

Chosen elements of the staff culture as a background of student problem behaviours

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Context

The ideology of teachers and their educational management is one of the essential elements of school culture. School culture is an important factor associated with the students risk behaviours.

Method

Data were collected in 2010 in four public middle schools in Warsaw. Quantitative-qualitative methods were used: direct observations, analysis of school documents, interviews with teachers and students, and anonymous self-report questionnaires for students and teachers.

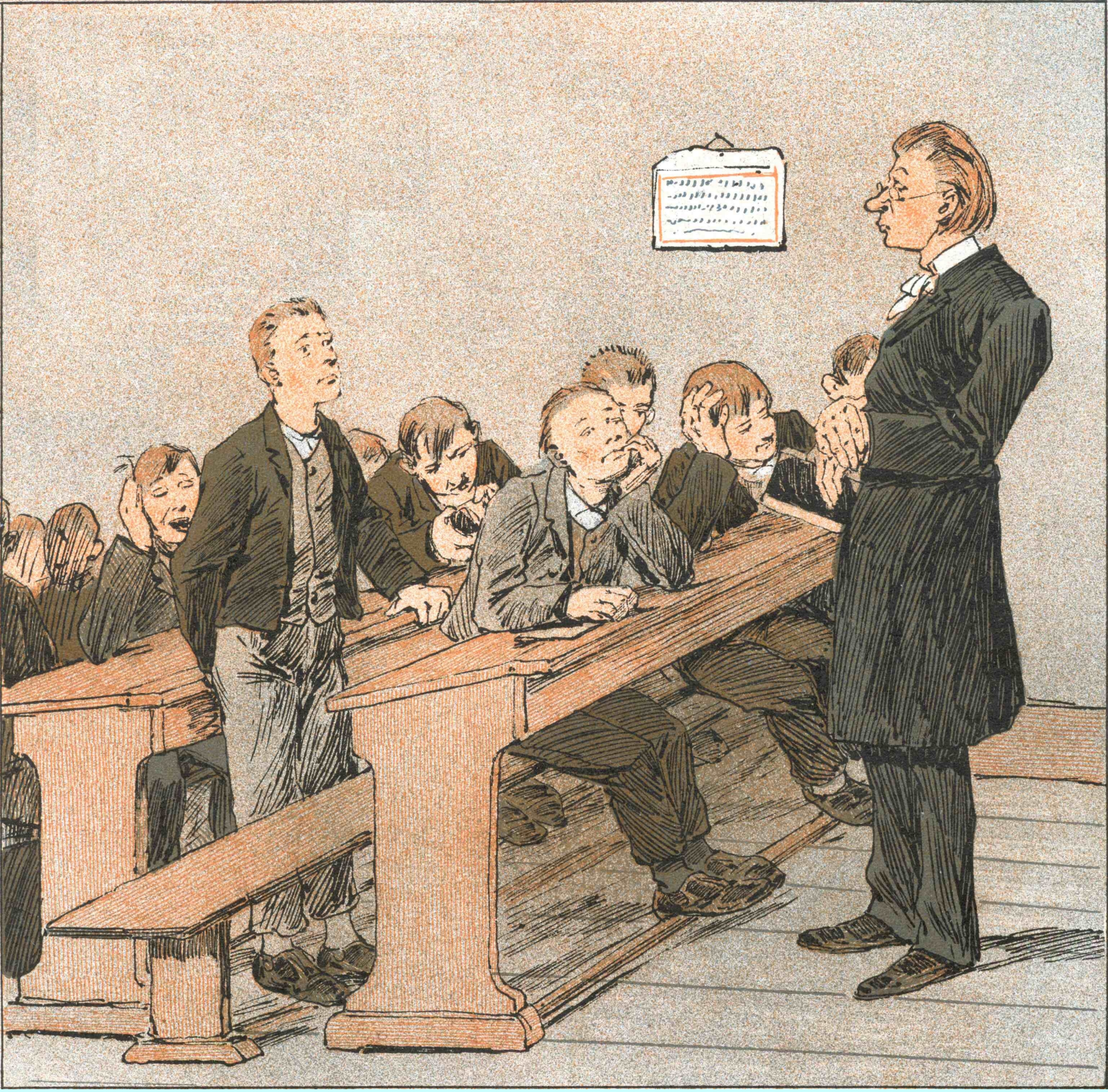
Objective

Our research was made to analyze and find the elements of the staff attitudes in two schools selected as "good" and "bad" because of the prevalence of student risk behaviours and the level of students’ school bonding.

Results:

1. Two schools (named A and B) were found extremely different in terms of:

- prevalence of risky behaviours including: alcohol, cigarettes, pain reliever use and violence
- school bonding including: attitudes towards school, commitment to school, involvement in the school life.



School A

- high prevalence of student problem behaviours
- low level of positive attitudes towards school
- weak bonding with school and little involvement in school life

High = higher than average

School B

- low prevalence of student problem behaviours
- positive perception of learning environment
- strong bonds with school and involvement in its life

Low=lower than average

2. Some elements of the staff attitudes were compared such as:

identification with the pedagogical ideology, their own vision of school work, connections between the team, a sense of overworking.

