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ALL FOR ONE, AND ONE FOR ALL! ASSESSING SCHOOL CULTURE FROM A TRIBAL PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

Establishing and maintaining sustainable levels of success within any school setting commences with a culture of connectedness between teachers, students and parents. This is an expression of their alignment and commitment to a shared set of core educational and community values. My research explored these relationships from the perspective of 'tribal' connectedness in three stages: 1) the formulation of the 'Schools as Contemporary Tribal Cultures' paradigm (SaCTC) – a framework for analysing connectedness and school culture based on current organisational research and indigenous tribal philosophies; 2) the development of a suite of mixed-method instruments capable of assessing the level of connectedness within a school community; and 3) contextualisation of the model and the findings in a short case study. The study focused on a Queensland regional school observed to possess strong levels of connectedness between students, teachers and parents, and a history of sustained academic and co-curricular success. The findings from the study provided evidence supporting the validity of the SaCTC paradigm, and yielded insights concerning gender-role dynamics and the relationship between a period of cultural immersion and connectedness. The SaCTC paradigm and insights from the study will provide researchers and practitioners in the field with new perspectives on school culture.

Introduction

This study was inspired by a turn of phrase used by the Principal of a Queensland regional school in his end of year address to the school community in which he stated, "it is our highly effective […] tribal connections that have provided the resources to cope with the many challenges of change." This reference to the school community as a tribal entity was no throwaway line but powerful metaphoric reflection of the leadership and educational philosophies that the school had progressively assumed under the guidance of his leadership.

Being of Tanzanian background the Principal had infused part of his cultural heritage with contemporary philosophies of education and educational leadership of his school. This Queensland regional school exhibited such strong levels of connectedness between students, teachers, parents and ancillary staff – a vibe – that external visitors picked up on within minutes of setting foot in the grounds. This connectedness has extended into all aspects of school life and has had a powerful impact on the academic, cultural and sporting achievements of the students individually and collectively. The school has a history of sustained academic and co-curricular success that sees it listed within the top 5 schools in Queensland.

This paper provides an overview of the study and has attempted to encapsulate the tribal dimensions of the cultural, educational and leadership philosophies that have contributed so strongly to this school's sustained success. It will also attempt to contextualize the tribal model in relation to the emerging body of practice that is redirecting the focus of school culture away from applications of the principles of organisational culture – which provide an immediate framework for leadership action – toward the establishment of what has been termed 'positive school culture', which is characterised by: a broad plan for a positive, safe, caring and inclusive school culture based on pro-social values and positive relationships through to classroom strategies that use 'positive peer reporting' to encourage and reinforce appropriate social skills and build positive relationships (Noble & McGrath, 2015). For instance, the Queensland Government mandated that state schools should develop a positive school culture, the scope of which has been articulated through the *Learning and Wellbeing Framework (Education Queensland, 2013),* and compliments Education Queensland's emphasis on connected

through productive pedagogies.

Finally, the discourse will also provide some of the insights gained from data collected through three instruments that were designed specifically to measure the level of connectedness and cultural alignment between members of the school community.

The 'Schools as Contemporary Tribal Cultures' Paradigm

The Schools as Contemporary Tribal Cultures Paradigm (SaCTCP) is a fusion of traditional indigenous worldview philosophies drawn from the Anishinaabe (First Nations) peoples of North America and the Bantu peoples of Sub-Saharan Africa as well as current research into organisational culture and school connectedness. These elements formed the ontological, epistemological and axiological basis for re-imagining school culture from a tribal perspective, and provided the analytical framework for analysing the quantitative and qualitative data gathered during the course of the study.

The fundamental precept that underscores the SaCTCP lies in the notion that an individual's sense of self and the ability to construct social identity are key factors in establishing social and cultural connectedness (Loiselle & McKenzie, 2006; Roffey, 2008; Tutu, 2004). Epistemologically, the tribal worldview begins with community and moves to individuality in a cultural environment characterised by cooperation and 'harmonic intelligence' (Dandala, 1996). This contrasts with Western epistemology, which moves from individuality to community in a cultural environment where competition is a norm (Battle, 2009). This seemingly small shift in emphasis is of great significance in terms of the choice of operational paradigm around which a school's governance and leadership team elect to develop a unified learning culture modelled on appropriate educational values.

