

SCHOOL-CULTURE PERCEPTION SCALE (SCPS) REPORT

Report Description: IMPORTANT - IN AUGUST 2012 DURING OUR DATABASE BUILD & TEST PHASE THIS REPORT IS FREE . IF DATA IS INCOMPLETE PLEASE CONTACT US & TRY AGAIN LATER.

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Date: 01/08/2012

Introduction:

The School-Culture Perception Scale (SCPS) report is adapted for use at home and in schools from an extensive questionnaire assembled as part of a University of Western Australia (UWA) doctoral thesis on Student-School Suitability. The SCPS evaluates student perceptions of school's socialisation supports and establishes a school "culture" profile or ethos using yuear cohort perceptions as input. In the SCPS report the preference profiles of individual students, are plotted with their school's culture as perceived by the overall student cohort and compared for *goodness of fit* or suitability.

Purpose:

The SCPS report is useful for both parents and school personnel. Parents can gain preliminary (non-parametric) understandings about the relative fit of their child with their current school peers and school personnel can monitor changes in their school's culture as perceived by their overall student community.

Philosophy:

The SCPS data enables examination of the culture of the students current school. Comparisons are based on differences between the perceptions of the individual student about the levels of school supports in their school's culture on a range of measures, and the perceptions of their peer cohort on the same. Evaluation of the suitability of the school culture is made using comparisons on ten (10) components identified from the research. Interpretation is made within the frame of the student's perceptions of relative alignment or contrast with the perceptions of their peer cohort. Differences between individual and cohort perceptions on these school culture components identify the strengths and limitations of the school student community in aligning with the *suitability* expectations of the student.

Report Format:

The SCPS charts are self-explanatory. The visual *graphical dashboard* outputs in the report are designed to communicate to parents and teachers as much information about each student as is possible in a *snapshot* profile. Data on each of ten (10) exogenous components (environmental factors extrinsic to the student) identified as contributing to the unique socialising culture of each school. These components evaluate the levels of perceived demand and responsiveness in the school's culture. Individual student perceptions on each

component of school culture are plotted against overall peer cohort means, measures derived from factor analysis of parent perceptions of schools' culture and augmented with the perceptions of school personnel. SCPS report outputs provide parents and teachers with an instant appraisal of each student's standing on each component of school culture relative to the school's existent culture perceived by peers. There are two graphs. The first plots student's perceptions of their school's culture on each of the measures of school culture against actual school culture as perceived by the peer cohort.

The second graph plots the percentile ranking of the individual with their school's culture. Differences between student perceptions and cohort perceptions of existent supports for levels of demand and responsiveness on ten (10) exogenous (observable) components in schools identify possible cause for concern. We measure levels of demand in school's culture by the degree of organisational structure, rules and academic pressure. Responsiveness is measured by the degree of student-focus, peer support, school spirit, available home help, pro-education family values, staff support of student autonomy, teacher student partnership, interpersonal communication and classroom learning climate.

The report table identifies if differences between student perceptions and actual school culture supports as perceived by the student community are significant. Significant differences are a focus for discussion about the relative suitability of the school peer cohort for individual students.

Definition Of Terms:

School Structure - The extent to which the school is organised with routines, rules and regulations enforced

Academic Press - The extent to which the school pressures students to strive and to achieve high academic standards

Student-Focused School Climate - The extent to which school personnel listen and consider student opinions

Peer Support for Schooling - The extent to which peers support or thwart the schooling process

Pro-Education Family Culture - The extent to which parents show interest in school activities

Home Help for Schooling - The extent to which academic help is available at home

Staff Support of Student Autonomy - The extent to which school personnel show understanding and tolerance of individual student choices

Teacher-Student Partnership - The extent to which school personnel are aware of student needs and are prepared to help them achieve their goals

