Implications from the Diagnosis of a School Culture at a Higher Education Institution

Bahar Gün

Izmir University of Economics, Turkey
bahar.gun@ieu.edu.tr

Esin Çağlayan

Izmir University of Economics, Turkey
esin.caglayan@ieu.edu.tr

Abstract

Probing into the school culture is the first step for the enhancement of the effectiveness of any school. Conducted in an English-medium private university in Turkey, this study aims at exploring teachers' perceptions of existing school culture to provide enriched and contemporary understandings of that culture, as well as making implications regarding understanding and improving school culture. Quantitative data was collected using the School Culture Survey (SCS) developed by Gruenert and Valentine, and the School Culture Triage, developed by Wagner and Masden-Copas; and qualitative data was collected through semi-structured interviews conducted with a sample group of teachers from the school. The results suggest that three dominant aspects of the culture of the school studied are collegial support and collaboration, collaborative leadership and unity of purpose. The outcomes of this research study facilitate a 'personal critique' for the given school, and implications can be extended to institutions operating in similar settings.

Keywords: School culture; perceptions; higher education; school improvement

Introduction

The success or failure of a school is closely related to the behaviour of its individual members. Considering that the culture of a school is a powerful influence on members' behaviour, a clear understanding of the culture of a school is, without a doubt, vital for its improvement. Peterson (2002) claims being able to understand and shape the culture leads to a success in promoting the learning of both staff and students. Barth (2002: 6) takes the significance of school culture one step further and suggests 'a school's culture has more influence on life and learning in the schoolhouse than the president of the country, the state department of education, the school board, or even the principal, teachers and parents can ever have'.

Due to the crucial role played by school culture in enhancing effectiveness the identification of this culture has been the focus of many studies with many different definitions of 'school culture'. Schein (1997) and Maslowski's (2006) definitions suggest that school culture consists of shared basic assumptions, norms and values that influence the functioning of a school as well as the way it copes with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration. According to Peterson (2002: 10),

'school culture is the set of norms, values and beliefs, rituals and ceremonies, symbols and stories that make up the 'persona' of the school'. Similarly, others support the notion of culture as a system of commonly shared symbols, myths and rituals that constitute the norms of a school (Bolman & Deal 1997; Rafaeli & Worline, 2000; DuFour & Eaker, 1998 in Brinton, 2007). These beliefs, assumptions and values are significant for guiding employee action and behavior (Burrello & Reitzug, 1993). As noted by Cavanagh (in Davis et al., 1999), school culture emanates from interpersonal interactions between individual teachers and groups of teachers, and their common perceptions and shared meanings which reflect collective beliefs, attitudes and values.

The ultimate aim of creating a variety of definitions of school culture, and conducting research in this area is to create 'more effective' schools. With this important aim in mind, it might prove useful to review the five important cultural elements of an effective school established by Snowden and Gorton (in Brinton 2007: 16) that characterise effective schools:

- a positive organizational culture
- emphasis on academic effort and achievement
- belief that all students can learn
- ongoing faculty development and innovation
- a safe and orderly learning environment

As they are rather complex organizations, schools require careful scrutiny for a full insight into the existing culture. The present study, which aims to contribute to the understanding of school culture, was conducted in an English-medium private university setting in Turkey, in which the School of Foreign Languages was the source school.

Aim of the Study

Sustaining a positive learning culture in a school involves identifying and maintaining the positive components of the existing culture, and ultimately, creating a learning environment for a more effective school. With this in mind, the aims of this study are twofold: (a) to explore teachers' perceptions of the existing school culture in order to provide an enriched and up-to-date understanding of that culture, and (b) to make implications regarding understanding and improvement of the school culture, and increase sensitivity to school context factors, derived from teachers' perspectives of school culture.

The study attempted to answer the following questions:

1. What are the instructors' perceptions about school culture?
2. Are there any differences between the instructors' perceptions of school culture according to gender, professional seniority, institutional tenure and level of education?