At this juncture it is important to stress that the SaCTCP is not just about the students or the curriculum. Learning and teaching is a highly social enterprise that embraces the capacities and potential of all members of school community: students, teachers, parents, ancillary staff and school governance. Therefore, the SaCTCP acknowledges that all members of the school community are equal participants in, and beneficiaries of, the school's culture.

The paradigm contextualises the fusion of traditional and contemporary worldviews of community as a dynamic interplay between four key elemental constructs of cultural relevance: Personhood, Collective Personhood, Cultural Purpose, and Worldview Assumptions. These are outlined in more detail below.

The concept of Personhood

In Anishinaabe culture there is a strong belief that in order to function effectively as people[1], we first must strive to maintain balance between the emotional, physical, spiritual, and mindful (social) aspects of self, and assist others to do the same (James, 2006). The central tenet here is that in attending to, and striving to maintain balance between, these four dimensions of personhood the we are caring for the wellbeing of our self-identity, which in turn promotes positive perceptions of self-concept, self-esteem, self-awareness, and self-determination (Gross, 2014; Stroink & DeCicco, 2001). Laramee (2012) asserts that in achieving this balance we become more receptive to learning and are able to work more effectively at both a personal level and within social contexts. Furthermore, Loiselle & McKenzie (2006, p. 6) argue that in fostering self-identity the "consciousness of one's duty and responsibility in the world [together with] an awareness of personal accountability" are heightened. These views are consistent with the research findings of Hattie (2003, 2009) and Marzano (1992), both of who identified the attitudes and perceptions of individuals as significant factors that influence how we see ourselves in our world as social learning beings.

Roffey's (2008) research into school connectedness affirmed the Anishinaabe worldview of the importance of self-identity, and suggested that the degree of social and cultural connectedness that a person feels in toward an organisation is a direct function of their perceived sense of self worth in conjunction with the value and social/emotional wellbeing afforded to them by the organisation and its

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[1] Members of a community or cultural group.

environment. Graveline (1998, p. 58) maintained that in promoting a positive sense of personhood "each individual becomes intensely aware of their personal accountability for the welfare of others." Roffey (2008) supported this view by asserting that in a responsive and caring culture responsibility for fostering and maintaining a positive sense of self-identity and personal wellbeing is not the sole purview of the individual. This leads into the second of the four constructs of the SaCTCP, Collective Personhood .

The concept of 'Collective Personhood'

The construct of Collective Personhood draws on the Bantu worldview, which is encapsulated in the philosophy of Ubuntu. Ubuntu is a humanist action-oriented philosophy of life (Mokgoro, 1997) that celebrates both people's lived experiences and their potential (Mandela, 1994; Oppenheim, 2012; Tutu, 1999). At the core of Ubuntu principles is an acknowledgement that people are social and co-dependent beings, which is summed up in the maxim 'I am who I am because of who we all are' (Mthembu, 1996). It expresses the need for a basic respect and compassion for others (Louw, 2003), promotes 'communalism and interdependence' (Mapadimeng, 2007, p. 258) and confirms that 'all human beings are connected not only by ties of kinship but also by the bond of reciprocity rooted in the interweaving and interdependence of all humanity' (Goduka, 2000, p. 70). Ubuntu also espouses values that tend to be associated with community wellbeing, including: consensus, agreement and reconciliation, compassion, human dignity, forgiveness, transcendence and healing (Mokgoro, 1999; Tutu, 1999).

The concept of Collective Personhood also draws on Graveline's (1998) 'self-in-relation' concept, which focuses on the nature and maintenance of positive social relationships that are built on the qualities of collaboration, reciprocation, trust and respect. These qualities and the values generally associated with them fall into one of three sub-constructs: Social Connectedness, Collaboration and Teamwork, and Sense of Community. Viewed as an interaction between the whole community under the banner of Collective Personhood, this values set acknowledges the capacity within everyone and every community to gain in the qualities that define Ubuntu through the capacity of each individual to contribute to the wellbeing of positive and restorative social relationships of others. This is in part reflected in the relative health of their self-identity as well as their capacity to conjointly foster and develop strong social values within the group context.

