

Students' Quality of School Life in Band 5 Schools

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As part of a major study that investigated the quality of school education in Hong Kong, this study assessed the quality of schooling in Band 5 secondary schools. If the quality of school education is to be enhanced, students' views of the quality of school life and their reactions to school should be examined. With reference to the Australian model and subscales of quality of school life, a sample of 2460 students from three selected Band 5 secondary schools was surveyed. Principal component analysis was used to analyze the data to explore the multidimensionality of quality of school life and the existence of subscales. The research contributes to provide insights to understand Band 5 schools and hints to assure the quality of education. Findings show that sense of achievement was not evident in the students' views of quality of school life and sense of opportunity had no effects on students' general satisfaction and negative affects. To promote the quality of education in schools which have admitted a great proportion of Band 5 students, enhancing teacher-students relations, strengthening social integration, and improving adventurous experience in the classroom are the effective strategies.

The *Education Commission Report No. 7 (ECR7)* recommended that quality school education should be assured by a two-pronged strategy: external monitoring through implementation of whole school inspections

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by the Quality Assurance Inspectorate (QAI) and internal school self-evaluation. The performance of schools will be audited against sets of indicators prescribed by the Education Department (1998a, 1998b). The QAI will make suggestions to schools according to the results of assessments concerning their further development and the areas in which they should get improved in the near future.

Hong Kong is at the outset of quality school educational reform (Siu & Tam, 1995; Board of Education, 1997; Education Commission, 1997; Pang, 1998a, 1998b), there are still no valid and reliable sets of performance indicators (PIs) for use in whole school inspections and school self-evaluation. Two sets of performance indicators have been proposed by the Education Department, one for primary schools (Education Department, 1998a) and one for secondary schools (Education Department, 1998b). However, the two booklets of performance indicators published by the Education Department depict only a structural framework of PIs that consists of domains, areas, aspects, components and suggested sources of information. In the framework, four domains of PIs, which include management and organization, teaching and learning, ethos and supports, and academic and non-academic performance, were proposed for both primary and secondary schools. Each domain was divided into several smaller areas which, in turn, further split into aspects and components. In total, 114 components of PIs were proposed for primary schools, whereas 116 components for secondary schools.

The reliability and validity of the sets of performance indicators proposed by the Education Department may be a question in terms of their general applicability to schools, since the PIs have not been validated and put into sophisticated statistical testing and development. The general applicability of the two sets of PIs must be established through numerous repeated tests with diverse samples of subjects of interest. Similarly, no reliable and valid PIs have been developed for use in internal assessments, while schools are

encouraged to conduct self-evaluation (Pang, 1998c). It was under this premise this study was carried out and attempts were made to develop some performance indicators for use in both external monitoring and internal school self-evaluation. Whereas there could be multiple PIs depending on one's chosen perspective, this study only attempted to develop PIs that indicate students' quality of school life in secondary schools. More specifically, this paper, as part of a major project, reports only the development of PIs for schools with Band 5 students (Band 5 schools), since these schools are unique and commonly ignored when quality school education is discussed in Hong Kong.

What then is meant by "Band 5 schools?" In the Secondary School Places Allocation (SSPA) System now functioning in Hong Kong, after the completion of primary schooling, pupils in the whole population are divided into five bands. "Band 1" refers to those pupils at the top 20% in a converted order of merit, Band 2 at the next 20%, and so on. Thus "Band 5 schools" are those schools which have admitted a large proportion of their pupils from bottom 20% in their Form 1 intakes. These are unpopular schools because both parents and students have rated them as a low priority based on the allocation system. Band 5 schools have students who are typically academically low achievers and students heavily associated with serious disciplinary problems (Education Department, 1993). Regardless of extra resources (for example, extra supports from the Student Discipline Section and central co-ordination teams from the Curriculum Development Institute) and special measures (for example, adopting "tailor-made curriculum," improved social worker-student ratio, additional manpower for guidance, strengthening home-school relationships and reduced class size), effective ways to promote the quality of education in Band 5 schools are still not fully understood. Thus this research attempted to provide some insights on the perceptions of students in Band 5 schools, and speculate on ways to promote the quality of education in these schools.

