

Three approaches to understanding and investigating the concept of school culture and school culture phenomena: implications to school improvement and school effectiveness

理解和研究學校文化概念和學校文化現象的三種理論觀點：對學校改進和學校效能的啟示

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Abstract

This article compares and discusses three prevailing approaches used to understand the concept of school culture and school culture phenomena. The approaches are typology-functionalist approach, process approach, and improvement-effectiveness approach. Compared with the other two, improvement-effectiveness approach is identified as more appropriate to conceptualize school culture when the concept is applied to promote school improvement and effectiveness. Moreover, the School Improvement Model of School Culture developed by Cavanagh and Dellar is introduced with the implications of the model to Hong Kong school leaders, policy-makers and educational researchers are being discussed.

Keywords

school culture, school improvement, school effectiveness

摘要

類型功能論、過程觀和改進效能觀是現時較常用作理解學校文化概念和現象之觀點。本文先對這三種角度作一簡介和比較，並指出當學校文化這概念應用於促進學校改進和學校效能時，相對於其餘兩種觀點，改進-效能觀是較為適合。同時，本文也介紹和討論了由 Cavanagh 和 Dellar 所發展的學校文化模型及其對香港的學校領導者、政策決策者和教育研究者的啟示。

關鍵詞

學校文化，學校改進，學校效能

Since 1980s, the Hong Kong government has announced numerous educational policies, published several educational consultation papers and reports, and implemented system-wide educational reforms to improve the quality of education and school. However, such educational initiatives have encountered the problem of suggestion flooding that confuses the visions and directions of the educational system (W. K. Tsang, 2006). In addition, the Hong Kong educational system is placed in the rapidly changing era. Therefore, school is expected to perform a wide range of new functions to support these rapid developments at the individual, institutional, community, society, and international levels (Cheng, 2005; Cheng, Tam & Tsui, 2002). Because of this reason, teachers will face different kinds of problems, challenges, difficulties and uncertainties (Cheng & Tsui, 1999) that may affect the school quality. As a result, how to improve and maintain school effectiveness and quality becomes an immediate question for educators, school leaders and policy-makers in Hong Kong to answer.

School culture is identified as a value system for school to attain effectiveness (Wagner, 2006; Burrello & Reitzug, 1993; Houtte, 2005; Masland, 1985; Cheng, 1996, 2000; Stolp, 1994; Hargreaves, 1995; Dimmock & Walker, 1998). Cavanagh and Dellar (1997b, 1998, 2003) also promote cultural intervention as an effective means to school improvement. In fact, different studies have proved that strong culture will lead better productivity, adaptability and flexibility to schools (Cheng, 1993), cause teachers' well-being (Aelterman et al., 2007), increase students' outcomes (Brady, 2005; Cavanagh & Waugh, 2004), and enhance teachers' organizational commitment and job attitudes (Cheng, 1989).

Because of this reason, this article aims to discuss and compare the prevailing approaches, including typology-functionalist approach, process approach and improvement-effectiveness approach, commonly used to understand and investigate the concept of school culture and the school culture phenomena. In addition, this article will also identify which approach is more appropriate when school

culture is applied to promote school improvement and effectiveness in this new era. Accordingly, the School Improvement Model of School Culture developed by Cavanagh and Dellar (1996, 1997a, 1997b, 1998, 2003) and its implications will be discussed.

Three approaches to school culture

Typology-functionalism

From functionalist perspective, school culture serves a variety of functions to schools (Smircich, 1983; Cheng, 1993; Burrello & Reitzug, 1993; Hoy & Miskel, 2005).

- (1) conveying a sense of identity for school members;
- (2) facilitating the generation of school commitment;
- (3) enhancing social system stability;
- (4) serving as a sense-making device that can guide and shape the behavior and performance of school members;
- (5) creating a boundary-defining function and distinguishing among organizations;
- (6) binding the organization together;
- (7) providing appropriate standards for behaviors; and
- (8) serving as a soft control system to organizational members.