The construct of Cultural Purpose

The construct of Cultural Purpose draws on the notion that people and communities come together for a purpose, and culture is the emergent "result of the of the [sometimes explicit, usually tacit] conversations and negotiations between the members of [a socially connected group or] organisation, and their environment" (Reason, 1994, p. 325) about the 'proper' way to do things and how to make meanings about the events of the world around them. From the perspective of emergence theory, culture is not imposed from outside or above but exposed from within (Douglas, 1985) and highly relevant. This is in contrast to the classical view of culture based on the assumption made by Lewin that culture is an expression or property of a particular state of existence; something that is reified, a 'thing' which can be observed, analysed and replaced with a different, better, thing (Seel, 2008).

The focus of this aspect of the exploration was, therefore, on those values, beliefs and principles that were important, relevant and maintained the focus of the school culture and its community on its purpose. To this end three sub-constructs were of particular relevance: Curriculum in its broadest sense as a conduit for the ongoing development of one's understanding of Personhood and Collective Personhood; Excellence in terms of encouraging oneself and others to be the very best they can be; and Leadership viewed as the capacity to inspire and/or influence others by one's efforts and capacities to contribute both personal and collective objectives.

The construct of Worldview Assumptions

The fourth construct of Worldview Assumptions was based on Schein's (2010) level 3 of

organisational culture – basic assumptions and core values. According to Schein this was the deepest level of organisational culture, as it consisted of sets of "basic 'taken-for-granted' assumptions about how the world is, and ought to be, that a group share and that determines their perceptions, thought, feelings, and their overt behaviour" (Schein, 1996, p. 9). These underlying assumptions and core values ultimately guide the articulation of the espoused values that are reflected in both the climate and culture of the organisation. Within the context of the school environment three philosophical sub-constructs presented as being fundamental assumptions to the successful and sustainable outcomes of the core business of learning and teaching: Individualism, Collectivism, and Inclusivism.

Conceptualizing the SaCTCP

Represented in the form of a circle, the paradigm is divided into quadrants representing the four key elements of a tribal culture: Personhood, Collective Personhood, Cultural Purpose, and Worldview Assumptions (see Figure 1). The arrangement of the quadrants is framed around the ontological view that human social behaviour is driven by a primal inclination to establish identity and meaning in one's existence, manifesting in the need to positively story oneself with various narratives (Riley, 2008), which are constructed around multiple harmonious realities that are complex, multifaceted, differently expressed in specific situations, and continually undergoing change (Whitehead, 2002). However, this does not occur in isolation because we live our lives in wider social contexts (family, peers, etc.) of shared ideational systems (beliefs, attitudes, values, etc.) and preferred behaviours that help to meet a range of personal needs. When considered within the context of a culture, this gives rise to the notion of contemporary cultures as being the emergent consequence of the conversations and negotiations between the members of a social unit and their environment (Reason, 1994). That is to say, culture is dynamic in nature because it is something which everyone is constantly creating, affirming and expressing (Seel, 2008, p. 2). Hence, from the perspective of emergence theory, culture is not imposed from outside but exposed from within (Douglas, 1985).
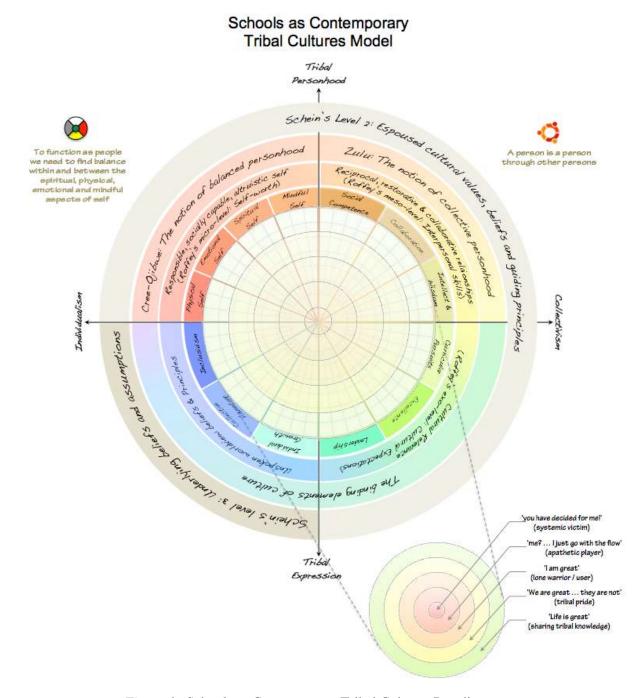
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Figure 1. Schools as Contemporary Tribal Cultures Paradigm

