Can a School Organization be Transformed into a Learning Organization?

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ABSTRACT

Organizations that have transformed into Learning Organizations have a strong tendency to focus upon continuous improvement and have the ability to cope with major change more successfully and effectively. The concept of the Learning Organization is not confined to a particular type, size, and form of organization, and also includes school organizations. Empirical and anecdotal evidence suggests that little research on school organization as Learning Organizations has been conducted and documented. It has been shown that there is currently no Taiwanese school organization at any level that claims to have become a genuine Learning Organization. This research paper presents an analysis of selected Learning Organization methodologies that are deemed to be effective in assisting in the process of transforming a school organization into a Learning Organization – business process reengineering (BPR), dialogue, scenario analysis, and learning histories. It also reviews various Learning Organization improvement models and models of educational cultural change and learning. The paper proposes a blueprint to transform school organizations into Learning Organizations – the "Learning Organization model for school organizations".

Key words: School organization, learning organization, Taiwan

INTRODUCTION

Organizations that have transformed into Learning Organizations have a strong tendency to focus upon continuous improvement and have the ability to cope with change more successfully and effectively (Drucker, 1998). The concept of the Learning Organization, according to Drucker (1998), is not confined to a particular type, size, and/or form of organization. In other words, the concept also includes school organizations. School organizations, in particular, have an increasing need to adapt to a relentless and ever-changing environment. A review of the literature on the Learning Organization demonstrates that little research on school organizations as Learning Organizations has been conducted and documented. In fact, it has even become evident that very few school organizations have become genuine Learning Organizations. Hitherto, there is no Taiwanese school organization at any level that claims to be an authentic Learning Organization, or has at least commenced the process of transforming into a Learning Organization. The Taiwanese society in general, and its educational system in particular, has been subject to significant major change in the past few decades. Changes in the external mega

and task environments have put a considerable amount of pressure upon Taiwanese school organizations to accommodate, adjust to, and cope with these changes. This, according to Comley, Arandez, Holden, and Kuriata (2001), necessitates a specific type of school organization that has the distinct ability to cope with major change in a most effective and successful fashion – a Learning Organization.

Cultural change in school organizations requires a systemic approach that will support the processes of changing the mindsets of autonomous professional teachers, who are responsible for the quality of learning that takes place among school communities. This research paper presents an analysis of selected Learning Organization methodologies that are considered to be effective in assisting in the process of transforming into Learning Organizations. Luthans, Hodgetts, and Lee (1994) identified three Learning Organization methodologies that have the capacity to assist organizations to become Learning Organizations, namely business process re-engineering (BPR), dialogue, and scenario analysis. In a similar vein, Kirk and Kirk (1997) emphasize the importance of these three methodologies. Roth and Kleiner (1995) state that learning histories should also be added to the list of appropriate Learning Organization methodologies that could assist in the process of cultural change for schools.

This research paper explores the proposed methodologies to develop school organizations as Learning Organizations, including business process re-engineering (BPR), dialogue, scenario analysis, and learning histories. The study also reviews the Learning Organization school improvement model and models of educational cultural change and learning. Finally, the paper proposes the "Learning Organization model for school organizations" that constitutes a blueprint for school organizations to transform into genuine Learning Organizations.

BUSINESS PROCESS RE-ENGINEERING (BPR)
Process Re-engineering is generally referred to as Business Process Re-engineering (BPR). It includes methodologies that look for new ways of doing things rather than simply trying to run old processes faster and more efficiently. Information Technology (IT) is an essential ingredient for successful implementation of BPR as it allows for efficient measuring of times and outputs and makes process records available to all participants. BPR executives have recognized that their task is to create a work environment that stimulates the organizations employees and encourages them to be more motivated, creative, and entrepreneurial than its competitors (Bartlett & Goshall, 1995; McLeod, 1997).