Students' Views of Quality of School Life

Concerns about the quality of school life and its measurement is probably greater now than ever before (Pang, 1999). The concept of "quality of school life" is ambiguous and remains vaguely defined. In order to comprehend the very meanings of quality of school life, one should have an understanding of the concept of "quality of life." The word "quality" is understood in a given context in its first lexicographic sense: it refers to the more or less "good" or "satisfactory" character of people's life (Szalai & Andrews, 1980, p.8). The word "life" is to be understood in the context of "quality of life" as referring to human life only. "Life" may refer to everyday life, the whole course of life, or life at its present state. In current sociological literature, term like "standard" or "level" of living, "style" of life, "quality" of life, "way" of life and so forth are used each in several different meanings (Bestuzhev-Lada, 1980, p.159). Quality of life is a value-laden concept because it refers to attributes that are "desirable" or "undesirable," selected out of all the qualitative attributes and their duly quantified indivisible elements which are involved with or respond to the life process of human beings (Mukherjee, 1980, p.189). The concept of quality of life has been extensively studied for adults (Nussbaum & Sen, 1993; Seed & Llyod, 1997) and is generally referred to the three basic aspects that have been discussed at both the individual and societal levels -- general feelings of well-being, opportunity to fulfill one's potential, and feeling positive social involvement (Baldwin, Godfrey & Proper, 1990). As to students' quality of school life, Epstein (1976) defined it in terms of three dimensions of student reactions to school -- satisfaction with school in general, commitment to schoolwork and attitudes towards teachers. In Epstein's conception of quality of school life, the quality of school life is viewed as a measure affected by both the informal and formal aspects of school including social and task-related experiences and relationship with authority figures and peers.

There has been a long history of school evaluations preoccupied with the measurement of academic achievement. Most parents regard that schools

with higher average achievement scores are quality schools and that their children studying there are having quality school education and quality school life. Although schools define many goals, academic success has always been the only goal regularly monitored and the only indicator for quality of school life.

Even further, some people define quality of schools in terms of school quantities, for example, higher per-pupil expenditures, better teacher credentials, more library books, laboratories, or other facilities or equipment and so forth (Epstein, 1981, p.1). However, these may have little to do with the quality of daily life in the school and imply little about internal processes of the school. The quality of school life for students is more likely to be determined by social processes in schools and classrooms than by objective quantities of resources. It may well be that the quality of a student's life is affected by the quality of the school's environment and culture, and that these are in part a function of how well the lives of students in the school go. Traditional research has ignored student reports on what schools are doing and has ignored other outcomes that are also important for student development and for determining how schools are doing. Thus it is important to investigate students' views of the school's environment and culture that can describe whether they are having quality school life. When the quality of school life is a reflection of how well a student's life is going in school, school evaluations are more accurately assessed.

Different stakeholders of schools, including, school administrators, teachers, parents, employers and the public, may have different views and expectation of the quality of school education and their views are quite diverse. Many researchers believed that if the quality of school education is to be enhanced, students' views of their quality of school life should be examined (Ainley, Goldman & Reed, 1990; Ramsay & Clark, 1990). In exploring students' views on quality of school life, different researchers emphasized different domains of students' performance in schools, including

both academic and social aspects. While there has been a long tradition of assessing quality of education in terms of students' academic achievement, especially in the school effectiveness movement, some researchers suggested the assessment of students' self-esteem (Bagley, Bolitho & Bertrand, 1997), general self-concepts (Marsh, 1994), healthy self-concepts (Lam, 1995), academic self-concepts (Marsh & Yeung, 1997), and students' perceptions of quality of school life (Epstein, 1981; Ainley & Bourke, 1992; Johnson & Johnson, 1993).

Students' attitudes toward school may be studied as performance indicators (PIs) – a reflection of how well a school is doing. Performance indicators may be objective, for example, academic achievement and dropout rate, or subjective, for example, measures of self-esteem, self-concept, and students' views of school life and reactions to school. However, objective PIs may be less informative for school decision making than subjective ones, since students' subjective reactions are messages about the school conditions as they are experienced. This study developed some subjective PIs in the area of students' view of quality of school life basing on a model developed by Epstein and Mcpartland (1976), William and Batten (1981) and Ainley, Goldman and Reed (1990) and to enrich the literature in this area. The multidimensionality of students' views of quality of school life has been confirmed and extensively tested in schools in different countries.