A Sense of Tribe within this Context

While the SaCTCP does not appear to differ significantly in structure or intent from the various conceptualizations of positive school culture found in the literature, it's the underpinning worldview philosophy that drives the model and makes the difference. For all intents and purposes this requires school leaders to make two paradigm shifts within their school community: 1) an epistemological shift from a culture that begins with the individual and transitions them into community, to a culture that begins with community and moves to individuality in a cultural environment characterised by cooperation and 'harmonic intelligence'; 2) a shift from away rules to a principled community, values driven, upholds the same expectations for all members (students, teachers and parents); and 3) a change of emphasis from 'me' thinking to 'we' thinking.

Measuring Tribal Connectedness

The case study employed a mixed methods approach to data collection as a means of understanding the dynamics present within a shared system of meanings that was embodied in a small-scale community (Eisenhardt, 1989; Whitehead, 2004). To this end three study specific instruments were developed: the Cultural Alignment Instrument (CAI), the Cultural Purpose Instrument (CPI), and an interview schedule. However, this paper focuses on data retrieved through the CAI.

The Cultural Alignment Instrument (CAI)

The CAI was developed specifically to collect quantitative data that could be used to determine the extent to which the philosophical worldviews and associated values held by all members of a school community aligned with the assumed and espoused values, beliefs and guiding principles of the organisation. The instrument consisted of 64 core educational and community value statements and worldview assumptions that were believed to underpin sustained success of the school relative to the wider educational community. Each value statement defined a dimension of one of the thirteen sub-constructs forming the basic framework of the SaCTCP. Five value statements subsequently defined each sub-constructs, the only exception was the sub-construct of Excellence, which contained only four values.

Respondents to the CAI were required to rate the degree of importance they attributed to each value statement using a 5-point Likert scale, where '1' indicated the value was of no importance through to '5' which indicated that the value was very important.

Measuring Alignment

The degree of alignment between respondents, and respondents and the organisation, was determined through an assessment of the importance ratings with respect to: 1) the degree of coherence, or synchronicity, between the resulting straight-line scatter plots for the four key role groups; and 2) the level of cohesion, σ_r, which was a pairwise measure of the gap between mean importance ratings for a given value statement as function of their standard deviations. Referred to as the cohesion coefficient, as σ_r approaches zero the alignment between paired ratings becomes stronger.

Findings in relation to role

Analysis of data pertaining to Balanced Personhood

The straight-line scatter plots in Figure 2 summarise the mean level of importance that members within each role group attributed to values comprising each of the four sub-constructs of Balanced Personhood with an overall mean of 4.30 standard deviation of 0.79. These descriptive statistics suggested that the school community shared a very strong alignment with the educational and community values espoused by the school as an organisation.
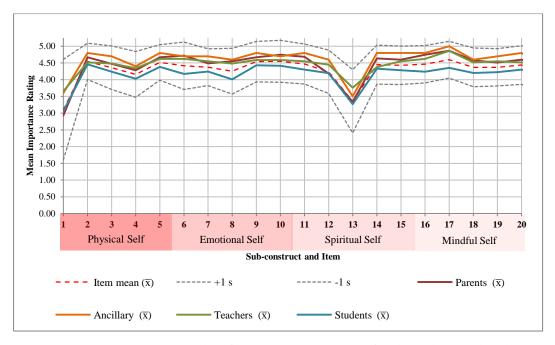
Figure 2: Scatter plots for the super-construct of Balanced Personhood