Method

The purpose of this descriptive study was to determine the instructors' perceptions of their school culture. The study is considered as a mixed method design (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2009), as it focuses on collecting, analyzing, and mixing both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study. Its central assumption is that using quantitative and qualitative approaches in combination provides a better understanding of research problems than a single approach alone. Sandelowski (2003) describes two primary purposes for electing to utilize both quantitative and qualitative data sources in

the same study: 1) to achieve a more comprehensive understanding of a target phenomenon, and 2) to verify one set of findings against another. Thus, the two research methods gain strength from each other; and using both increases research strength and reduces weakness (Rousseau, 1990; Schneider, 1990).

School culture, by nature, is a multi-faceted, complex and multidimensional phenomenon that can be better explored when several different methods are applied. Schein (1985) argues that the only safe way to reveal the deeper nuances of culture is by checking of information through different methods. Hence, the application of both types of method ensures better understanding of the phenomenon. Considering the abovementioned benefits, the study was designed following the principles of the mixed method data collection approach.

Setting and Participants

This study was conducted in order to discover the teachers' perspectives regarding the school culture in the School of Foreign Languages at a private English-medium university in Turkey. Within the school, three main programmes are offered, namely, the English Preparatory, Freshman English, and Second Foreign Languages Programmes, employing about 180 teachers who cater for the language needs of around 1600 students.

The teacher profile in the School of Foreign Languages consists of teachers from different nationalities (American, British, Canadian, French, Spanish, Italian, German, Russian and Turkish), different age groups, ranging from 24-55, and different teaching experience, ranging from 0-20+ years. The overall number of teachers in the three programs is as follows:

Table 1. Number of Teachers

	Native Speaker		Non-Native Speaker		Total
	N	%	*N*	%	*N*
Preparatory Programme	26	22%	92	78%	118
Freshman Programme	11	58%	8	42%	19
2nd Foreign Languages Programme	18	44%	23	56%	41

The researchers had access to the school where the study took place, ensuring an authentic commitment to the task, and providing insider knowledge, which as Patton (2001) stated, is valuable to the building of a research relationship to collect effective data.

Sample

The sample for the quantitative portion of the study consisted of 116 instructors at a private English-medium university in Izmir, Turkey. The demographic information collected included gender, age, total years of work experience, total years of experience at the present job, and level of education. Table 2 depicts the frequency distributions of teachers' background variable.

The sample for the qualitative portion of the study consisted of 11 instructors selected using the purposeful sampling method. This is a non-random method of qualitative sampling where the researcher selects information-rich cases for study in depth (Patton, 2001). Selection of the interviewee sample for the current research was carried out in such a way as to ensure that all three programmes and different levels of institutional tenure were equally represented.

Table 2. Frequency Distributions of Teachers' Background Variable

Scale	n Frequency	% Percentage
Gender		
female	89	76.7
male	27	23.3
Institutional Tenure		
0-5	67	57.8
6-9	49	42.2
Professional Tenure		
1-9	51	44.0
over 9	65	56.0
Level of Education		
Graduate	84	72.4
Post-Graduate	32	27.6

Data Collection

Quantitative Phase

In the quantitative portion of the research, two scales were used. The main scale used was the School Culture Survey (SCS) developed in 1998 by Gruenert and Valentine. A factor analysis found six factors: *Collaborative Leadership, Teacher Collaboration, Professional Development, Unity of Purpose, Collegial Support* and *Learning Partnership*. It contains 35 items, each of which is rated on a 5-point scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Permission to use this survey was granted by its authors.

This study incorporated five of the six factor scores reflective of the relationship between administrators and teaching staff:
- Unity of Purpose (Reliability Coefficients = .82)
- Collaborative Leadership (Reliability Coefficients = .91)
- Teacher Collaboration (Reliability Coefficients = .83)
- Collegial Support (Reliability Coefficients = .79)
- Professional Development (Reliability Coefficients = .86)
- Learning Partnership (Reliability Coefficients = .65)

Each of these six distinct concepts plays a key role in understanding the collaborative culture of a school. According to Covey (in Bean 2003: 50) one of the most important parts of school culture is the mission and the vision, which are the two main aspects of *unity of purpose*. Covey believes 'culture, by definition, assumes shared vision and values, as represented by a mission statement put together and understood and implemented by all levels of the organization'.