According to this perspective, school culture can be categorized in terms of different functions. For instance, Hargreaves (1995) identifies two different functions of school culture – instrumental-social control and expressive-social cohesion. These two domains constitute the cores of school culture, including formal school culture (low cohesion and high

control), welfarist school culture (high cohesion and low control), hothouse school culture (high cohesion and high control), survivalist school culture (low cohesion and low control), and ideal school culture (the optimal levels of the two domains). The ideal culture is the most effective because of the optimal cohesion, optimal control, and high expectations and support in facilitating achievement (Hargreaves, 1995). As a result, school leaders should reengineer prevailing school culture to the ideal culture.

Moreover, Hargreaves (1995) also develops another typology model based on the social system theory. In this model, Hargreaves categorizes school culture into traditional culture and collegial culture. He points out that the collegial culture is more favorable than the traditional one. Therefore, he suggests school leaders purchase this kind of culture through reconstructing school structure and the sub-structures.

Although this typology-functionalist approach recognizes the contributions of school culture to school improvement and effectiveness, the conception of school culture is unrealistic. First, typology-functionalists take the holistic view about school culture. They think that school only has one culture without any sub-cultures. Moreover, this holistic view tends to be descriptive so that school culture is regarded as static rather than dynamic. However, school culture constrains and is constructed by the interaction between school members, between school sub-cultures, and between internal and external environments in the reality. Furthermore, this approach disregards the dysfunctions of school culture. As a result, the simplism and optimism will threaten the

validity of school culture theory. The following statement written by Firestone and Louis can summarize the criticism to the perspective.

First, they [typology-functionalists] have taken insufficient advantage of the interpretive turn in social theory generally and not attended to theories using ‘codes’ to explain how culture work. Second, they have not adequately examined the role of culture in conflict or how culture is constructed. Finally, culture has stayed a holistic concept and researchers have not attended to the interplay of national, organizational, subgroup, and other cultures (1999, p.298).

Process Approach

To respond the drawbacks of typology-functionalism, some scholars investigate school culture with process approach. This approach focuses upon the mechanisms by which school culture is developed and maintained (Cavanagh & Dellar, 1997a). Moreover, it pays attention to both the ambiguities of signs in organizations and the process whereby the sense is made of them (Firestone & Louis, 1999). Another key feature of this approach is that school culture is regarded as dynamic and in the continuous interaction with the external environments (Cavanagh & Dellar, 1997b, 2003). As a result, this approach is not only able to show how school culture is constructed, but also explain how it works (Houtte, 2005). Generally, the processists share these assumptions and viewpoints, but they are divided into two camps: symbolic interactionism and conflict theory.

Symbolic interactionists emphasize observing the details of interpersonal interaction in school is important to understand school culture (Chang, 2003, 2006). They also try to understand school culture by interpreting and decoding the symbolic sides of organizations (Firestone & Louis, 1999) through the investigation of the cultural manifestation such as saga, heroes, symbols and rituals with qualitative research methods (Masland, 1985). According to this perspective, school culture constructs and is constructed by symbolic interaction (Chen & Kuo, 2001). The interactive model of school culture proposed by Maxwell and Thomas (1991) is a good example to the process-symbolic interactionist approach.

Conflict perspective argues that school social system is consisted of dominant groups (e.g. teachers) and subordinate groups (e.g. students) (Waller, 1932). Therefore, school is full of social conflicts that are the base for school culture formulation. Social conflicts would create irresolvable struggles between these two groups of people (Reid, 1987; Waller, 1932). Developing unique culture becomes an effective means for both groups to fight with their counterparts, because culture serves legitimation of the position of the groups to the members, negation of the sources of legitimation put forward by other groups, and specification of a blueprint for educational establishments (Vaughan and Archer, 1971). Therefore, Erickson (1987) states that school culture is not only the conceptual structure and symbols or bits of information, but also is the meanings generated in the political struggles.

The strength of process approach is the recognition of the complexity, diversity and dynamics of school culture. It is helpful to understand the process of culture construction and transformation. However, it is less improvement or effectiveness oriented, so it may not be easy to give clear directions for school leaders to transform schools and improve school effectiveness.