A visual inspection of the rating patterns indicated that perceptions of the relative importance that each of the role-groups attributed to the values comprising the sub-constructs of Physical, Emotional, Spiritual and Mindful Self were strongly coherent. The rating patterns also suggested that parents, teachers and ancillary staff were strongly cohesive with respect to the level of importance they attributed to these values. An analysis of the cohesion coefficients for the various role group pairings supported this general observation, and revealed that very strong levels of cohesion existed between the parent-teacher ($\sigma_r = 0.19$) and parent-ancillary ($\sigma_r = 0.23$) pairings, while cohesion between the teacher-ancillary pairing rated as just strong ($\sigma_r = 0.31$). Cohesion between the various student adult pairings ranged from sound ($\sigma_r = 0.49$) to weak ($\sigma_r = 0.77$).

In combination, the coherence and cohesion data suggested that, within the community, the alignment existed between parents, teachers and ancillary staff was of a robust nature. This signified that core educational, community and social values concerning the notion of Balanced Personhood were being mutually supported at home and School. The alignment between the student and adult groups was at best moderately supportive; within the worldview of developing the individualism through community this outcome within the student data was not surprising, and was consistent with research concerning the social-emotional development of adolescence.

There were three other patterns observed within the data that were worth noting. The first was that the Kruskal-Wallis test confirmed that there were statistically significant differences between students and teachers, students and parents, and students and non-teaching staff, but not between any other role-group combinations. The second observation concerned value statement 1 ('Recognise things that affect your physical health') within the sub-construct of Physical Self. In this instance, each of the key stakeholder groups not only placed low importance on the value but were somewhat polarized in their view with noticeable differences in mean rating occurring between the parent-student groups and teacher-non-teacher groups. This was in part, attributed to the fact that many of the students were involved in co- and extra-curricular sports through the school, and consequently viewed this value as a 'given'. The third observation concerned on value statement 13 ('Having spiritual faith'), for which there was a strong and unanimous rating response that ranked it as the one of the least important values espoused by the school.

Analysis of data pertaining to Collective Personhood

Figure 3 depicts a summary of the rating patterns of each of the four key role-groups with respect to the values comprising the super-construct of Collective Personhood and its three sub-

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constructs. The overall mean and standard deviation for the data set were $\bar{x} = 4.23$ and $\sigma = 0.72$. thus indicating that a alignment between the members of the school community and the school, with respect to values pertaining to Collective Personhood, was very strong.
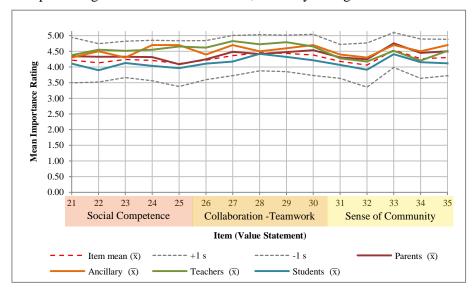

Figure 3: Coherence plots for the super-construct of Collective Personhood

An inspection of the data with respect to coherence revealed a significant degree of variation in how the key stakeholder groups perceived the relative importance of values, one to another, across the three sub-constructs of Collective Personhood: coherence within the sub-construct of Social Competence was weak (25-50 per cent synchronicity); within the sub-construct of Collaboration and Teamwork coherence was partial (50-75 per cent synchronicity); and there was complete synchronicity within the sub-construct of Sense of Community. The inter-role cohesion data for the sub-construct of Social Competence indicated that cohesion between each of the adult pairings was generally strong (i.e. $\sigma_{r(\text{parent-teacher})} = 0.35$, $\sigma_{r(\text{parent-ancillary})} = 0.25$ and $\sigma_{r(\text{teacher-ancillary})} = 0.25$). A strong level of cohesion also existed within the student-parent pairing ($\sigma_{r(\text{student-parent})} = 0.40$). This was in contrasted to the student-teacher and student-ancillary pairings, for which the level of cohesion was moderate (i.e. $\sigma_{r(\text{student-teacher})} = 0.63$ and $\sigma_{r(\text{student-ancillary})} = 0.63$). Inasmuch as the cohesion and coherence data for the adult role groups appeared to be contrary (i.e. very poor coherence but strong to sound cohesion), a strongly supportive alignment was determined to exist between the various adult role groups as well as between students and parents. Alignment between the students and teacher, and students and ancillary staff pairings was evaluated as limited.