Collaborative leadership is vital for sustaining a healthy school culture because of the positive influence of distributed leadership among participants. As Barnett and McCormick (2003: 68) stated, 'consensus and commitment to school vision were developed through leadership practices such as communication, leader credibility and the involvement of the school community in collaborative processes'.

Teacher collaboration, in the sense that 'teachers collaborate, exchange ideas and develop tight collegial connections' (Bean, 2003: 51) is also one of the more important components of school culture, building professional communities and leading to school learning in the long run. Ideally, teachers throughout a school will work collectively and collaboratively, engaging in such activities as mutual classroom observations, lesson modelling, grade-level and team planning, and evaluation and assessment of teaching practices (Bambino, 2002).

Very closely linked to collegiality is *professional development*, an important influence on teacher practice which has become an essential aspect of improved teaching (Brownwell, et al., 2006). The result of professional development is that teachers work together, which is considered an important characteristic of a successful school (Strahan, 2003).

The last dimension of SCS is *learning partnership*, which aims to measure parent-student involvement in the learning process. Since the context of the study is a higher education institution, in which the parent involvement is rather minimal, the items included in this dimension were excluded from the scale used in this study. Instead, the study focused on *affiliative collegiality*. As Kruse (2001) states "in collaborative settings, the relationships between teachers are not built solely around structures and tasks but around communal experiences and interests of all school members" (p. 359). For this reason, the items that aim to measure *affiliative collegiality* in the instrument called School Culture Triage (Wagner & Masden-Copas, 2002) were added to the scale with the author's permission. Affiliative Collegiality aims to measure group cohesion and social interaction among teachers.

After translation into Turkish by the researchers, the scale was submitted to a panel of four English language teachers, two of whom were bilingual. In the light of the suggestions made, the items were amended and piloted with a group of 50 instructors from the same institution. An exploratory factor analysis using Varimax rotation was conducted and it yielded a scale of 28 items grouped into 3 dimensions. The scale was found to be highly reliable (28 items; ··= .92).

Table 3 describes each scale and provides a sample item of each scale. The items are measured on a five-point Likert scale, a score of '1' indicating strong disagreement with the item statement, and a score of '5' indicating strong agreement.

Table 3. Description of School Culture Survey Scales and Sample Items

Scale	Description	Sample item
Collegial Support & Collaboration	Teachers value collaboration and support each other.	Teachers are willing to help each other when problems arise.
Collaborative Leadership	School administrators value the contribution of teachers in the decision-making process.	Administrators at all levels trust the professional judgment of teachers.
Unity of Purpose	Teachers understand and support the school mission.	The approach to teaching reflects the mission of the school.

Table 4 shows the results of the factor analysis for the modified 28-item version of the SCS for the sample of 116 instructors. This table shows that every item had a factor loading of greater than 0.30 with its own scale, and of less than 0.30 with each of the other three scales.

Table 4. Factor Loadings for Modified 28-Item Survey of SCS

Item	Factor loading		
	Collegial Support & Collaboration	Collaborative Leadership	Unity of Purpose
c6	,763		
c20	,723		
c11	,702		
c25	,678		
c15	,677		
c22	,659		
c10	,555		
c7	,543		
c3	,458		
c2	,441		
c12		,791	
c1		,776	
c19		,775	
c9		,671	
c13		,624	
c5		,584	
c14		,563	
c16		,512	
c4		,445	
c24		,442	
c8		,433	
c23			,805
c27			,761
c18			,701
c17			,562
c21			,528
c28			,504
c26			,468

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.
Factor loadings smaller than 0.30 have been omitted.

Qualitative Phase

For the qualitative portion of the study, the researchers conducted semi-structured interviews with each participant over a ten-week time span. The interviews, which lasted for about 40 minutes, were audio-recorded because as Patton (2001) pointed out, a tape recorder is 'indispensable'. The audio-recorder provides an accurate, verbatim record, capturing the participants' language, including their hesitations, and tone in far more detail than would ever be possible with note-taking. The researchers followed the interview protocols created by the researchers themselves. The topics covered in the interviews were: (1) collaborative leadership; (2) affiliative collegiality; (3) unity of purpose; (4) professional development; (5) collaboration among instructors.