DIALOGUE
Dialogue requires people to gradually learn to suspend their defensive exchanges and further probe into the underlying reasons for why those exchanges exist. In a Learning Organization, employees should be prepared to willingly uncover their assumptions about themselves and their environment. Thus, a Learning Organizations needs to do more than acquire new knowledge. In fact, it requires managers to unlearn old practices that have outlived their usefulness and discard ways of processing experiences that have worked in the past. The central purpose of dialogue is to establish a field of genuine meeting and enquiry. Isaacs (1993) refers to this as "container" (p 25) and builds a setting in which people are allowed to free flow of meaning and vigorous exploration of the collective background of their thoughts, their personal dispositions, their shared attention, and their rigid features of their individual and collective

assumptions. Consequently, dialogue is defined as "a sustained collective inquiry into the processes, assumptions, and certainties that composed everyday experience" (Isaacs, 1993, p 25).

A substantial number of academics deem dialogue to be an essential part for the development of organizational learning, including Senge (1990), Useem and Kochan (1992), Nadler and Nadler (1993), Gerard and Teurfs (1995), Heckman (1996), Jaworski (1996), Ruohotie (1996), Alvesson (1997), and Kirk and Kirk (1997). Dialogue occurs when organizations move beyond communication and between the various sub-cultures and thus facilitate a new level of genuine collaboration. It is therefore a highly sophisticated level of genuine communication between all sectors of the organization including its clients or customers. Schein (1993) suggests that problem solving groups or teams in an organization must engage in dialogue. Dialogue facilitates the building of sufficient common ground and mutual trust in that all members are able to reveal was is really going on in their minds. Accordingly, Schein (1993) offers practical advice on how to commence dialogue. This involves a facilitator creating the physical space, defining good communication, having members share their past experiences they consider examples of good communication, and having each member comment. It is important that in these sessions each member of the group feels equal and is given guaranteed "air time" (p 44). Moreover, critical to the successful development of dialogue is the ability of individuals to engage in "suspension" (p 44) during meetings and conversation. Suspension may occur when individuals engage in internal listening and do not respond with an emotional reply to ideas expressed by others. It is this response that allows individuals to become reflective and to start to appreciate that their perceptions may be colored by their needs and expectations. It is this process of becoming reflective that makes participants realize that the first problem of listening to others is to identify the distortions and bias that filters ones own cognitive process (Schein, 1993).

According to Senge (1990), dialogue is not a discussion that shares its roots with percussion and concussion and is basically a competitive exchange. Dialogue is a basic process for building common understanding, in that it allows participants to see hidden meanings of words. By letting disagreement go, meanings become clearer and the group gradually builds a shared set of meanings that make much higher levels of collaboration and creative thinking possible (Senge, 1990). Watkins and Marsick (1993) emphasize how dialogue reflects the way individuals think and is a key to learning through interaction with one another. It is therefore considered a critical medium of learning. Specifically, as it relates to Senge's model (1990), a dialogue forms a foundation that enables work groups to better practice the learning disciplines.

Isaacs (1993) identifies four stages of dialogue. The first stage is the 'instability of the container' reflected by individuals with a variety of unexpressed assumptions, beliefs, and perspectives. The second stage is also the 'instability of the container' and recognition of the first stage crisis. It is a decision to tolerate uncertainty that creates an environment where people realize that they are doing something different than usual. Groups fluctuate between suspending views and falling back into the more comfortable mode of discussing and critiquing them. The third stage is the 'inquiry in the container'. If the second crisis is navigated, a new level of awareness among the group emerges. People inquire together as a whole and insights often emerge. The fourth stage is the 'creativity in the container'. If this third crisis is navigated, consciousness among group members is raised to new heights. Thinking takes on a different rhythm and pace. People realize that the medium and the message are linked. Information from

the dialogue process conveys as much meaning as the content of the words being exchanged. Rigid, ingrained thought patterns are loosened as new levels of intelligence emerge (Isaacs, 1993). According to Gerard and Teurfs (1995), these four stages of dialogue assist in the process of cultural transformation in three ways – behaviorally, experientially, and attitudinally. Behavioral transformation is possible when participants learn how to dialogue together and experiential transformation follows as higher levels of dialogue are achieved. Attitudinal transformation is possible when dialogue facilitates a shift at the "belief and attitude" (Gerard & Teurfs, 1995, p 148) level and when rigid individualism gives way to attitudes of collaboration and partnership.