Improvement-effectiveness Approach

As depicted above, typology-functionalist approach and process approach are not sophisticated enough to understand school culture for school improvement and effectiveness. Thus, a more sophisticated approach is required. Improvement-effectiveness approach is emerged under this background.

To some extent, the origin of this approach can be traced back to the movement of integrating school effectiveness research and school improvement research in 1990s (Reynolds, 2001). According to the advocates of this movement, these two research disciplines are mutually beneficial. On the one hand, school effectiveness research can offer guidance for school improvement; on the other hand, school improvement research can examine the findings of school effectiveness research (Creemers, 2002; Creemers & Reezigt, 2005; Reynolds et al., 2000). The advocates then identify school culture as a critical component to maintain, achieve and improve school effectiveness (Reezigt & Creemers, 2005; Bennett, 2001; McMahon, 2001).

Accordingly, "The notion of school culture from [improvement-]effectiveness approach assumes

examination of school culture in terms of the extent to which it is supportive of the educational purpose of schools" (Cavanagh & Dellar, 1997a, p.3). Unlike typology-functionalism, improvement-effectiveness perspective does not take the holistic view. On the other hand, it agrees with the process perspective that school culture is diverse and dynamic. Improvement-effectivenessists point out that school culture is consisted of many interacted and interdependent cultural components or elements. Furthermore, this perspective does not only value the functions of school culture, but also recognize the dysfunctions to school (e.g. Denison, Haaland and Goelzer, 2004). In addition, it is helpful to profile school culture in order to promote school improvement. According to this approach, school culture is considered as an open system (Caavanagh & Dellar, 1998; Chang, 2006).

To sum, improvement-effectiveness approach absorbs the strengths and avoids the weaknesses of typology-functionalist approach and process approach. It does not only emphasize the contributions of school culture, but also recognize the dysfunctions to school. Moreover, this approach abandons the holistic view. Rather, it considers school culture as a dynamic process. Therefore, this view is more realistic, comprehensive, and applicable to promote school improvement and school effectiveness. The summary and comparison of the three approaches are presented in Appendix 1.

The School Improvement Model of School Culture (Appendix 2) proposed by Cavanagh and Dellar (1996, 1997b, 2003) is based on improvement-effectiveness approach. Therefore, this model is outlined here for illustrating how this approach works.

First and foremost, the School Improvement Model of School Culture views school as learning community. Thus, Cavanagh and Dellar (2003) refer school culture to the culture of learning community and defined it as

The culture of a learning community is manifested, developed, maintained and transformed by the sharing of beliefs, values and norms amongst teachers resulting in commonality of purpose and actions intended to improve the learning of both students and teachers (p.199).

They (Cavanagh & Dellar, 2001a, 2001b) also point out that this culture is characterized by (1) improved educational outcomes, (2) an emphasis on learning, (3) mutual empowerment and caring, (4) collaboration, (5) partnerships, (6) the social processes which develop, maintain and transform the culture, and (7) the group and individual knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, values, norms and behaviors. Based on this conceptualization, school culture is improvement oriented and favorable to transform schools towards learning organizations or learning communities (Cavanagh & Dellar, 2003). Moreover, this conceptualization also implies that school culture is not only restricted to the explanation of the school environment, but also has a more widespread meaning associated with particular communities (Cavanagh & Dellar, 2001a), like the community of teachers, the community of parents, and the community of students (Cavanagh & Dellar, 2001b).

Moreover, Cavanagh and Dellar (1998, p.7) identify six cultural elements of this kind of school culture, including

- (1) Professional values concern the importance of the social institution of education and the need for school growth is grounded on pedagogical principles;
- (2) An emphasis on learning produces a learning community in which there is a commitment to professional growth and improved outcomes for students;
- (3) Collegiality empowers teachers to exercise professional judgments through the development of supportive inter-personal relationship;
- (4) Collaboration is interaction between teachers in which information is shared on school operational matters including the instructional program;
- (5) Shared planning is a collective process whereby a common vision of the school is actualized by logical planning; and
- (6) Transformational leaders share power and facilitate a school development process that engages the human potential and commitment of teachers.