The interviews were audio taped and transcribed. A coding list was developed, based upon the conceptual framework. In order to improve the reliability of the analyses, the interviews were coded

independently by two coders (inter-coder reliability=0.90). After examining all the themes that emerged, the researchers conducted a thematic analysis in which common areas among the participants' responses were identified, and the views of the participants on these areas were revealed.

While transcribing the recorded data, Mayring's (2000) descriptive record system was used. This study employed content analysis, an approach frequently used in the qualitative analysis of interview data and open-ended questions (Robson, 2001). In this study, a categorical analysis of content analysis was used. In this process, first, the message is divided into units, and then these units are grouped according to pre-defined criteria. The function of the codes is to ensure that the data is divided into units which can then be grouped in a meaningful way. In that case, codes take function by creating a full and meaningful group of independent parts (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Creating categories and their subcategories allows the researcher to re-examine the data. In this study, the instructors' perceptions of the school culture were examined in six categories. Table 5 shows the five categories and the codes identified.

Table 5. The Categories and Codes Identified

Categories	Codes
Teacher Collaboration	- cooperation - exchanging ideas and materials - sharing the same physical environment - group meetings
Professional Development	- short courses - encouragement - personal decision - workshops - MA and PhD
Affiliative Collegiality	- social activities - appreciation - bringing people together - dining together - smoking together - inadequate activities - friendship
Unity of Purpose	- mission and vision - teaching a foreign language - realization of aims and objectives - student success rates
Collaborative Leadership	- innovation - being involved in decision-making - awareness - openness

Data Analysis and Findings

Based on the questionnaire responses of all instructors, the internal consistency (alpha reliability) coefficients for the three scales ranged from 0.87 to 0.90 (see Table 6).

Table 6: Reliability Coefficients, Means and Standard Deviations of the Scales
of the School Culture Survey

Scale	No of Items	Mean *M*	SD	Alpha Reliability α	Variance Explained (%)
Collegial Support & Collaboration	10	3.59	0.62	0.88	20.55
Collaborative Leadership	11	3.14	0.72	0.90	18.78
Unity of Purpose	7	3.69	0.67	0.87	14.67
TOTAL	28	3.44	0.60	0.95	53.99

N = 116 instructors

In this research, mean scores were associated with the level of presence of a factor which reflected the effectiveness of school culture. The mean scores were ranked as follows: above 4.00, very strong presence of a factor, 3.50-3.99 positive presence, and 3.00-3.50 neutral presence. A negative culture situation was indicated by mean scores of less than 3.00.

In the analysis of the first question of the study, arithmetic averages were used to determine the instructors' perceptions of school culture. For the analysis of the second question, t-Tests were used for independent samples to determine whether the instructors' perceptions differed according to gender, level of education, professional seniority and institutional tenure.

Question 1: What are the instructors' perceptions about school culture?

The mean of the instructors' 'total' school culture perceptions was *M* = 3.44, corresponding on the scale to the answer 'I neither agree nor disagree'. Thus, it can be concluded that the instructors' perceptions about school culture were neutral.

Table 7: Items with the Highest and Lowest Values

		Mean	Items
Collegial Support & Collaboration		3.59	
	Highest	3.94	Teachers are willing to help each other when problems arise.
	Lowest	3.09	Teachers and staff visit/talk/meet socially outside of the school to enjoy each other's company.
Collaborative Leadership		3.14	
	Highest	3.60	Professional development is valued in our school.
	Lowest	2.71	Administrators at all levels take time to praise teachers that perform well.
Unity of Purpose		3.69	
	Highest	3.92	Teachers are kept informed of current issues in the school.
	Lowest	3.56	Methodological issues are voiced openly and discussed among teachers.

Table 7 shows that factors with the highest (3.69) and lowest (3.14) means were unity of purpose and collaborative leadership respectively.

Unity of purpose measures the degree to which instructors work toward a common mission for their school. A school that scores high on this factor has teachers who understand, support and perform in accordance with that mission. They also seek out ideas from seminars, organizations and other professional sources to maintain current knowledge, particularly about instructional practices.

Teachers who were interviewed stated that they were aware of the mission and vision of their school and that they believe their school was working towards the set mission and vision. One teacher noted that in order to provide students with the highest standard of foreign language education they keep up with trends in their field.