Senge (1990) contends that dialogue also assists in the development of shared vision and includes it as one of the five disciplines. Sergiovanni (1994) characterizes dialogue as an educational platform that incorporates the school's beliefs about the preferred aims, methods, and climate, and thereby creates a community of mind that establishes behavioral norms. Vanderberghe (1995) suggests that "vision" rather than "vision building" (p 40) plays a crucial role in the construction and maintenance of a professional culture within schools.

Fritz (1996) states that organizations advance when a clear vision creates tension between the real and the ideal, while Starratt (1995) stresses the importance of institutionalizing the vision in policies, programs, and procedures. Smith and Stolp (1995) and Fritz (1996) view dialogue as the foundation for the other organizational learning methodologies and an essential ingredient for successful cultural change in school organizations.

SCENARIO ANALYSIS

Scenario analysis involves the organization in planning responses to change under a number of likely scenarios rather than planning for only one single scenario. At its most basic, scenario analysis is a disciplined method of imaging possible futures that organizations could apply and converting organized possibilities into narratives that are easier to grasp than great volumes of data. According to Schoemaker (1995), the most important characteristic of scenario analysis is that it challenges the prevailing "mindset" (p 26-27) of those in the organization. For school communities to anticipate the future in a rapidly changing, dynamic, and volatile environment requires far more than systematic analysis. It demands creativity, insight, and intuition. Scenarios, stories about possible futures, combine these elements into a foundation for robust strategies. The test of a good scenario is not whether it portrays the future accurately but whether it enables a school organization to learn and adapt. Scenarios are described as alternative environments in which today's decisions are played out. They are not predictions, nor strategies.

Instead, they consist of descriptions of different futures specifically designed to highlight the risks and opportunities inherent in specific strategic issues. Alternative scenarios provide a way of investigating the future without focusing on one forecast to the exclusion of others. Therefore, scenario analysis is a tool for ordering one's perceptions about future environments. In practice, scenario analysis resembles a set of stories, written or spoken, that are built around carefully constructed plots. Scenario analysis, thus, presents alternative images, instead of extrapolating current trends from the present (Schoemaker, 1995).

Scenario planning differs from other planning methods, such as contingency planning, sensitivity analysis, and computer simulations. Contingency planning examines only one uncertainty and presents a base case and an exception or contingency. Scenarios explore the joint

impact of various uncertainties that stand side by side as equals. Sensitivity analysis examines the effect of a change in one variable keeping all other variables constant. Moving one variable at a time makes sense for small changes. However, if the change is much larger other variables do not stay constant. Scenarios, on the other hand, change several variables at a time without keeping others constant. Scenarios are more than just the output of a complex simulation model. They attempt to interpret output by identifying patterns and clusters among the millions of possible outcomes a computer simulation might have generated. Thus, scenarios go beyond analysis that includes subjective interpretations and organized possibilities into narratives that are easier to grasp than great volumes of data. Perhaps the most important characteristic of scenario analysis is that it too challenged the prevailing "mindsets" (Schoemaker, 1995, p 26-27) of those in the organization. Scenario analysis helps with the implementation of business process re-engineering (BPR). Wrong or inadequate changes to systems or processes may sometimes result in political backlashes. To manage the risks of BPR, it is important to anticipate an organization's future environmental and operational uncertainties. Scenario analysis provides a way to avoid the obstacles to "revisioning" (Clemons, 1995, p 61-71) that includes over-confidence, intellectual arrogance, and anchoring in the present. Successful scenario analysis sessions require certain ground rules. These include putting aside assumptions about norms, politics, and structure, and, thus, provides an open, non-threatening environment, open communication that facilitates an examination of underlying values, everyone is viewed as an equal, and a facilitator who ensures that the sessions stay focused on the future (Hosley, Lau, Levy, & Tan, 1994). Scenario analysis is likened to a play where the actors are free to imagine the improbable thus expanding thinking and creativity (Thomas, 1994).