The inertia of these cultural elements is in a state of dynamic equilibrium. This equilibrium gives school overall stability, which “ensures the maintenance of the culture under conditions which may threaten the common values and norms towards student learning and professional interaction which characterize the culture” (Cavanagh & Dellar, 1998, p.11). Thus, “the interdependency of the six cultural elements allows dissipation of pressure on individual elements by the equilibrium being re-established with a re-configured internal balance” (Cavanagh & Dellar, 1998, p.11). In

other words, these six cultural elements together can constitute strong school culture (Cavanagh & Dellar, 1997b). Furthermore, Cavanagh and Dellar portray the nature of the cultural elements is both descriptive and developmental.

Collectively, they provide a framework for describing the prevailing culture of a school ... Alternatively, the elements may be considered as the mechanisms by which inter-personal interaction between teachers occurs within the school. This conceptualization focuses upon the process of cultural development rather than on the specific values and norms which characterize the prevailing culture ... It is proposed that the six elements be considered as vehicles of cultural growth rather than as purely cultural processes (Cavanagh & Dellar, 2003, p.200).

As a result, conceptualizing school culture in this way is supportive to school reforms and can provide rationale for school transformations.

School Culture Elements Questionnaire

To measure this kind of school culture, Cavanagh and Dellar (1996, 1997a, 1998) develop the School Cultural Elements Questionnaire (SCEQ). The SCEQ comprises two forms - (1) the actual form that profiles teaching staffs' perceptions of the prevailing culture and (2) the preferred form that allows the staff to express the desired future state of the culture - and each form contains 42 items to measure the six aspects of school culture: professional values, emphasis on learning, collegiality, collaboration, shared planning, and transformational leadership. Each item of both

forms is followed by a 5-points Likert scale from strongly agree (score = 5) to strongly disagree (score = 1). The scale mean scores above 3.5 for indicate an aggregated response level in the agree range with > 2.5 and < 3.5 indicating overall uncertainty (Cavanagh & Dellar, 2001b). The reason to including the preferred form is to allow the SCEQ to be utilized as a part of a school improvement process in which the respondents are concern with the discrepancies between the prevailing culture and the preferred culture (Cavanagh & Dellar, 1996). Therefore, school leaders can plan cultural interventions for school improvement with the SCEQ. The SCEQ and the scoring sheet are attached in Appendix 3 and 4.

Applications of the School Improvement Model of School Culture in Hong Kong

In fact, there is not much research applying this model in the Hong Kong context. Therefore, we only present two more relevant studies here. Because of our purposes, only those results and findings of the research that are related to the School Improvement Model of School Culture are discussed.

One study is conducted by Ngan (2003). The major objective of this research is to examine teacher receptivity to change and school culture as well as their relationships when Information Technology for Education Reform is introduced and implemented in Hong Kong primary schools. Through studying three primary schools, the results show that (1) the SCEQ was useful as a means for investigation in Hong Kong; (2) teacher receptivity to change and school culture had a dynamic interaction between each other; (3) the role of principals and leaders within core teaching teams was crucial to develop strong school culture;

(4) strong school culture in the study tended to be humanistic orientation; (5) school culture was contributive to IT implementation in schools; and (6) school culture in Hong Kong to some extent was influenced by traditional Chinese culture and values, such as authority orientation.

Another one is a case study conducted by K. K. Tsang (2009). In this case study, Tsang does not pay attention to all the cultural elements. Rather, he only focuses on the impacts of the cultural elements of an emphasis on learning, collegiality and collaboration on teacher effectiveness in a secondary school in Hong Kong. The study shows that the SCEQ and the three sub-scales (an emphasis on learning, collegiality and collaboration) were internally reliable. This study also identifies that school culture in general had the greatest impacts on teacher effectiveness compared with other factors like teachers' characteristics and the practices of academic divisions. More specifically, the study indicates that the cultural element of collaboration had large effects to teacher effectiveness. On the other hand, the element of an emphasis on learning would influence teacher effectiveness indirectly through enhancing the collaboration-oriented activities such as co-teaching, collaborative lesson preparation and peer observation. Nevertheless, this study encounters certain limitations. First, the external validity and generalizability are limited. This is because only one case was studied. Second, only three cultural elements of the School Improvement Model of School Culture were considered in the study. Therefore, the findings may not really represent the model of school culture.