Collaborative leadership measures the degree to which school leaders establish and maintain collaborative relationships with the teachers. A school with highly collaborative leadership has leaders who value teachers' ideas, seek input, engage staff in decision-making and trust the professional judgment of teachers. These leaders support and reward risk-taking and innovative ideas designed to improve the teaching and learning process. These leaders also reinforce the sharing of ideas and effective practices among teachers. The instructors used the following words to refer to the existing leadership in the school: discipline, diligence, transparency and innovation.

The instructors who were interviewed emphasised shared decision making as an important element of leadership. As one instructor noted

> "the instructors sometimes wish they could be more involved in the decision-making."

Another stressed the importance of the voice of instructors:

> "The administration should develop and demonstrate empathy with the teachers. We are the ones who keep the system going. We are like the 'soldiers of an army'. Of course they should listen to us because we are the ones who could provide reliable feedback on the system."

Trust, fairness and transparency, which are also important aspects of leadership, were the other reoccurring themes during the interviews:

> "When there is something wrong, or when some people break the rules, the whole staff is reprimanded or given a warning. I follow the rules and do my job properly so this makes me feel frustrated. I am not rewarded or appreciated for the extra work I do, but I am reprimanded because of the irresponsible behaviour of a few teachers. This hurts."

> "In this school there are three departments but they are all parts of the same school. However, the working hours are different. Our lessons usually end at 19.30 but in the prep programme instructors can leave at 16.30. Working conditions should be the same. Otherwise, this inequality leads to frustration and jealousy among the staff".

> "When duties are announced, people check the others' duties and find out if they are given more or fewer duties than the others. This is because duties did not used to be distributed fairly before. Now it's changed, though. People should not be asking "why me?". The reasons why they are given certain duties should be explained. If people know the rationale behind certain decisions, they do not complain or show discontent."

These quotes suggest that those in authority should clarify the rationale behind decisions which affect instructors in the interests of trust, fairness and transparency.

Collegial Support and Collaboration measures the degree to which teachers engage in constructive dialogue that furthers the educational efficiency of the school. A high score on this factor means that teachers trust each other and value each other's ideas, plan together, observe and discuss teaching practices, and assist each other as they work to accomplish the tasks.

The interviewees indicated that the instructors in this school work together, share ideas and problems, exchange materials and help each other. They also noted that teaching in the same programme is an important factor that facilitates cooperation among the instructors. One instructor also emphasised the effect of the physical conditions on the level of collaboration:

> "*Physical conditions have an effect on the extent to which teachers collaborate. When people share the same room, they naturally work in collaboration. However, it depends on the people's personality. If you are a person who enjoys working with people, then you naturally do it. You do not need people to provide collaboration opportunities for you. But I think people in this school generally enjoy working together.*"

Mutual understanding and personal differences are some other factors that affect the level of collaboration. As one instructor observed:

> "*In our department there 9 different cultures, 9 different languages are spoken. Of course, this makes it difficult to work together and share the same workplace at times. Some people talk loudly and make a lot of noise, for instance, which is rather disturbing.*"

Question 2: Are there any differences between the instructors' perceptions of school culture according to gender, professional seniority, institutional tenure and level of education?

An independent samples t-test was conducted to examine whether there was any significant difference between male and female instructors in relation to their perceptions of school culture (see Table 8). There was no significant difference in perceptions in terms of gender (t=0.56, df=114, p>.05). The difference was not significant although the perceptions of the female instructors (*M*=3.45) were slightly more positive than those of the male instructors (*M*=3.38). Similar results were yielded in terms of professional seniority (t=-0.97, df=114, p>.05), institutional tenure (t=-1.39, df=114, p>.05) and level of education (t=-1.17, df=114, p>.05). In short, no significant difference was found between the groups in relation to perceptions of school culture. This suggests that the given demographic variables do not have an effect on the staff's perceptions of school culture.