Scenario analysis is especially important to the schools of the future, as they are likely to need to possess knowledge and skills that nurture change over time toward that vision. According to Snyder, Acker-Hocevar, and Snyder (1996) and Dalin and Rust (1996), it is essential that many of the deep-rooted traditions of schooling become extinct and new dynamic and energetic work cultures emerge to take their place. In such schools, principals will build Learning Organizations that center on student needs for 21st century life, and indeed function as school leaders who are designers, teachers, and stewards (Snyder, Acker-Hocevar, & Snyder, 1996, p 19). In addition, schools of the future will establish curriculum where everything ties together and where the learning process will relate to the everyday learning and to the maturity of the students. Additionally, teachers in schools of the future will be continuously motivated to learn themselves and schools will develop toward a Learning Organization where the standard of the entire staff participates in investigations, does research, works together and creates results together (Dalin & Rust, 1996, p 150-156).

LEARNING HISTORIES

Learning Histories assists in understanding what it takes to make a learning community. In the broadest sense, a learning history is a new approach to the old concept of learning from the past and involves an interactive right and left hand column analysis on a selected theme. The most effective learning histories are jointly told tales in which teams of insiders work closely with outside researchers (Roth & Kleiner, 1995). A learning history is a relatively new format for presenting the story of a research project. It is designed to portray the project as participants experience it and to invite participants to draw their own conclusions. A learning history

describes what happens in a learning and change process in the voice of participants. It documents 'hard' facts and events and focuses upon what people think about events, how they perceive their own actions, and records differences in people's perceptions.

A learning history includes not just reports of action and results, but the underlying assumptions and reactions of a variety of people. The final report may take many different forms but its story is always larger than any a person's experience. The power of the learning history depends upon its ability to convey multiple perspectives on controversial events. Every participant should feel that their own point of view is treated fairly and that they understand how other people come to their perspective and every reader should undergo a learning experience just from reading the learning history (Roth, 1996). Such an approach applies the assessment of an organizational change initiative through an effort to develop the capability of the people in the change process. The participants also evaluate the program and its progress in the service of creating materials that will help to diffuse their learning to other interested parties. In combining these three elements of learning history, a feedback cycle at an organizational level is created. Assessment to capability-development to evaluation and back to assessment becomes a process of organizational reflection that leads to the development of actionable knowledge (Argyris, 1993). Learning histories have been developed, utilized, and refined by Roth and Kleiner (1995), Roth (1996). Jacques (1997), Thomas (1997), Wymer and Roth (1997), and Castleberg and Roth (1998). They are now recognized as a valuable methodology to assist organizations in promoting learning and cultural change.

Learning histories draw upon techniques from ethnography (Sanday, 1979), oral history (Yow, 1994), and action research, learning, and process consultation (Argyris, Putnam, Smith, 1985; Argyris, 1990) in promoting reflection and inquiry. Action research adds focused inquiry skills and effective methods for developing people's capacities to reflect upon and assess the results of their efforts. The analysis of data from interviews, observation, and written documents follows from traditional qualitative data analysis processes (Strauss, 1987; Corbin and Strauss, 1990; Miles and Huberman, 1994). An emphasis of the analysis process is to develop grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) from what people said happened and the issues that face them (Roth, 1996).

Each element in a learning history process (i.e., interviewing, observing, analyzing, writing, editing, circulating drafts, following up and conducting dissemination workshops) is intended to broaden and deepen learning throughout the organization by providing a forum for reflecting on learning and substantiating results. The learning history process can be beneficial not only for the original participants, but also for researchers who advise them, and ultimately for anyone who is interested in organizations' learning processes (Roth, 1996).

