ClimateQUAL: advancing organizational health, leadership, and diversity in the service of libraries

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Abstract:

This article is a review of the book "ClimateQUAL: Advancing Organizational Health, Leadership, and Diversity in the Service of Libraries" edited by Charles B. Lowry.

Keywords: ClimateQual | Organizational climate | Diversity | Academic libraries | Library administration | Book review

Article:

This book positions itself as a definitive text on the ClimateQUAL tool with its comprehensive introduction and exploration of how it can be applied. The preface, written by Charles B. Lowry, illustrates the editor's involvement with ClimateQUAL since its inception as the Organizational Climate and Diversity Assessment (OCDA) in the early 2000s at the University of Maryland. Lowry's history with ClimateQUAL gives him authority in discussing the tool and puts him in a unique position to curate a collection of chapters (two of which Lowry co-authored) on ClimateQUAL.

The book opens with a preface and a chapter that provides both a history and a detailed description of ClimateQUAL. This is essential since the following chapters build on the foundation established by the opening to explore other aspects of the tool and its usage, such as how to use ClimateQUAL in conjunction with LibQUAL+ (Chapter 4) and how to utilize it for longitudinal studies (Chapter 6). As the subtitle of the book indicates, its primary focus is the discussion of how ClimateQUAL can be used to gauge and analyze three areas—organizational climate, the impact of leadership, and diversity. For example, Chapter 3 explores organizational climate by discussing how organizational leadership influences workplace climate and how that is reflected in ClimateQUAL results. Differences in leadership style have impact on how other staff members perceive the environment. On the issue of diversity, Chapter 7 assesses the level of workplace diversity by looking at ClimateQUAL results gathered at U.S., U.K., and Canadian libraries and providing an in-depth analysis of the data on demographics, which highlights the

ways that libraries can improve diversity in the profession. This chapter accounts for the distinct cultural contexts in Canadian and U.K. libraries that inform demographic categories as compared to the U.S., which makes for a stronger analysis.

Since ClimateQUAL was developed as a tool for academic libraries, this book seems ideal for academic librarians or administrators, especially those engaged in conducting organizational assessment. That target audience would find value in the discussions and studies presented here. There is not a chapter that directly addresses the application of ClimateQUAL outside of academic libraries but there is still a place for this text in other types of institutions. Public libraries can face many of the same organizational and workplace issues as academic libraries.

The book has the potential to become a definitive text on the topic of implementing ClimateQUAL since it fills a niche in the literature on the topic and provides a good overview of various aspects and applications of the tool. The writing style of the book is academic, leaning toward the technical side. Most of the chapters report on specific studies conducted with ClimateQUAL, contributing to the technical feel of the language of the book. Considering that the target audience for this book is academic librarians, particularly administrators and other faculty members, the academic style writing is not a detraction.

This book would be ideal for a collection that supports librarians in their practice, especially if there is an interest in using ClimateQUAL in their own assessment efforts. ClimateQUAL: Advancing Organizational Health, Leadership, and Diversity in the Service of Libraries, or at the very least select chapters from the text, might also have a place as recommended reading as part of a library management curriculum in an Library & Information Science program.