Table 8: Differences concerning school culture based on demographic variables

Organizational Culture		n	*M*	SD	df	t	p
Gender	Female	89	3.45	0.58	114	0.56	0.58
	Male	27	3.38	0.66			
Professional Seniority	1-9 years	51	3.43	0.66	114	-0.97	0.92
	over 9 years	65	3.44	0.55			
Institutional Tenure	0-5 years	67	3.37	0.55	114	-1.39	0.17
	6-9 years	49	3.53	0.65			
Level of Education	Graduate	84	3.43	0.59	114	-1.17	0.86
	Post-Graduate	32	3.45	0.63			

Conclusion

The study at hand is based on the premise that recognition of school culture is vital for improvement. Studies of this kind are believed to contribute to the improvement of any school by making implications for staff and student learning. Awareness of school culture also means that to bring about change, the current culture should be re-examined and restructured, by taking into consideration what is known about a given culture.

The findings of the study suggest that the three most eminent aspects of the culture of the school studied are collegial support and collaboration, collaborative leadership and unity of purpose. The importance of teacher collaboration as the strongest positive element in the given school culture suggests that teachers' formal and informal professional learning can best be enhanced by building and sustaining the necessary opportunities for teacher collaboration within institutions. Since collegiality, by nature, is personal and cannot be imposed upon teachers, school managers can be encouraged to provide time and opportunities for teachers to engage in personal matters and develop bonding (Cavanagh et al., 1998). This key implication of the study was also reflected by Jurasaite-Harbison (2009) in her research related to teachers' workplace learning. Teachers are more likely to engage in this kind of learning in schools in which physical and social environments promote professional interactions (Jurasaite-Harbison & Rex, 2010), a conclusion confirmed in the present study. This kind of collaboration should definitely be promoted because it raises morale, enthusiasm, and efficacy of teachers; and helps them become more receptive to new ideas (Barth 1990; Fullan, 1991).

Regarding the unity of purpose element, it can be concluded that there is a common awareness about the mission and the vision of the school among the teachers involved in this study. As asserted in a study by Westhuizen et al. (2005), teachers in high performance schools demonstrate awareness of the school mission and vision, and this awareness and agreement on the school mission leads to commonality in the thinking and the behaviour of the teachers and administrators.

As for collaborative leadership, attitudes seem ambiguous in the school examined, in the sense that there is no clear-cut indication of how teachers actually perceive the effectiveness of leadership in their school. In view of the complexity of leadership, it would perhaps be expected that studies of this kind would not be able to produce a clear evaluation of leadership (Engels et al., 2008).

Teachers' being 'neutral' or 'undecided' in studies of this kind could be interpreted in two ways: either there is an absence of clear communication between the teachers and the management; or teachers lack awareness of the culture they are in. For the school examined, it can be implied that the leaders in that school should reflect on and reconsider their roles and responsibilities; and how they are communicated to the staff members. This becomes particularly important when the size, i.e. the number of instructors and teaching programmes of the school examined is taken into consideration. As Burrello & Reitzug (1993: 676) point out 'leaders are not the sole sources of wisdom in school'. Therefore, they should work for greater opportunity for effective staff involvement in the decision making processes, as well as for improved the flow of communication in the school, and its constant improvement.

Martin (in van der Westhuizen, et al., 2008) draws attention to the 'uniqueness' attribute of a school culture, suggesting that the interest should be directed to the unique features of each institution. With that in mind, increasing the understanding of existing school cultures in general can help to identify the core elements of the culture of a particular school, and this can then serve as a blueprint to be used by individual schools to identify those elements of their culture which may need to be

developed. In conclusion, research studies such as this one are essential for understanding how culture is built from interrelated elements and how such an understanding can help build healthy, strong, productive and successful school communities by facilitating a 'personal critique' for all the parties involved in school culture.

References

Bambino, D. (2002). Critical friends. *Educational Leadership, 59*(6), 25-27.

Barnett, K., & McCormick, J. (2003). Vision, relationships and teacher motivation: A case study. *Journal of Educational Administration, 41*(1), 55–73.

Barth, R.S. (2002). The Culture Builder. *Educational Leadership*, *59*(8), 6-11.

Barth, R.S. (1990). *Improving schools from within*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Bean, W. (2003). *Relationship between teacher learning and school culture*. M.Ed. Thesis, University of Wollongong.