A learning history focuses upon what people think about the event and how they perceive their own and other people's actions. A learning history unveils the differences in people's perceptions. By 'hearing' all the voices and recreating the experience of 'being there', learning histories help understanding of what happened in a way that enables more effective judgments to be made. The chief objective therefore of learning histories is to transfer and diffuse participants' learning (Castleberg & Roth, 1998).

The learning history methodology helps participants assess and evaluate themselves, as researchers capture the data that allows the larger learning process to be documented. The following seven stage processes of learning history can help create a feedback cycle that

encourages reflection (Roth, 1996). First, a planning stage delineates the range and scope of the document as well as the audience that intends to learn from the organizations experience. Second, a series of retrospective, reflective conversational interviews with participants in a learning effort is commenced taking pains to gather perspectives from every significant point of view. Third, a small group of internal staff members and outsider learning historians 'distil' the raw material into a coherent set of themes. This analytic effort, based upon techniques of qualitative data analysis and the development of grounded theory, builds capacity for making sense of and evaluating improvement efforts. Fourth, a document is written based upon a thematic orientation that includes use of narrative from interviews. These quotes are fact-checked with participants before they are distributed in any written material. Such checking provides an additional opportunity for reflection. Fifth, a small key group of participants attend a workshop after reading the learning history prototype to allow reflection and review of the material. Sixth, the learning history document becomes the basis for a series of dissemination workshops. In the dissemination workshops people throughout the school consider the questions 'what has the school learned so far from this program?' and 'how is its success (or lack of success) judged?'. Finally, after a series of dissemination workshops, a review of the learning history effort itself is carried out (Roth, 1996).

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THE LEARNING ORGANIZATION SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT MODEL

Interestingly, much of the literature on the Learning Organization has been written from the perspective that Learning Organizations produce positive outcomes for the organization. However, even though numerous authors, including Senge (1990), McGill, Slocum, and Lei (1992), and Garvin (1993), have considered the notion of a Learning Organization culture, there does not appear to be any widely accepted theory on how this could be achieved. Some authors have identified a Learning Organization culture as entrepreneurship and risk taking (Kanter, 1989; Cahill, 1997), facilitative leadership (e.g., Slater & Narver, 1995), organic structures (Woodman, Sawyer, & Griffin, 1993), decentralized strategic planning processes (Mintzberg, 1994), and individual development valued as an end in itself (Garvin, 1993). At the same time, however, there have been few attempts to test these conceptual approaches empirically, or to measure to what extent they have contributed to and enhanced organizational performance (Garavan, 1997).

The author of this article opines that new light can be focused upon this dilemma by developing a Learning Organization model that expedites a path to cultural change. Garavan (1997) suggests that the essential task in creating a Learning Organization is the creation of enabling cultures and structures that are needed at the individual and organizational levels. This is the essential focus for the creation of a Learning Organization "Model of Cultural Change in Schools" that will augment such cultures and structures.

Cleary (1992) describes a model as a simplified representation of the real world. This suggests that it takes the form of a diagrammatic representation (e.g., chart) or may be

conceptual in that words, statements, or phrases are used to describe the overall operation of the researcher at hand. Irrespective of whether the model may be a diagram or be conceptual, the purpose of any model is to simplify and clarify thinking, to identify important aspects, to suggest explanations, and to predict consequences (Dye, 1992). Models have been widely employed in management theory to help clarify relationships and processes, including McGregor's (1960) theory 'X' and theory 'Y' model, Blake & Mouton's (1964) nine part grid diagram, and conceptual models developed by Maslow (1954) and Herzberg (1974). These studies confirm that models assist the researcher to understand the 'real' world and to provide a useful touchstone between the real world and the reality of the researcher (Dye, 1992).