Staff A

- focused on using formal procedures of education
- identifying themselves strongly with the bureaucratic and romantic ideology

teacher = civil servant; teacher =hero

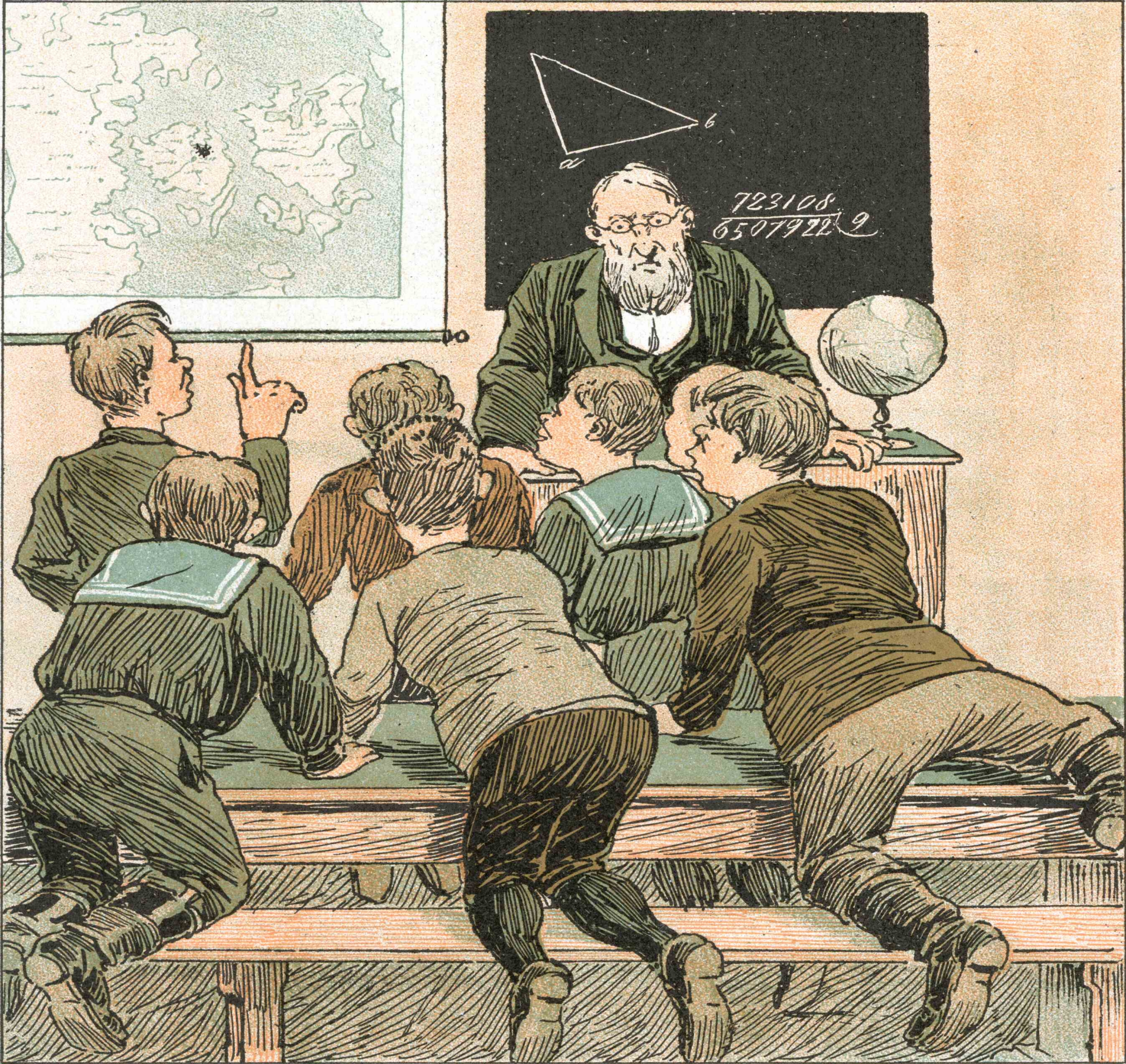
- conflicts among the staff caused by the professional solidarity and age hierarchy
- feeling of overworking above average
- has a weaker connection with their school
- the most important value in teacher’s work is an assistance to develop the students’ knowledge; to work for the good of the students
- staff behaviours that teachers do not accept:
 - disclosing the details of the staff meetings to the others
 - avoiding duties

Staff B

- focused on the development of students
- do not tied to any ideology, the nearest to liberal ideology

teacher = creator; teacher = mentor

- intensity of conflict situations lower than average
- feeling of overworking below average
- stronger connection with their school
- the most important value in teacher’s work is to help students to develop their passions and a willingness to learn
- staff behaviours that teachers do not accept :
 - lack of good-will for students
 - lack of openness to new ideas



Conclusions:

- 1) The results show that a higher number of youth problem behaviours happen in conjunction with a different approach of the teachers than when the number of risky behaviours is lower.
- 2) Higher number of risky behaviours from students is combined with more formal and rigorous approach from teachers, where the rapport between teachers is less harmonious and the duties seem to be disproportionally harder.
- 3) In order to prevent youth problem behaviours we recommend to support teachers to change their approach to more positive. This would have a positive effect on students' behaviours which in turn would maximize teachers' satisfaction and would not leave them subjected to professional burnout.
- 4) School culture is one of the key elements in school-based youth problem behaviours prevention.