Although there are only two studies related to School Improvement Model of School Culture, these

studies still provide some evidences to support that this model and the SCEQ are useful to understand educational phenomena for school improvement and school effectiveness in Hong Kong. Nevertheless, we still need more evidences to support, modify and even falsify this model and the instrument in order to fit the Hong Kong context.

Implications and recommendations

Based on the above discussion, there are some recommendations to school leaders, educational policy-makers and educational researchers.

For the school leaders, they can improve their schools' effectiveness based on the School Improvement Model of School Culture. First, they can profile and identify the structure of the culture of their schools with the SCEQ. The profile can provide a rational decision-making framework for them to conduct and evaluate school improvement activities (Cavanagh & Dellar, 1998). Based on the framework, they can also work out a deliberate plan with working staff. Then, it is possible for them to transform schools systemically through creating a strong school culture.

Based on this model, Cavanagh and Dellar (1998) advise the educational policy-makers that "the foundation for cultural intervention is an educative process in which teachers learn about school culture and are empowered to influence its growth. This process needs to commence in pre-service teacher education, continue through post-graduate courses and be built into in-service and professional development programmes" (p.17). Therefore, the Hong Kong government and the educational policy-makers should enhance the education process by providing more such

programmes to develop teachers' professionalism and empowerment.

For the educational researchers, they should apply this model in investigating different aspects of school. This will be facilitative to understand the capability of this model in explaining different educational phenomena and promoting school improvement as well as school effectiveness in Hong Kong. However, it should be caution while employing this model and the SCEQ, because this model and the instrument are embedded in the Western Australian context. Therefore, it is suggested to conduct research to test the reliability and validity of them.

Conclusion

Hong Kong schools and educators have faced a lot of challenges and uncertainties due to the rapid changes of the educational policies and drastic educational reforms. Moreover, these challenges and uncertainties are expected to be enlarged in the new changing era. Therefore, how to maintain and improve

school effectiveness becomes a critical question to school leaders, educators and policy-makers. It is possible to find the answers from the concept of school culture. Therefore, this article reviews and compares three approaches commonly used to understanding and investigating this concept and phenomena. The approaches include typology-functionalist approach, process approach and improvement-effectiveness approach. It is argued that improvement-effectiveness approach is more favorable than other two while school culture is applied to improve school effectiveness. Therefore, the School Improvement Model of School Culture developed by Cavanagh and Dellar (1996, 1997a, 1997b, 1998, 2003) is used to illustrate how this approach works. Finally, the implications and recommendations to school leaders, policy-makers and educational researchers in Hong Kong are discussed. Hopefully, this short discussion is helpful for these groups of people to improve the educational effectiveness in Hong Kong.