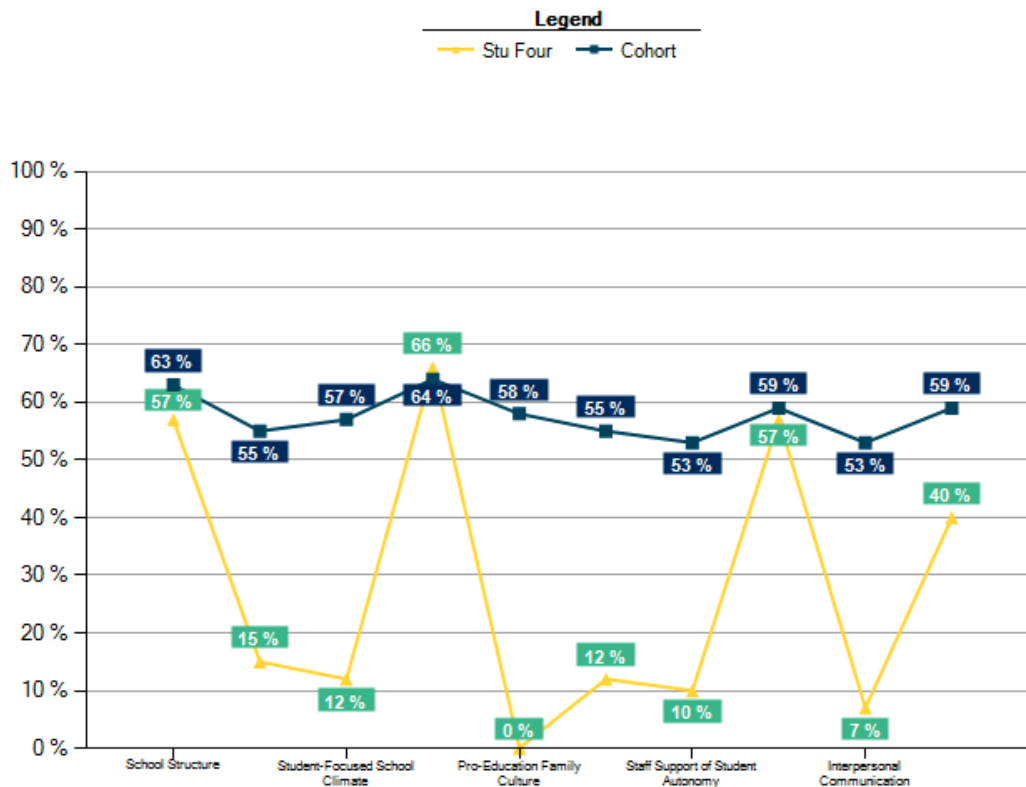
Interpersonal Communication - The extent to which school personnel relate with student interests and are prepared to negotiate to achieve outcomes

Classroom Learning Climate - The extent to which school personnel use positive approaches to engage