Notably, there were two values that tended to polarize members of the community, both. The first concerned value statement 22 ('Taking time to value and affirm others') and incurred a negative response from the students relative to the adult cohort who were strongly aligned on the importance of this value. The second instance centred on value statement 25 ('Actively contributing to the aims of the school community'), a polarization of opinion occurred the parent-student and teacher-ancillary pairings; the parents and students placing significantly less importance on the value than teachers and ancillary staff.

Analysis of data pertaining to Cultural Purpose

Figure 4 depicts the rating patterns for each of the four key role-groups with respect to the values comprising the super-construct of Cultural Purpose and the three sub-constructs, which indicated a strong alignment between all members of the community and the values comprising the super-construct. The overall mean and standard deviation for the data were $\bar{x} = 4.26$ and $\sigma = 0.71$, suggesting that a strong alignment existed between members of the school community and the school as an organisation, with respect to values associated with Cultural Purpose.
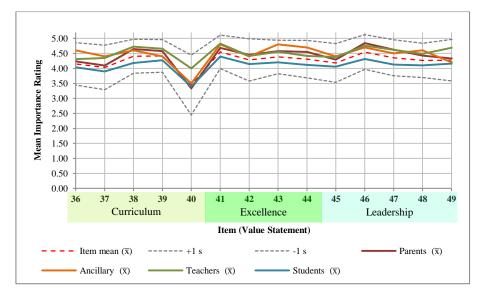
Figure 4: Coherence plots for the super-construct of Cultural Purpose

The data in Figure 4 revealed a highly synchronous set of rating pattern, this indicated that a high level of coherence existed between each of the role groups with respect to their collective perception of the relative importance of values associated with Cultural Purpose. A pairwise analysis of the cohesion coefficients for the various couplings of key role groups suggested that very strong levels of cohesion existed within the parent-teacher ($\sigma_{r(\text{parent-teacher})}$ = 0.20), parent-ancillary ($\sigma_{r(\text{parent-ancillary})}$ = 0.25) and teacher-ancillary ($\sigma_{r(\text{teacher-ancillary})}$ = 0.27) pairings. However, pairings between students and each of the three adult role groups exhibited only sound levels of cohesion (i.e. $\sigma_{r(\text{student-parent})}$ = 0.52, $\sigma_{r(\text{student-teacher})}$ = 0.64 and $\sigma_{r(\text{student-ancillary})}$ = 0.61). Therefore, cohesion and coherence data suggested that a robust alignment existed between each of the adult role groups, while alignment between each of the student-adult pairings was moderate in nature.

The responses to value statement 40 ('Appreciate and confirm our Christian heritage') within the sub-construct of Curriculum are worth noting. This value expanded on the notion of 'Having spiritual faith' as expressed in value statement 13, and in both instances the concept attracted relatively strong negative response.

Analysis of data pertaining to Worldview Assumptions

Figure 5 presents the rating patterns for each of the four key role-groups with respect to the values comprising the construct of Worldview Assumptions and its three sub-constructs. The data was characterised by an overall mean of 4.30 and a standard deviation of 0.66. This suggested that a very strong alignment existed between members of the school community and the worldview assumptions espoused the school.
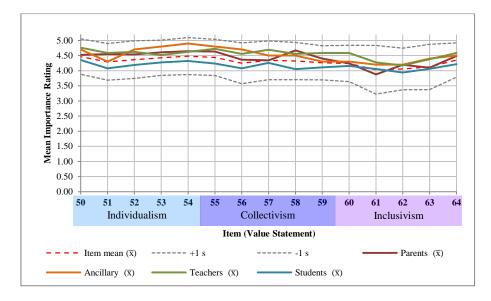
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Figure 5: Coherence plots for the construct of Worldview Assumptions