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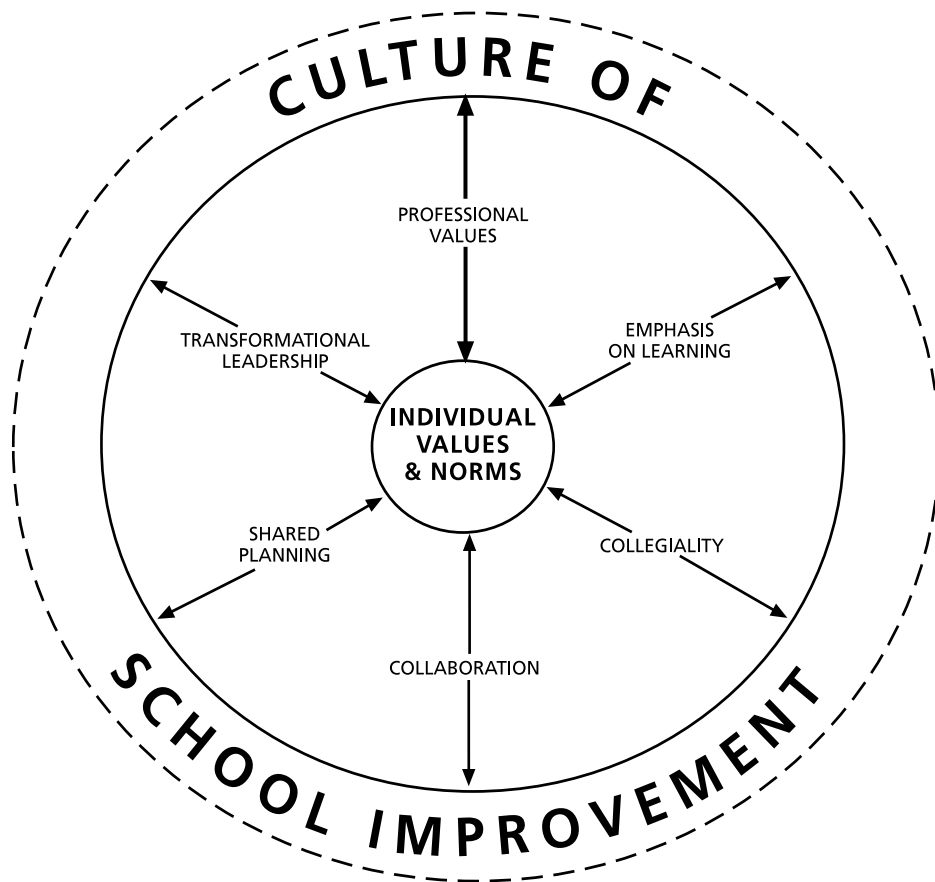
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Appendix 1

The summary and comparison of the three school culture approaches

	Typology-functionalist approach	Process approach		Improvement-effectiveness approach
Theoretical origins	- Functionalism	- Symbolic interactionism	- Conflict theory	- Functionalism - Interactionism
Conceptions and assumptions about school culture	- School culture is contributive to school functioning - School culture can be classified - Holistic view	- School culture is formulated through social interaction between the school members - School culture is diverse and separated	- School culture is based on social conflicts - School culture is diverse and separated	- School culture comprises different cultural elements - Social process by which school culture is created - School culture have both positive and negative functions to educational institutions
Strengths	- Give directions for school improvement - Recognize the contributions of school culture to schools - Describe and identify the features of different types of school culture	- Recognize the complexity and diversity of school culture - Identify the dynamic process of school culture - Discover the school culture formation and transformation process		- Give directions for school improvement - Recognize the functions and dysfunctions of school culture - Identify the dynamic process of school culture - Identify the relationship of school culture to internal and external environments - Understand and give suggestion to the school culture formation and transformation
Limitations	- Neglect the dysfunctions of school culture - Too descriptive - Disregard the diversity and complexity of school culture	- Cannot give clear direction and vision to school improvement - Not easy to understand the relationship between school culture and school improvement and effectiveness		- Pay less attentions to the impacts of social conflict on school culture and school functioning
Examples	- Hargreaves' typology models of school culture	- Maxwell and Thomas' interactive model of school culture	- Erickson's interactive framework	- Cavanagh and Dellar's School Improvement Model of School Culture

Appendix 2 : *School Improvement Model of School Culture*



(Source: adopted from Cavanagh & Dellar, 1998)

Appendix 3: SCHOOL CULTURAL ELEMENTS QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire is likely to take you about 10 minutes to complete.

To ensure that your individual responses will be anonymous do not write your name on the form. This questionnaire contains a number of alternative statements about things which occur in some schools. After reading each of the statements carefully, indicate to what extent you agree or disagree that each of the statements actually applies to **your school**.

Some statements in this section are fairly similar to other statements. Don't worry about this - simply select the response which best describes your agreement or disagreement by drawing a circle around:

- 5 if you **Strongly Agree** with the statement
- 4 if you **Agree** with the statement
- 3 if you are **Uncertain** about the statement
- 2 if you **Disagree** with the statement
- 1 if you **Strongly Disagree** with the statement

Please respond to all the statements but do **not** circle more than one response to each.

- | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Students are not provided with the skills needed for future educational or vocational experiences. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 2. I am proud to be an educator. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 3. Teachers have an understanding of how to support each other. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 4. Items for discussion at meetings always come from the same people. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 5. Expressions of the school's future vision do not reflect staff consensus. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 6. The principal and deputies are the most influential members of the staff. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 7. Educational programs don't contribute to improving the quality of life in our society. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 8. I spend time in personal reflection about my work. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 9. Teachers are reluctant to share problems with each other. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 10. There is little debate in meetings. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 11. We have not developed a common vision for the school's future. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 12. The school administration does not encourage others to take control of new projects. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

13. The creative potential of students is not realized.	5	4	3	2	1
14. Developing the social skills of students is important.	5	4	3	2	1
15. Teachers do not make an effort to maintain positive relationships with colleagues.	5	4	3	2	1
16. We work together to implement the decisions of meetings.	5	4	3	2	1
17. We do not gather data for gauging the success of school programs.	5	4	3	2	1
18. The principal and deputies do not encourage the professional growth of teachers.	5	4	3	2	1
19. I have a clear understanding of how I can contribute to realising the future vision for the school.	5	4	3	2	1
20. Teachers learn from each other.	5	4	3	2	1
21. My professional decisions are not usually supported by colleagues.	5	4	3	2	1
22. We frequently discuss what should be taught in particular curricula or courses.	5	4	3	2	1
23. We do not always evaluate the success of existing school programs.	5	4	3	2	1
24. Members of the administration show a genuine concern for me as a person.	5	4	3	2	1
25. Individual differences between students are not catered for.	5	4	3	2	1
26. I am receptive to advice from colleagues about my teaching.	5	4	3	2	1
27. We are willing to help each other when problems arise.	5	4	3	2	1
28. Teaching methods and strategies are not discussed sufficiently.	5	4	3	2	1
29. We have identified ways of determining if school priorities are achieved.	5	4	3	2	1
30. The principal and deputies give teachers sufficient “space” to get on with their work.	5	4	3	2	1
31. I work towards achieving the school vision.	5	4	3	2	1
32. We believe that every child can learn.	5	4	3	2	1
33. We always encourage each other to exercise our professional judgments.	5	4	3	2	1

34. We often compare how we assess student achievement.	5	4	3	2	1
35. Teachers are not unified in working towards the school's future vision.	5	4	3	2	1
36. Members of the administration generate a personal commitment from teachers that ensures the success of innovations.	5	4	3	2	1
37. Improvements in student achievement are rewarded.	5	4	3	2	1
38. I still find new ways to improve my teaching.	5	4	3	2	1
39. We encourage each other to take responsibility for new projects.	5	4	3	2	1
40. Student behavior management strategies are not discussed sufficiently.	5	4	3	2	1
41. Teachers have not implemented school priorities.	5	4	3	2	1
42. The persistence of successful innovations is assisted by visible ongoing support from the administration.	5	4	3	2	1

Please take a break of one minute before answering Section 2 of the questionnaire

Section 2: Preferred Form of Cultural Elements

This section contains a number of statements about the school in which you would wish to work. You are asked to give your opinion about how well each statement describes what you would prefer this school to be like.

Some statements in this section are fairly similar to other statements. Don't worry about this - simply indicate how well each statement describes your **preference** for your ideal school by drawing a circle around:

- 5** if you **Strongly Agree** that this would be preferable for your school
- 4** if you **Agree** that this would be preferable for your school
- 3** if you are **Uncertain** that this would be preferable for your school
- 2** if you **Disagree** that this would be preferable for your school
- 1** if you **Strongly Disagree** that this would be preferable for your school

Please respond to all the statements but do not circle more than one response to each.