students

Results

GRAPH 1: STUDENT-CULTURE PERCEPTIONS WITH COHORT

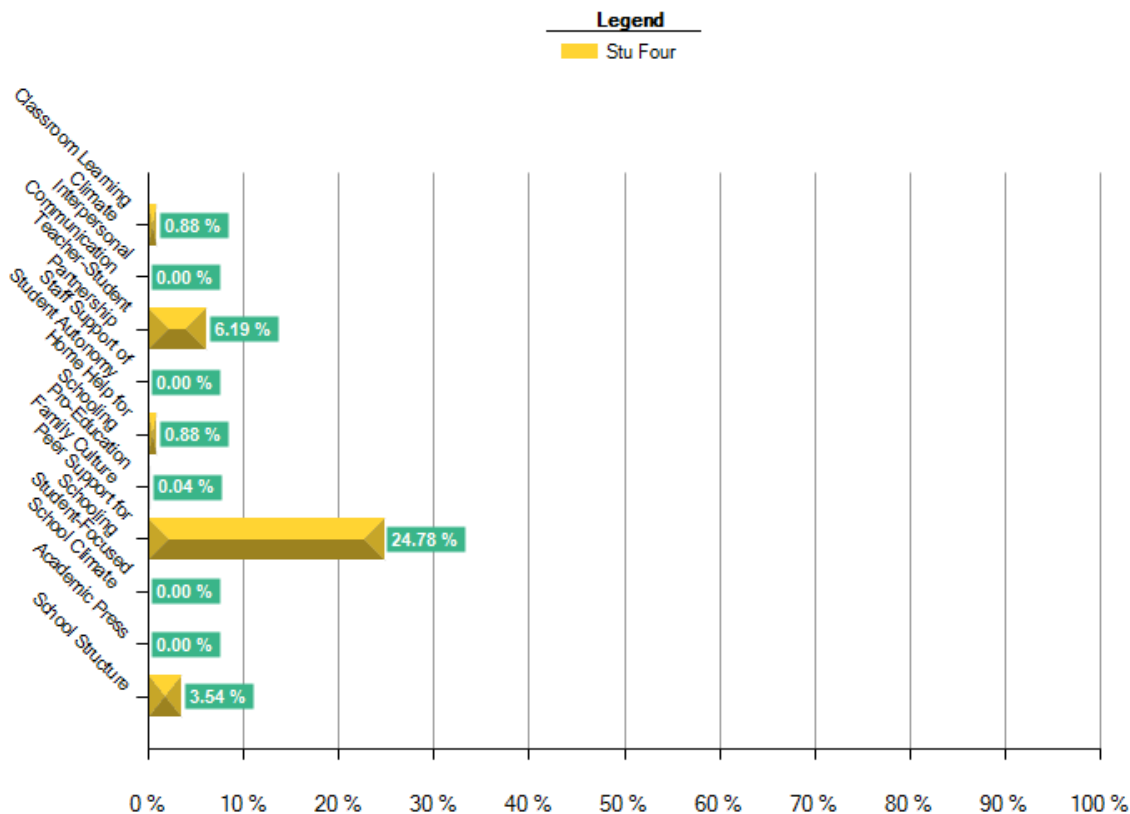


Interpretation of Graph1

Graph one shows student perceptions of school culture mapped with existent components of school culture as seen "through student eyes". There are three dimensions on which students appraise the suitability of their school's culture. The first dimension is student's personal preference for organisational standards. Organisational standards measures student perceptions of contextual demandingness or the degree of structure (rules and discipline) and academic pressure (achievement expectations) perceived in the culture of their school. The second dimension is student's personal preference for interpersonal care. Interpersonal care measures student perceptions of the level of social responsiveness or the degree of student-focus, peer support, school spirit, pro-education family values and available home help perceived in the culture of the school. On both these dimensions when student preferences align with or exceed the existent support levels in the school, this indicates relative suitability. A third student preference dimension is tolerance of individual choice. Tolerance of individual choice measures student's perceptions of the level of autonomy responsiveness support or the degree of staff support for

student autonomy, teacher-student partnership, interpersonal communication and classroom learning climate perceived in the culture of their school.

GRAPH 2: SCHOOL-CULTURE PERCEPTIONS RANKING



Interpretation of Graph2

This graph indicates the percentile ranking of the student in relation to their peer cohort. The ranking shows the proportion of participants that perceived less support in the context than did the student on each component of school culture. A ranking of 50% is average, therefore, high scores or low scores can indicate relative suitability depending on the component being measured and the engagement style of the student.

As a rule of thumb when interpreting these outputs, schools' universally tend to be perceived by students as overly demanding contexts. More is not necessarily better. *Alignment* on such components correlates with higher student perceptions of suitability. On the social responsiveness components, schools are generally perceived by students to be adequately caring. Once again more is not better and in most schooling context is not required. *Alignment* on these components correlates with higher student perceptions of suitability. However, on the school-base autonomy responsiveness components *contrast* rather than alignment relates with higher

perceptions of suitability. This is particularly true when the level of tolerance in schools greatly exceeds that which students expect.