Figure 1 presents the 'Learning Organization model for school organizations' which is a schematic model of organizational learning that allows a link between theory and the real world. It is analogous to a map that links analysis and investigation with the world of observable events. The schematic model is an extension of the semantic model and displays the relationships and processes of organizational learning and cultural change in schools. Keeves (1997) claims that semantic and schematic models lack precision, which render them not amenable to testing, and do little to advance the development of theory. However, Keeves also acknowledges that semantic and schematic models are nonetheless very popular in educational research and such symbolic and diagrammatic form models help to make explicit the structure of a model that would otherwise be hidden in an excess of words. Morecroft and Sterman (1994) warn that when constructing a model, it is better to adopt the 'client' rather than the 'expert' perspective as this avoids the problem of giving little consideration to the client's existing mental models.

MODELS OF EDUCATIONAL CULTURAL CHANGE AND LEARNING

A considerable number of Learning Organization change models have emerged over the past ten years (Garvin, 1993; Kim, 1993; Benoit & Mackenzie, 1994; Marquardt & Reynolds, 1994; Castle & Estes, 1995; Nevis, DiBella, & Gould, 1995; Acker-Hocevar, 1996; Cicmil, 1997; Robinson, Clemson, and Keating, 1997). For the purpose of this research paper, three of the above models of organizational learning and cultural change will be examined. These models have been instrumental in the conception, development, and evolution of the 'Learning Organization model for school organizations' (Figure 1).

Acker-Hocevar (1996) presents an "education quality culture model" (p 80-81) for school organizations whose focus is customer success and satisfaction. This results from the interconnected action of six performance areas, including strategic planning, systems thinking and action, information systems, human resource development, quality services, and visionary leadership. An additional dimension of continual improvement stimulates all the performance areas into an on-going and system-wide improvement. Acker-Hocevar (1996) asserts that a quality school culture influences the system-wide response to customer needs and expectations and affects desired outcomes in customer success and satisfaction. Thus, customer needs and expectations drive school development over time and affect shared vision and school purpose. New customer requirements affect both the individual's and the school's capacity for increased adaptation and change. The school's ability to respond to altered conditions and trends in the educational environment is essential for the success of the school. The importance of this model results from its strong links and dialogue with the community and the importance of visionary leadership, strategic planning, systems thinking and action, and human resource development.

According to Acker-Hocevar (1996), these characteristics are considered essential for the establishment of a Learning Organization school.

Castle and Estes (1995) developed a model of a high-performance learning community. The model depicts a learning community that is learner-centered, community-based, and strategically-managed. It assumes that all individuals are able to learn to their fullest capacity. The model promises education, health, and social services to children, their families, and the broader community. It provides coherence and support for all citizens from birth to death. Through the mastery of specialized skills in preparation for employment at the individual's highest level, learners acquire the abilities and motivation necessary for lifelong learning. The scale of impact has drawn some criticism as the model extends in breadth from lifelong education for all community learners to health and social services of the community and in time span from birth to death. Nevertheless, the model displays rich qualities of a systemic nature that separates it from the rest of the school improvement/cultural change models.

Benoit and Mackenzie (1994) present a Learning Organization model that incorporates a sophisticated notion of process. This model expands the simple definition of process and recognizes process as a time-dependent sequence of elements. According to Benoit & Mackenzie (1994), the model also incorporates the role of people and structures in the organization. Universities, as defined in developed countries, have also been involved in establishing Learning Organization structures (Franklin, Hodgkinson, & Stewart, 1998; Martin, 1999; Tam, 1999; Comley, Arandez, Holden, & Kuriata, 2001; Forest, 2002; Prince & Stewart, 2002). They have generally been concerned with the same issues as in school organziations despite their different educational hierarchical level, including, strategies for developing Learning Organizations, the importance of the empowerment of all members, the significance of a spirit of inquiry and continual learning, Learning Organizations committed to continuous improvement, learning opportunities for university faculty and staff, and the ideal corporate learning university. The models in the literature do not add any further information than that contained in the Learning Organization models for schools. The author of this research paper will therefore use the models that have been identified for school organizations.