Trends within the data suggested that, with the exception of the student-teacher pairing, a moderate level of coherence existed between the roles groups with respect to their perceptions of the relative importance of values comprising the construct of Worldview Assumptions. Only the student-teacher pairing exhibited strong coherence across all three sub-constructs. Contrary to the generally poor levels of coherence, an examination of cohesion coefficients indicated that the rating patterns for pairings between parents, teachers and ancillary staff were very strongly cohesive (i.e. $\sigma_{r(\text{parent-teacher})}$ = 0.26, $\sigma_{r(\text{parent-ancillary})}$ = 0.27 and $\sigma_{r(\text{teacher-ancillary})}$ = 0.25). The cohesion data for pairings between students and each of the adult role groups was consistent with the findings for each of the other constructs, in that the cohesiveness between the various pairings was rated as moderate (i.e. $\sigma_{r(\text{student-parent})}$ = 0.45, $\sigma_{r(\text{student-teacher})}$ = 0.63 and $\sigma_{r(\text{student-ancillary})}$ = 0.58). Consequently, the cohesion and coherence data revealed that a robust alignment existed between the adult role groups with respect to values comprising the construct of Worldview Assumptions, and that a moderate level of alignment existed between the various pairings of students and the adult role groups.

Summary of findings in relation to role

The analysis of the data confirmed that an alignment between the perceptions held by key stakeholder groups, with respect to the relative importance of the community's core educational values, does exist within a narrow band of the 0-5 rating scale. Pairwise comparisons of the levels of importance attributed to the values by each cohort group obtained through the Kruskal-Wallis test, post hoc tests using Dunn's (1964) procedure, and the alignment data indicated that there was no statistically significant differences in levels of importance attributed to the core educational values identified in the SCTCM by parents, teachers and ancillary staff. This suggested that the values and beliefs espoused within the home and school environments were mutually supported and reinforced by parents and schools staff. However, the student data did present as statistically significantly different across all 13 sub-constructs.

Graphical analysis of the data representing the relative importance of each of the 13 main-constructs and 64 value statements, as determined by each of the key stakeholder groups, illustrated the synchronous nature of the values and beliefs held by members of the school community. This level of synchronicity is suggestive of a high level of organizational coherence; that is to say, everyone in the organisation share a similar set of values with respect to the holistic educational development and wellbeing of all members of its community.

Findings in relation to gender

The line graph in Figure 6 depicts the mean level of importance that females and males within the sample attributed to each of the 64 values statements listed within the CAI. This data suggested that each of the values tended to hold more significance for the female respondents than males. The data also indicated that a strong pattern of synchronicity (i.e. coherence) between female and male members of the community, despite variations in their perception of the relative importance of each of the 64 core educational value statements.
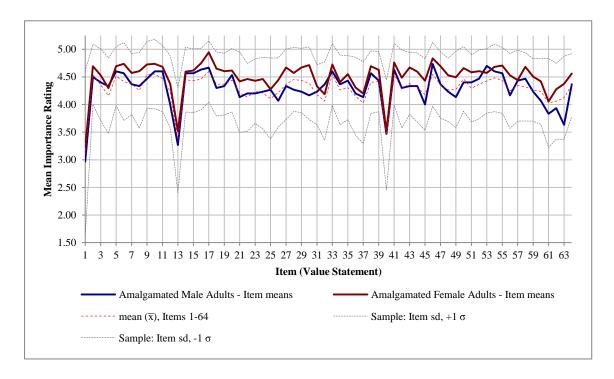

Figure 6:　Rating patterns for male and female adults

The student gender and stage of schooling data indicated that the alignment between students in Years 11-12 and their opposite gender counterparts in Years 9-10 was of a robust nature. That is to say, their rating patterns were generally united in their synchronicity and they exhibited strong to very strong agreement in their perceptions of the relative importance of values relating to each of the three sub-constructs of Collective Personhood. Notwithstanding the inconclusiveness of the Years 11-12 female and Years 7-8 male pairing data, the alignment data for the Years 11-12 male and Years 7-8 female pairing suggested that a low to moderate level of connectedness existed between the two peer groups. This was due to significant variations in the cohesiveness in the level of importance that each peer group placed on values pertaining to the sub-constructs of Collaboration and teamwork, and Sense of Community; the Years 7-8 females being a more aspirational in their rating pattern. Finally, alignment between the Years 9-10 male students and Years 7-8 female students mediocre, inasmuch that their ratings patterns were moderately coherent, their cohesiveness modest due to the tendency of both peer groups to either over-rate or under-rate individual value statements relative to the rest of the sample.