Epstein and Mcpartland (1976) were the first researchers to propose a model of students' perceptions of quality of school life. They empirically confirmed that students' perceptions of the quality of school life have at least three dimensions: (1) general satisfaction with the school, (2) commitment to schoolwork, and (3) teacher-student relationship. Epstein and Mcpartland's simple model was tested in school contexts and was well established with reliability and validity. The concept of quality of school life and Epstein's subscales of quality of school life were subsequently tested extensively in other countries, for example, the United States (Wright &

Jesness, 1981), Canada (Isherwood & Hammah, 1981), Israel (Darom & Rich, 1981) and West Germany (Scheerer, 1981).

However, Epstein's conception of quality of school life was a bit narrow in the sense that only three areas of students' reactions to school were covered. In Australia, William and Batten (1981) further developed the model of students' views of quality of school life in Victorian schools. After interviewing with thousands of students from different schools in Victoria, they proposed a model of students' views of quality of school life that is distinguished into general feelings of well being and feelings related to specific domains of life. The general domains came from the literature concerned with quality of life overall whereas the specific domains derived from a theory of schooling. The general domain of quality of school life has two subscales, which are:

1. General satisfaction – it measures general positive feelings about school (e.g., My school is a place where I really like to go each day).
2. Negative affect – it measures general negative personal reactions to school (e.g., My school is a place where I feel upset).

Both subscales are measures of students' general well being at school. William and Batten (1981) also proposed five specific areas of student experience originated from a theory of schooling developed by Mitchell and Spady (1978). They were:

1. Teacher-student relations – it refers to the adequacy of interaction between teachers and students (e.g., My school is place where my teachers help me to do my best).
2. Social integration – it refers to students' relationships with other people and classmates (e.g., My school is place where other students accept me as I am).

3. Opportunity – it refers to a belief in the relevance of schooling (e.g., My school is a place where the things I learn are important to me).
4. Achievement – it refers to a sense of being successful in schoolwork (e.g., My school is a place where I am successful as a student).
5. Adventure – it refers to a sense of self-motivation in learning and a sense that learning is enjoyable for its own sake (e.g., My school is a place where I am excited about the work we do).

Based on this framework, a school-life questionnaire was developed by Ainley, Reed and Miller (1986) in the Victorian government secondary schools. Their work revealed that students' views of quality of school life are related to aspects of school organization and teacher job satisfaction. Another school life questionnaire for use in primary schools was developed by Ainley, Goldman and Reed (1990) and its general applicability was well established in both the Victorian and New South Wales school systems (Ainley & Bourke, 1992). Other studies reveal that student, teacher and school demographic characteristics did have effects on student quality of school life (Bourke, 1992) and student quality of school life was strongly associated with intentions for further education (Bourke & Smith, 1989) and student absenteeism and teacher stress (Schofield & Bourke, 1997).

In outlining the framework of students' quality of school life it was indicated that five of the subscales referred to specific domains and two to general aspects of school life. Such a view is consistent with the structure of many job satisfaction measures, for example, Holdaway's (1978) conception of teachers' job satisfaction in which teacher satisfaction in the workplace was divided into specific areas and general areas. Such a framework of quality of school life enables the examination of the question of which of the specific domains of school life is most influential in terms of general satisfaction and negative affects. When using the data gathered from the Band 5 schools

in this study and using regression analysis, it was possible to infer which strategies are effective to promote students' quality of school life by manipulating the five subscales in the specific domain of quality of school life.

In this study, "students' quality of school life" is defined as students' general satisfaction to schools as well as their specific reactions to aspects of schooling. The quality of school life is a measure that is affected by both the informal and formal aspects of school and is determined by their experiences inside or outside the classroom. Attempts were made to test whether the model of quality of school life developed in the Australian context could also be applicable in Hong Kong schools. As part of a major study which investigated into the quality of school education in Hong Kong, this study only assessed the quality of schooling in a sample of three secondary schools with Band 5 students as their major Form 1 pupil intakes. By adapting the Quality of School Life (QSL) questionnaire developed by Ainley, Reed and Miller (1986) in Hong Kong schools, the aims of this study were (i) to explore the general applicability of the Australian model of quality of school life in the local context, (ii) to develop some performance indicators for use in the assessment of the quality of school education and (iii) to suggest strategies, such as counselling interventions, which are effective in promoting students' quality of school life in Band 5 schools. A further development of such a model enables the quality of school life in Hong Kong schools be managed and be improved continuously.