MODELS OF CHANGE IN SCHOOL ORGANIZATIONS

The three educational Learning Organization models proposed by Acker-Hocevar (1996), Castle and Estes (1995), and Benoit and Mackenzie (1994) emphasize strong Learning Organization processes. Despite their standing, they seem to offer limited insight into the methodologies that are required to implement such processes in school organizations. They also appear to be indifferent toward teacher emotions that have significant impacts on cultural change outcomes. The discovery of effective and successful methodologies for cultural change in school organizations remains the crucial challenge. Nonetheless, the diversity of the three organizational learning models has strongly influenced the formulation of the main model underlying this research paper.

The 'Learning Organization model for school organizations' (Figure 1) highlights and draws attention to the need to accurately *establish the existing culture of the school organization* before any methodologies are to be applied. Drucker (1998) deems this "essential" (p 3-5) and asserts that most organizations move to correct the culture of the organization, before they accurately establish the assumptions upon which the organization has been built. Drucker (1998)

emphasizes that these are the very assumptions that shape the organization's behavior and dictate the organization's decisions about what to do and what not to do. In other words, to successfully generate a Learning Organization and/or to carry out cultural change in a school organization, it is imperative to establish correct assumptions about the organization and its environment, including the society and its structures, the market, the customer, and the technology. Drucker (1998) also puts emphasis on the assertion that it is vital to establish assumptions about the specific vision and mission of the organization and to ascertain correct assumptions about the core competencies needed to establish the organization's vision and mission. The assumptions about the organization's environment, the organization's vision and mission, and the organization's core competencies must fit reality. According to Drucker (1998), they must also fit one another and be known, understood, and constantly "tested" (p 10-11) throughout the organization.