The data indicated that parents and teachers of both genders were coherent in terms of their perceptions of the relative importance of value statements comprising the four of constructs of Personhood. Furthermore, pairwise analyses of the descriptive statistics and cohesion coefficients for female parents, female teachers and male teachers indicated that a close alignment existed between the various pairings of these three groups with respect to the perceptions they held in relation to the relative importance of the core values comprising the constructs of Physical, Emotional, Spiritual and Mindful self. From these findings three emergent patterns became apparent with respect to role and gender. The first of these patterns was the tendency for female parents and teachers to attribute more importance to each of the value statements comprising the four constructs of Personhood than their male counterparts. As a consequence, female parents and female teachers tended to be strongly

cohesive, and therefore highly aligned, in their shared perceptions of the importance of the individual core values associated with the Physical, Emotional, Spiritual and Mindful self. The second pattern to emerge was the tendency for female teachers and male teachers to share a much closer alignment than female parents and male parents. The third pattern to be identified was the tendency for any pairing involving male non-teaching staff was more likely to exhibit moderate to low levels of cohesion with respect to the core values, which was in contrast to the relatively strong levels of cohesion associated with any other adult gender-role pairing.

It was also observed that a synchronous coherence and generally strong levels of cohesion existed between the genders of the two most significant adult role model groups (i.e. parents and teachers) within the school community in relation to values comprising the constructs of the Physical, Emotional, Spiritual and Mindful self. Furthermore, the data indicated that female parents and female teachers were more closely aligned in their support of core educational values, than any other adult gender pairing.

The inference drawn from these findings was that female parents and teachers were the significant proponents of core community values, and as a consequence were likely the key drivers of the school culture and climate. Therefore, in response to the guiding research question, the data indicated that gender does appear to be a factor in maintaining the mutual support and reinforcement of core educational values and beliefs among adults within the home and school.

Findings in relation to period of association

The period of association data in Figure 7 provided strong evidence that the respondents' collectively exhibited a robust and highly connected alignment to the values comprising the 13 sub-constructs of the SCTCM irrespective of the period over which they had been associated with the school and its culture. That is to say, the data indicated that individuals appeared to have formed a strong associative tie with the community and its culture, from the point of their initial membership; very possibly because of a strong pre-existing alignment between the values held by the individual and those espoused by the community. This appeared to contradict some claims made from within the within the teaching staff that new students needed to be proselytized into the ways of the community.
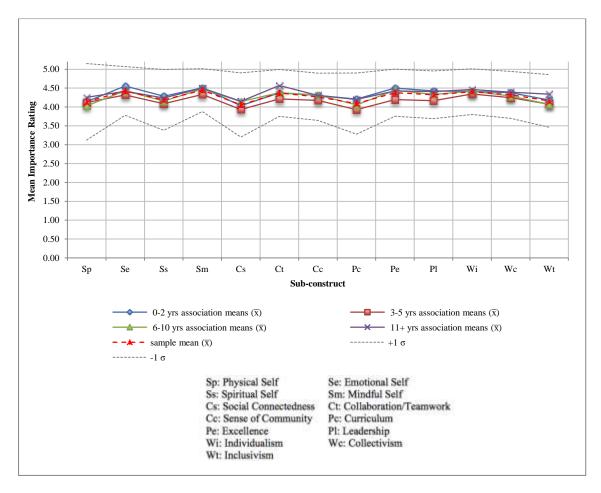
Figure 7: Rating patterns organized by period of association

Conclusion

Strong levels of alignment exist among members of the community supporting the hypothesis that the operational implementation of the tribal paradigm is reliant on the collective support and understanding. However, there is considerable work to be done in further developing the both the SaCTCP and the CAI to develop it as a functional model that could be adopted in other school settings.

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