1. Students would not be provided with the skills needed for future educational or vocational experiences.	5	4	3	2	1
2. I would be proud to be an educator.	5	4	3	2	1
3. Teachers would have an understanding of how to support each other.	5	4	3	2	1

4. Items for discussion at meetings would always come from the same people.	5	4	3	2	1
5. Expressions of the school's future vision would not reflect staff consensus.	5	4	3	2	1
6. The principal and deputies would be the most influential members of the staff.	5	4	3	2	1
7. Educational programs wouldn't contribute to improving the quality of life in our society.	5	4	3	2	1
8. I would spend time in personal reflection about my work.	5	4	3	2	1
9. Teachers would be reluctant to share problems with each other.	5	4	3	2	1
10. There would be little debate in meetings.	5	4	3	2	1
11. We would not have developed a common vision for the school's future.	5	4	3	2	1
12. The school administration would not encourage others to take control of new projects.	5	4	3	2	1
13. The creative potential of students would not be realized.	5	4	3	2	1
14. Developing the social skills of students would be important.	5	4	3	2	1
15. Teachers would not make an effort to maintain positive relationships with colleagues.	5	4	3	2	1
16. We would work together to implement the decisions of meetings.	5	4	3	2	1
17. We would not gather data for gauging the success of school programs.	5	4	3	2	1
18. The principal and deputies would not encourage the professional growth of teachers.	5	4	3	2	1
19. I would have a clear understanding of how I can contribute to realizing the future vision for the school.	5	4	3	2	1
20. Teachers would learn from each other.	5	4	3	2	1
21. My professional decisions would not be usually supported by colleagues.	5	4	3	2	1
22. We would frequently discuss what should be taught in particular curricula or courses.	5	4	3	2	1
23. We would not always evaluate the success of existing school programs.	5	4	3	2	1

24. Members of the administration would show a genuine concern for me as a person.	5	4	3	2	1
25. Individual differences between students would not be catered for.	5	4	3	2	1
26. I would be receptive to advice from colleagues about my teaching.	5	4	3	2	1
27. We would be willing to help each other when problems arise.	5	4	3	2	1
28. Teaching methods and strategies would not be discussed sufficiently.	5	4	3	2	1
29. We would identify ways of determining if school priorities are achieved.	5	4	3	2	1
30. The principal and deputies would give teachers sufficient “space” to get on with their work.	5	4	3	2	1
31. I would work towards achieving the school vision.	5	4	3	2	1
32. We would believe that every child can learn.	5	4	3	2	1
33. We would always encourage each other to exercise our professional judgments.	5	4	3	2	1
34. We would often compare how we assess student achievement.	5	4	3	2	1
35. Teachers would not be unified in working towards the school’s future vision.	5	4	3	2	1
36. Members of the administration would generate a personal commitment from teachers that ensures the success of innovations.	5	4	3	2	1
37. Improvements in student achievement would be rewarded.	5	4	3	2	1
38. I would still find new ways to improve my teaching.	5	4	3	2	1
39. We would encourage each other to take responsibility for new projects.	5	4	3	2	1
40. Student behavior management strategies would not be discussed sufficiently.	5	4	3	2	1
41. Teachers would not have implemented school priorities.	5	4	3	2	1
42. The persistence of successful innovations would be assisted by visible ongoing support from the administration.	5	4	3	2	1

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey

Appendix 4: The SCEQ Scoring Sheet

Enter your score for each item on the table below by starting at item 1 and moving from left to right across the page

Where an Asterisk(*) occurs, this indicates that the value of your score needs to be reversed.

That is 5 = 1, 4 = 2, 3 = 3, 2 = 4 and 1 = 5

For example if for item 4* you circled 5 (strongly agree) enter 1

Both Actual Form and Preferred Form

1*	2	3	4*	5*	6*
7*	8	9*	10*	11*	12*
13*	14	15*	16	17*	18*
19	20	21*	22	23*	24
25*	26	27	28*	29	30
31	32	33	34	35*	36
37	38	39	40*	41*	42
+.....	+.....	+.....	+.....	+.....	+.....
Professional values	Emphasis on learning	Collegiality	Collaboration	Shared planning	Transformational leadership