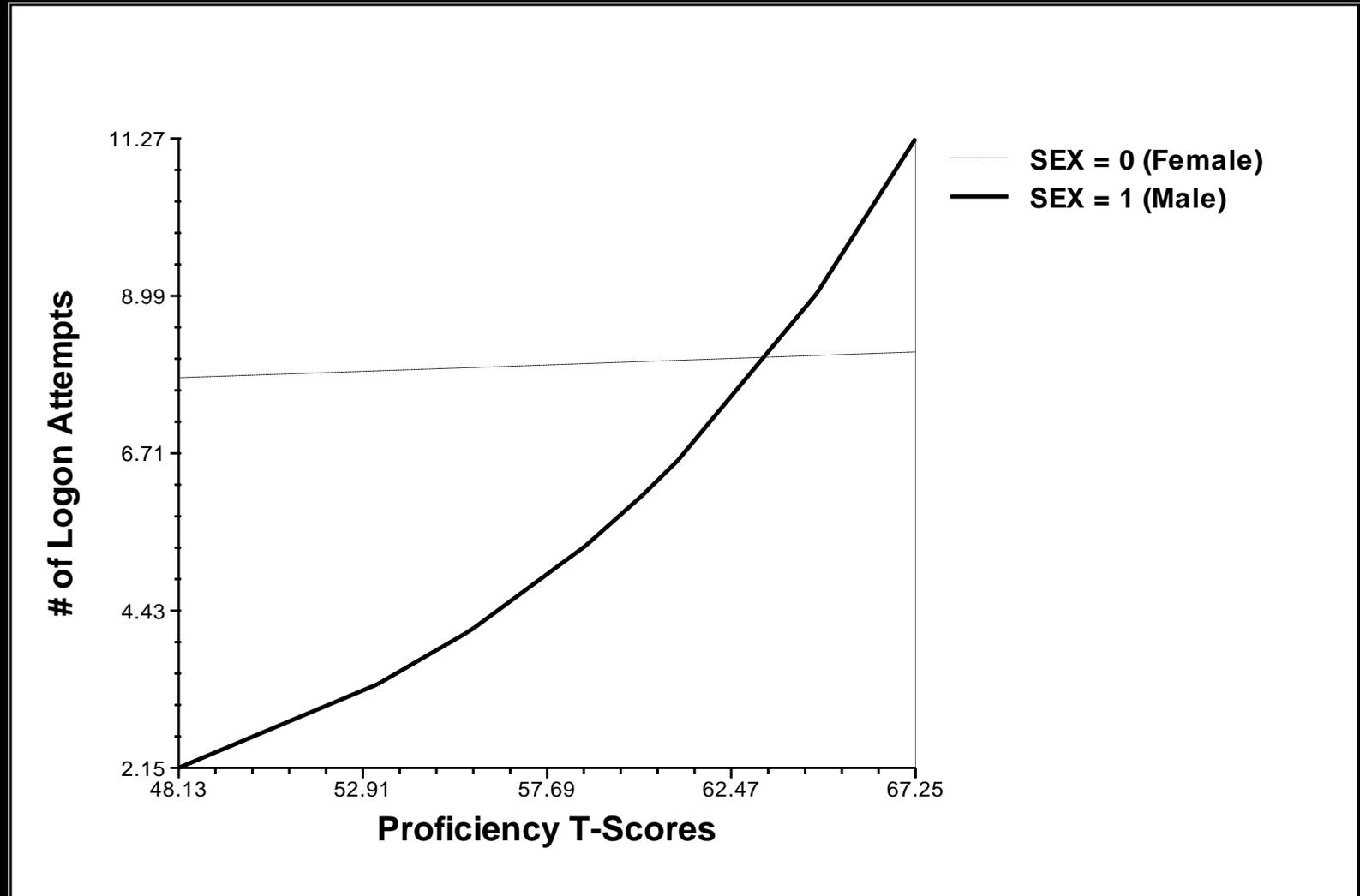
IMPLICATIONS

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- **Long-term funding to support technology use**

- **Mediators and moderators of organizational culture**

Policy Makers

Research

Org.

Staff

- **Policies and procedures to support technology use**

Utility of technology and confidence using it

Impact on KnoxHMIS

- 2008 – Foundation funding acquired to
  - Enhance understanding among homeless services leadership regarding utility of HMIS for improving services and client outcomes
  - Increase technical training and support for staff
- 2011 – 13 agencies participate in KnoxHMIS
- 2011 – KnoxHMIS staff participate in Compassion Knoxville using KnoxHMIS data to dispel stereotypes about homelessness

Future Directions

- Identify mediating and moderating variables of organizational culture's effects
  - Individual
    - Education
    - Technology proficiency
  - Organizational
    - Public vs. non-profit
    - Organizational climate
- **Assess the relationship among homeless service culture, technology use, and client outcomes**

GRATEFUL ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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