Method

Participants

Band 5 schools are those schools which have admitted a large proportion of their pupils from bottom 20% in a converted order of merit in their Form 1 intakes. Most schools have to admit pupils from a mix of bands, and an average banding value can be calculated for the Form 1 pupil intake for each school. A school admitting 70% Band 5 pupils, 20% Band 4 pupils

and 10% Band 3 pupils will have an average banding value of 4.60. In this study, Band 5 schools are defined as those schools which have an averaging banding value ranged from 4.50-5.00, that is, those schools which have admitted a great proportion of Band 5 students in their Form 1 intakes. Three Band 5 schools* were invited to participate in the study. The three schools were selected since they had average banding values greater than 4.50 as revealed by the principals as well as they were interested and willing to take part in the study.

Instrument

Ainley, Reed and Miller's (1986) original 44-item Quality of School Life (QSL) questionnaire was adapted in this study. All 44 items were translated into Chinese. For the sake of easy understanding by students the 44 items were already phrased in a very simple English form and the idea in each item was not complicated. This rendered the translation of the items into Chinese straight forwards and without much difficulty. A professor who specialized both English and Chinese also checked the translation to ensure accurate meanings of the items.

A major aim of this study was to explore the general applicability of the Australian model of quality of school life in the Hong Kong context. There might be cross-cultural problems in transferring the items to local schools. If the meanings of some items were not the views of Hong Kong students, the items would not load onto respective subscales in subsequent factor analyses. Considering the fact that it was an exploratory study and that too few items loading onto a respective subscale would render its reliability coefficient decreased, two to three more new items that described students' views of quality of school life were created and added to each of the subscales. In total, 16 new items were added to the original item pool in constructing the quality of school life questionnaire. Students were requested to rate the 60 school life items in the form of "My school is a place where..." and on a four-point Likert scale from "Strongly Disagree," "Disagree," "Agree" and

“Strongly Agree” with “1” indicating “Strongly Disagree” to “4” indicating “Strongly Agree.”

Procedures

The adapted version of the QSL was administered to all Secondary 1 to 5 students (78 classes) in the three selected schools. The questionnaires were administered to all the students within each school at the same period of time. Teachers who were in charge of that particular period were requested to read out the instructions and all the items to the students. Students had about 40 minutes to respond to all the items in the questionnaires. In total, 2460 useful returns were obtained and the rate was 78 percent.

Results

As inspired from the work of Holdaway (1978), which indicates that teachers’ job satisfaction in the workplace could have two domains: facet and overall satisfaction, Bourke (1986) argued that the consequent factor analyses of the scales of quality of school life should be performed at two levels with items about general situations in schools included in the first and items about specific situations included in the second. Students’ quality of school life has been conceptualized as a two-factor model in which the first factor indicates students’ general feelings of well being at the school and the second factor indicates feelings related to specific areas.

Principal component analyses were conducted separately for the general school life items and for the specific school life items. This approach emphasized the development of specific subscales, which were considered to be more likely to provide useful information about concrete areas to schools and teachers than the more general subscales. The results of the principal component analyses of the general and specific domains of students’ views of quality of school life are shown in Tables 1 and 2 respectively, in which the structure, loading, eigenvalue and percentage of explained variance of respective factors are also included.

Table 1 Factor Loadings for Principal Component Analysis with Oblique Rotation for the General Domain of Quality of School Life Items

Item	The school is a place where...	Component	
		1	2
1.	...I like to be	0.785	0.000
2.	...I feel happy	0.753	-0.100
3.	...I really like to go each day	0.739	0.000
4.	...I get enjoyment from being there	0.716	0.000
5.	...I have a lot of fun	0.686	-0.157
6.	...I always miss very much	0.666	0.164
7.	...I want to go even on holidays	0.647	0.000
8.	...I feel helpless	0.115	0.709
9.	...I feel threatened	0.000	0.700
10.	...I feel neglected	0.000	0.670
11.	...I feel upset	-0.135	0.656
12.	...I feel worried	0.000	0.646
13.	...I feel restless	0.000	0.607
14.	...I feel lonely	-0.159	0.533
Eigenvalue		4.733	2.077
% of Variance Explained		33.80	14.84

- Note.** (1) Principal component analysis and oblique rotation were used in the factor extraction.
- (2) Salient variables are those with factor loadings greater than 0.3 in absolute value.
- (3) Based on the meanings of the grouped items, Component 1 is named "General Satisfaction" and Component 2 as "Negative Affects."