Table 1. Student Perceptions of their Current School's Socialising Culture

Student Need	Deviation Standardized Scores		HiScore	LowScore
	Std.Dev.	Z-score	Sig.higher than group...	Sig.lower than group...
School Structure	10.061	-1.987	FALSE	TRUE
Academic Press	15.5821	-3.9023	FALSE	TRUE
Student-Focused School Climate	16.8036	-3.7787	FALSE	TRUE
Peer Support for Schooling	12.6598	-0.7494	FALSE	FALSE
Pro-Education Family Culture	16.5858	-4.5433	FALSE	TRUE
Home Help for Schooling	16.5633	-3.4969	FALSE	TRUE
Staff Support of Student Autonomy	16.5409	-3.8221	FALSE	TRUE
Teacher-Student Partnership	13.0187	-1.6606	FALSE	TRUE
Interpersonal Communication	15.3771	-4.318	FALSE	TRUE
Classroom Learning Climate	12.094	-2.9481	FALSE	TRUE

Interpretation Table1

Table one examines the significance of differences between individual student perceptions and their peer cohort on each component of school culture. A significant HiScore or LoScore is indicated by the word TRUE highlighted yellow in the table. All significant differences should be considered in relation to the graphical data displayed and the interpretive text to determine if it is likely to exert a positive or negative influence on relative school suitability for each student.

Background:

Socialisation research suggests that parents, schools as organisations and school personnel as individuals can be classified by their engagement style, that describe socialisation percepts that they believe provide the best schooling outcomes for students. Schools and their personnel each have unique preferences and supports for particular levels of challenge (demandingness) and nurture (responsiveness) that define their socialising culture as either authoritarian (strict), authoritative (fair), indulgent (accommodating) or impersonal (matter of fact).

Students also have preferences for particular levels of contextual demandingness and responsiveness and they also can be categorised as compliant (preference for structure), social (preference for belonging), self-determining (preference for independence) or avoidant (preference for anonymity) in engagement style. Therefore, interaction between students with different socialisation preferences and the unique socialising culture of schools and their personnel influences students' satisfaction, motivation schooling outcomes and overall wellbeing. Recent research on student motivation suggests that alignment of students' preferences

with complimentary school culture supports enhances their schooling outcomes for students. For example, compliant students will align with and perceive themselves to be most suited with authoritarian schools, social students align with authoritative schools, self-determined students with accommodating schools and avoidant students with impersonal schools. Thus, suitable school choice can minimise the transition shock experienced by many students when entering unfamiliar mismatched classrooms or schooling contexts.

Application:

Parents can apply the SCPS data to compare their children's perceptions of their school's culture with those of their peer cohort. This offers a preliminary measure of suitability *fit* with the school's student community. Significant variance from the peer cohort mean perceptions should be noted, monitored and discussed with school personnel.

Schools can use the SCPS report data to evaluate how their school culture is perceived by individual students and year cohorts. As students' progress from transition to graduation they usually integrate and internalise the values of their schools. This is the socialising process. Thus, schools can apply the SCPS data to map the progress of individual student intervention planning and also to monitor the impact on the school's student community of the implementation of school improvement strategies designed to change the overall culture of their school.

Concluding Statement:

Recent research on the maintenance of motivational force for schooling and students' overall wellbeing shows that many more students than previously thought, are disengaging from formal schooling at primary to secondary transition. Students are not the same, it is unrealistic to expect each to have the personal resources to successfully adjust to new schooling contexts, thus the onus is on schools to cater better for students with different engagement styles. For many students a reduced emphasis on the curriculum (impersonal) and more effort on establishing positive relations will be more effective in maintaining students' motivation for schooling through the unsettling period of transition.

Schools have unique socialising styles. SCPS report data can assist schools to adjust their routines and practice to align better with and improve students' perceptions of their school culture. Furthermore, the SCPS provides school personnel with insight into the schooling experience seen "through student eyes".

About the Author

HiScore conducts applied research in schools and seeks input from school leaders, practicing teachers, school psychologists and the community.

Disclaimer

- I. Our surveys are of a self-report format, therefore the author makes no claims about their reliability
- II. Our database is a dynamic build design, as survey data comes in, report reliability is auto-updated

- III. Relevant information is provided in each report but interpretation is made in context by the reader
- IV. In the analysis of these data significantly high and low findings are reported at a 90% confidence level. This means that outputs have a 1 in10 statistical probability of error.