Brinton, C.M. (2007). *Comparing perceptions about collaborative culture from certified and non-certified staff members through the adaptation of the school culture survey-teacher form*. PhD Diss., University of Missouri-Colombia.

Brownwell, M.T., Adams, A., Sindelar, P., Waldron, N., & Vanhover. S. (2006). Learning from collaboration: The role of teacher qualities. *Council for Exceptional Children*, *72*(2), 169-185.

Burrello, L.C., & Reitzug, U.C. (1993). Transforming context and developing culture in schools. *Journal of Counselling & Development, 71*(6), 669-677.

Cavanagh, R.F., Dellar, G.B., & Graham, B. (1998). *The development, maintenance and transformation of school culture*. Paper presented at the 1998 Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, April 13-17, San Diego, CA.

Davis, D.R., Ellett, C.D., & Rugutt J.K. (1999). *School level differences in teachers' perspectives of multiple dimensions of school culture*. Paper presented at the 1999 *Annual Meeting of the Mid-South Educational Research Association*, November 17-19, Alabama, USA.

Engels, N., Hotton, G., Devos, G., Bouckenooghe, D., & Aelterman, A. (2008). Principles in schools with a positive school culture. *Educational Studies, 34*(3), 159-174.

Fullan, M.G. (1991). *The new meaning of educational change*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Gruenert, S., & Valentine, J.W. (1998). *The school culture survey*. Columbia, MO: University of Missouri-Columbia.

Jurasaite-Harbison, E., & Rex, L.A. (2010). School cultures as contexts for informal teacher learning. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *26*, 267-277.

Jurasaite-Harbison, E. (2009). Teachers' workplace learning within informal contexts of school cultures in the United States and Lithuania. *Journal of Workplace Learning*, *21*(4), 299-321.

Kruse, S. D. (2001). Creating communities of reform: Continuous improvement planning teams. *Journal of Educational Administration*, *39*(4), 359-383.

Leech, N.L., & Onwuegbuzie, A.J. (2009). A typology of mixed method research designs. *Quality & Quantity*, *43*, 265–275.

Maslowski, R. (2006). A review of inventories for diagnosing school culture. *Journal of Educational Administration*, *44*(1), 6-35.

Mayring, P. (2000). Qualitative content analysis. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, *1*(2). Retrieved July 10, 2012 from http://www.qualitativeresearch.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/1089/2386.

Miles, M.B., & Huberman, A.M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis*. California, USA: Sage Publications.

Patton, M. (2001). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Peterson, K.D. (2002). Positive or negative. *Journal of Staff Development*, *23*(3), 10-15

Robson, C. (2001). *Real world research*. Massachusetts, USA: Blackwell Publishers.

Rousseau, D.M. (1990). Assessing organizational culture: The case for multiple methods. In B. Schneider (Ed.), *Organizational Climate and Culture (pp.* 153-193), San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Sandelowski, M. (2003). Tables or Tableaux? The challenges of writing and reading mixed methods studies. In A. Tashakkori and C. Teddlie (Eds.), *Handbook of Mixed Methods in Social and Behavioural Research (pp. 321-350)*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Schein, E.H. (1985). *Organizational culture and leadership: A dynamic view*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Schein, E.H. (1997). Organizational culture and leadership. Retrieved April 7, 2010 from http://www.tnellen.com/ted/tc/ schein.html.

Schneider, B. (Ed.) (1990). *Organizational climate and culture*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Strahan, D. (2003). Promoting a collaborative professional culture in three elementary schools that have beaten the odds. *The Elementary School Journal*, *104*(2), 127-146.

Wagner, C.R., & Masden-Copas, P. (2002). *School culture triage survey*. Retrieved February 16, 2010 from www.schoolculture.net.

Westhuizen, P.C.V.D., Mosoge, M.J., Sawnepoel, L.H., & Coetsee, L.D. (2005). Organizational culture and academic achievement in secondary schools. *Education and Urban Society*, *38*(1) 89-109.

Westhuizen, P.C.V.D., Oosthuizen, I., & Wolhunter, C.C. (2008). The Relationship between an effective organizational culture and student discipline in a boarding school. *Education and Urban Society*, *40*(2), 205-225.