Table 2 Factor Loadings for Principal Component Analysis with Oblique Rotation for the Specific Domain of Quality of School Life Items

Item	The school is a place where...	Component			
		1	2	3	4
1.	...my teacher treats me fairly in class	0.802	0.000	0.000	0.000
2.	...my teacher help me to solve problem	0.756	0.000	0.000	0.000
3.	...my teacher is fair to me	0.736	0.000	0.000	0.000
4.	...my teacher guides me patiently	0.721	0.000	0.000	0.000
5.	...my teacher helps me to do my best	0.699	0.000	0.000	0.000
6.	...my teacher takes an interest in helping me with my work	0.666	0.000	0.148	0.127
7.	...my teacher listens to what I say	0.642	0.000	0.000	0.000
8.	...I am popular with other students	0.000	0.782	0.000	0.000
9.	...other student accept me as I am	-0.107	0.713	0.123	0.000
10.	...other students are very friendly	0.166	0.710	0.000	0.000
11.	...people look up to me	0.000	0.705	0.000	0.000
12.	...people trust me	0.000	0.686	0.000	0.000
13.	...I get on well with the other students in my class	0.000	0.648	0.000	0.000
14.	...other people care what I think	0.000	0.604	0.000	-0.125
15.	...what I learn will help me in the future career	0.000	0.000	0.738	0.000
16.	...it will help me fit to the society	0.000	0.000	0.702	0.000
17.	...the work is a good preparation for my future	0.000	0.000	0.695	0.000
18.	...the things I learn will help me in secondary school	0.000	0.000	0.694	-0.192
19.	...what I learn will be useful to me when I leave school	0.000	0.000	0.691	0.104
20.	...I get excited about the work we do	0.000	0.202	0.000	-0.647

(table continues)

Table 2 (Continued)

Item	The school is a place where...	Component			
		1	2	3	4
21.	...I like to do extra work	0.000	-0.109	0.129	-0.631
22.	...the work we do is interesting	0.132	0.116	0.000	-0.584
23.	...I enjoy what I do in class	0.216	0.204	-0.137	-0.559
24.	...learning is fun	0.140	0.000	0.149	-0.557
25.	...I always do the work that really interest me	0.156	0.135	0.000	-0.500
26.	...I know I can do well enough to be successful	0.285	0.000	0.107	-0.468
Eigenvalue		8.839	2.341	1.616	1.132
% of Variance Explained		34.00	9.00	6.22	4.36

Note. (1) Principal component analysis and oblique rotation were used in the factor extraction.

(2) Salient variables are those with factor loadings greater than 0.3 in absolute value.

(3) Based on the meanings of the grouped items, Component 1, 2, 3 and 4 are named as "Teacher-Student Relations," "Social Integration," "Opportunity" and "Adventure" respectively.

The two subscales of the general domain, general satisfaction and negative affects, matched what Ainley, Reed and Miller (1986) stipulated in their framework. However, of the original five subscales in the specific domain, only four subscales were resulted, including teacher-student relations, social integration, opportunity and adventure. The study reveals that achievement was the subscale in the specific domain that was missing in the students' views of quality of school life in the three Band 5 schools.

In scaling the latent factors, 40 items (out of the 60 items in the item pool) were included in the final factor structure of the QSL. All items of the subscales in the final factor structure contributed to the underlying meanings

of the latent constructs respectively. The factor structure of the final model of the quality of school life derived from the three Band 5 schools was somewhat different from the Australian model, in which the subscale of achievement was not concluded in the specific domain. The basic descriptive statistics and the reliability coefficients of the subscales are provided in Table 3. The reliability coefficients of the six subscales ranged from 0.78 to 0.87, indicating that they were reliable measures of students' perceptions of quality of school life in the three Band 5 schools.