The 'Learning Organization model for school organizations' (Figure 1) constitutes the conceptual framework of this paper and aims to establish accurate assumptions about the school's environment, its vision and mission, and its core competencies, and to record the impact that Learning Organization methodologies have upon these processes taking into account the positive and negative impacts of staff emotions. At the outset, the conceptual framework purports to ascertain the existing school culture (Box 1) that in itself is not considered a Learning Organization. Thereafter, the framework determines the perceived ideal Learning Organization school (Box 2). Thereafter, discrepancies between the descriptive existing school culture (Box 1) and the prescriptive perceived ideal Learning Organization school (Box 2) are likely to emerge (Box 3). Consequently, the identified perceived shortcomings (Box 4) in terms of an organization's leadership (Box 5), culture (Box 6), innovation and communication (Box 7), and professional development and recognition (Box 8) are expected to manifest. According to Cole, Hale, and Whitlam (1997), it is the organization's leadership, culture, innovation and communication, and professional development and recognition characterize and exemplify Learning Organizations.
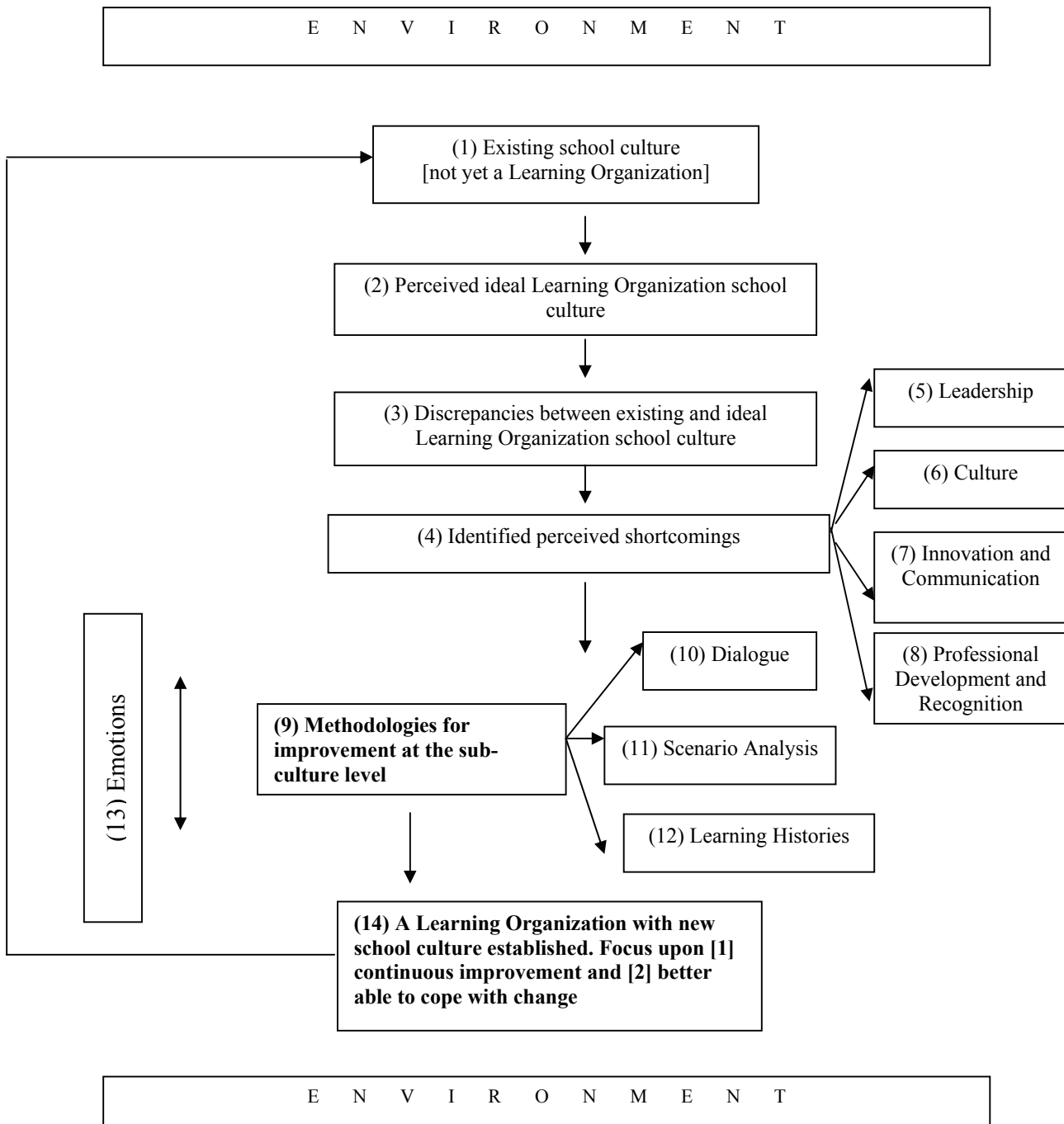
Figure 1 Learning Organization model for school organizations

Source: developed for this research paper and adapted from Drucker (1998, pp. 9-11)

CONCLUSION

School organizations as Learning Organizations have a strong tendency to focus upon continuous improvement and possess the capacity and ability to cope with change successfully and effectively. This research paper has explored the proposed methodologies to develop non-Learning Organization school organizations as genuine Learning Organizations, including the tools of business process re-engineering (BPR), dialogue, scenario analysis, and learning histories. In an effort to transform a school organization into a Learning Organization, a model entitled 'Learning Organization model for school organizations' (Figure 1) has emerged. This model is primarily based upon Drucker's (1998) research and impacted by established models, including the three educational Learning Organization models proposed by Acker-Hocevar (1996), Castle and Estes (1995), and Benoit and Mackenzie (1994). The author of this research has concluded that the latter models have a strong tendency to emphasize Learning Organization processes and may thus not be adequate for the radical and successful transformation of a school organization into a Learning Organization.

Further research on the transformation of a school organization into a genuine Learning Organization is absolutely paramount. School organizations in particular will require a culture that focuses upon continuous improvement and, more importantly, have the ability and capacity to cope with major internal and external change effectively and successfully. The model that has emerged in this research paper (Figure 1) is still an untested framework that needs to be further developed, refined, and tested. For this purpose, a case study research ought be conducted in an attempt to transform an existing non-Learning Organization school organization into a Learning Organization.

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