Table 3 Means, Standard Deviations and Reliability Coefficients of the Subscales of the Quality of School Life

Subscale	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>n</u>	Alpha	No. of Item
General Satisfaction	2.65	0.58	2216	0.87	7
Negative Affects	2.13	0.51	2248	0.79	7
Teacher-Student Relation	2.79	0.53	2233	0.84	7
Social Integration	2.69	0.54	2225	0.87	7
Opportunity	2.96	0.50	2251	0.78	5
Adventure	2.68	0.47	2204	0.84	7

Correlations of the Subscales of the QSL

There were two domains and six subscales in the final model of quality of school life in the three Band 5 schools in this study. It was expected that the six subscales inter-correlated among each other. Table 4 shows the correlations among the various subscales.

Table 4 Correlations between the Subscales of the Quality of School Life Questionnaire

	General Satisfaction	Negative Affects	Teacher-Pupil Relations	Social Integration	Opportunity	Adventure
General	1.00					
Satisfaction						
Negative Affects	-0.39	1.00				
Teacher-Pupil Relations	0.62	-0.37	1.00			
Social Integration	0.56	-0.32	0.43	1.00		
Opportunity	0.52	-0.25	0.53	0.37	1.00	
Adventure	0.76	-0.34	0.66	0.58	0.63	1.00

Note. All figures are significant at 0.001 level.

The findings showed that the two subscales (general satisfaction and negative affects) of the general domain were negatively correlated, with a coefficient of -0.39 . While the two subscales were not identical in sense and could be treated as separate variables, there was strong association between them. In a school, while one subscale was high in score, the other would be low. It was also evident that all four subscales of the specific domain of quality of school life were positively and significantly correlated to each other. The correlation coefficients ranging from 0.37 to 0.66 show that their associations were strong to each other.

In the correlations between the two general subscales and the four specific subscales, while all four specific subscales had positive and significant associations with general satisfaction, they had negative and significant associations with negative affects. All four specific subscales had positive correlations with general satisfaction with coefficients greater than 0.50. This suggested that when students perceived themselves enjoying good relations with teachers, getting along well with other people, having a schooling relevant to their future and having a sense of self-motivation in

study, they usually had greater degrees of general satisfaction of the schools. On the contrary, all four specific subscales correlated in similar magnitudes with negative affects, ranging from -0.25 to -0.37 . Similarly, when students perceived themselves having good teacher-student relations, good social relationship with other people, good classroom experience and a kind of study relevant to their future lives, students' negative feelings of the schools, such as, helplessness, neglectedness, loneliness, upset and worry were usually low.

The Effects of Specific Subscales on General Subscales

The previous section reveals that the subscales of both the general and specific domains were strongly associated to each other. In the conceptualization of the quality of school life, Ainley, Goldman and Reed (1990) regarded that the general domain and the specific domain of quality of school life are of different measures and should be treated separately. The satisfaction of the four specific subscales would have contributed to the students' general satisfaction of the schools and, in the other way, diminished the students' general level of negative personal feelings. It was postulated in this study that the four specific subscales of quality of school life might have different effects on the two general subscales. Ordinary least squares multiple linear regression analysis was used to investigate relationships between the subscales of general and specific domains. The results of regression analyses of general satisfaction and negative affects on the four specific subscales of quality of school life in the three Band 5 schools are presented in Table 5.

Table 5 Linear Regressions of the Subscales of General Domain on the Subscales of Specific Domain of School Life

	Teacher-Pupil Relations	Social Integration	Opportunity	Adventure	Multiple R	Adjusted R ²
General Satisfaction	0.14 (0.11)***	0.18 (0.17)***	0.04 (0.04)	0.55 (0.63)***	0.78	0.61
Negative Affects	-0.20 (-0.18)***	-0.18 (-0.17)***	-0.002 (-0.002)	-0.11 (-0.11)*	0.41	0.17

Note. Figures are provided in terms of standardized coefficient, whilst figures in brackets are metric coefficients.

*** $p < 0.0001$ ** $p < 0.001$ * $p < 0.05$

The standardized regression coefficients given in Table 5 indicated the extents to which the four subscales of the specific domain would have effects on the two subscales of the general domain. Three of the four specific subscales did have effects on students’ general satisfaction of the schools. Adventure was the subscale that had most powerful effects on general satisfaction, with standardized regression coefficients equal to 0.55, whereas the other two subscales could only have moderate effects. It implied that if students’ levels of general satisfaction were to be promoted in schools, adventure could be an effective strategy. If the classroom climate was more open, positive and conducive to learning, students would experience the processes of teaching and learning more interesting and full of fun. A good classroom climate would make teaching and learning more effective and teachers could deploy their skills to the full while students were motivated to do their best. If students in the three Band 5 schools had a good sense of self motivation in learning and if they found that learning was enjoyable for its own sake, they might have greater satisfaction in schools.

As to negative affects, while the same three specific subscales had significant and negative effects on it, the effect of opportunity was insignificant. The two effective strategies to eliminate students’ negative

affects in these schools were to promote teacher-student relations and to have stronger social integration among the students. When the social supports from both teachers and peer students increased, students' personal negative feelings would be diminished accordingly. Adventure was the third strategy to reduce students' negative affects, although its effect was less than the former strategies.

A cautionary note should be made with respect to the term, "effects," in the regression analyses. Since the statistical data in this study were cross-sectional in nature, there was no way that the data could suggest the directionality of the casual relationships as implied in the study. However, it was based on the hypotheses that the four subscales of the specific domain might have effects on the two subscales of the general domain. The analysis of the data was designed to shed light on the question of whether or not these hypotheses were consistent with the data. If relationships were inconsistent with the data, doubt would be cast on the hypotheses that had generated them. Consistency of the assumptions with the data, however, would not necessarily constitute a proof of the directionality of the causal relationships, but at least it would lend support to it. The hypotheses survived the test since they had not been disconfirmed.

In sum, teacher-student relations, social integration and adventure were identified as useful strategies to enhance students' general satisfaction and to eliminate students' negative affects in Band 5 schools. However, it should be noted that the effects of opportunity on students' general satisfaction and negative affects were all insignificant in these schools. Students in these schools perceived their schooling as not relevant to their future and believed that any change in perception of opportunity would have no contribution to their general satisfaction and no effects on reducing their negative feelings. Students studying in Band 5 schools might have lost their confidence in future and perceived their schooling irrelevant to their growth and future development. They did not regard that what they learned would help them

in future. In the students' views, schools were not a place where the things they learnt were important for them when they left schools.

Conclusions and Discussions

This study was launched to assess the quality of schooling in three selected Band 5 secondary schools in Hong Kong. It is argued that students' reactions to their schools and their views of school life are the essence of the quality of school education and should be considered and investigated if one wants to explore ways to manage and assure quality school education and to link evaluation (uses of performance indicators) and school improvement together. The study adapted Ainley, Reed and Miller's (1986) model of quality of school life and the Quality of School Life (QSL) questionnaire developed in Australia, in order to develop the concept of students' quality of school life in the local context. The study developed a new 40-item QSL questionnaire to assess the quality of schooling in Band 5 schools.

When compared to the Australian studies, there were a minor modification in the local model of quality of school life. While general satisfaction and negative affect were the two scales in the general domain, there were only four scales in the specific domain in the local context, including teacher-student relations, social integration, opportunity, and adventure. Achievement was the specific subscale missing in the students' views of their quality of school life in the three selected Band 5 schools. The students did not have a view of academic success in their perceptions. It is a crucial area to which administrators and teachers should attend to, if academic achievement in the schools is to be promoted. There should be in the schools some measures to allow students a sense of being successful in the schoolwork.

In this study the general and specific domains were treated separately, since the specific scales were likely to provide significant information for

schools and teachers about concrete areas in which the quality of school education can be managed. If teachers want to promote students' levels of general satisfaction in the schools, raising students' sense of adventure, improving teacher-student relations and enhancing social relationships among students are the effective means. These are also effective means to reduce students' personal negative feelings.

In the three Band 5 schools students' perceptions of their opportunity in schooling had no significant effects on their general positive feelings or negative feelings. Almost all students in the three Band 5 schools had low opinions of the opportunities that the schools could provide for them. They were conscious of the relevance and potential provided by the schools, but they did not appear to believe that the schools could provide a solid foundation for their future lives. Most students in the three Band 5 schools might have lost confidence in their future. They regarded that education in the schools was irrelevant to their future lives and nothing could be done to change the situation. Such pessimistic views of the future are quite pervasive among the students and should secure our attention.

In order to reverse the students' views of quality of school life in the two specific areas, achievement and opportunity, recommendations that may promote the students' quality of school life in the three Band 5 schools are made as follows:

1. First, teachers in Band 5 schools should not lose confidence in the students' future and should have appropriate expectations of them. Evidence from effective schools suggests that schools that are instructionally effective for poor children have a climate of expectation in which no children are permitted to fall below minimum but efficacious levels of achievement (Edmonds, 1979). Schools should have "high expectations" of all their students, although high expectations are not sufficient for school success (Clark, Lotto & Astuto, 1984). Confident teachers who expect students to perform to their personal level of quality populate good schools.

2. It is to recommend that teachers in schools which have admitted a great proportion of Band 5 students should attend experiential in-service counselling skills training courses that would result in both teachers' and students' attitude changes towards teaching and learning. See, Hall and Hall's (1998) study in Hong Kong showed that after training, teachers shifted from a custodial attitude to a more humanistic attitude towards their students and there was a clear shift to a more positive social-emotional climate in their classrooms. Teachers after acquiring counselling skills will have a greater preference for cooperative learning rather than competitive or individual learning and will have higher expectations that students would take control of their own learning processes. Such in-service counselling skills training courses may promote students' adventurous experience in the classroom, enhance teacher-student relations, and strengthen social relationships in the schools with a high percentage of academically low achievers.

3. It has previously been argued that the quality of students' life is affected by the quality of the school's environment and culture. It is important for school being a positive environment in which students' problems are responded to in a positive and constructive manner. While professional supports and extra resource inputs are essential to Band 5 schools, it is important to underscore the fact that all teachers in these schools should play a vital part in creating such a positive environment. Being in the front line, teachers are often in a better position to identify students in need of help and to help them recognize and overcome their problems. It is essential that the schools should adopt a whole school approach to guidance and counselling (Education Commission, 1990), that is, all teachers in the schools should actively participate in assisting students to resolve their development problems.

4. It is also essential that school-based developmental and constructive

programmes be provided in these schools to facilitate the students' personal development, social adaptation and adjustment (Education Commission, 1990, p.30). Developmental programmes, for example, orientation programmes for Secondary 1 students and programmes on study and career choices for senior students, may help students improve their relationship with their peers and enhance self-confidence. Constructive programmes, for example, involving students in drawing up of regulations and rules and in setting school goals, may promote students' self-acceptance and self-awareness and develop healthy relationships between teachers and students.

A few comments should be put forward to the limitations of the study. Since the data collected in this study were cross-sectional in nature, to establish directions of causal relationships among the subscales in regression analysis is difficult. In order to identify causal relationships among the subscales of the two domains, longitudinal studies or experimental research into students' views of quality of school life should be conducted in the future. Another limitation arises from the sampling of Band 5 schools. The findings of this study may not be applicable to all schools which have admitted "a great proportion" of Band 5 students, since the proportions of Band 5 students in the Form 1 intakes vary in great extent from school to school. The final model of quality of school life in this study may not be generalized to other Band 5 schools since a sample of three Band 5 schools may be too few to represent the population. It should be noted that testing of theoretical models and development of performance indicators are, in principle, an ever-continuing process. Further testing and research work should include a greater sample of Band 5 schools with diverse demographic variables such as history, background, and students' socioeconomic status.

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Footnote

* Based on the 1992 Secondary School Places Allocation (SSPA), the number of Band 5 students was 17,032 (out of 855,115 Form 1 students) and there were 63 schools which had admitted more than 70% Band 5 students (out of 446 secondary schools) (Education Department, 1993).

「第五組」學生之學校生活質素

在制定提升學校教育質素政策和措施時，我們必須考慮學生對學校生活質素的觀感和他們對學校的反應。這篇文章報告香港「第五組」學校的學生對學校生活質素的觀感和反應。來自三所第五組學校的2460名學生參加了是項研究，回答了一份有關學校生活質素的問卷。經由統計學之因子分析法和直線回歸法分析資料後，證明學生對學校生活質素的概念是多層次和多度向的。研究結果顯示，第五組學校的學生在學校生活上缺乏成功感，對學業前途並不存有希望。如要提升第五組學校學生的學校生活質素，學校應增強師生關係，促進社群融合和改善學生在課堂上的經歷。