

MINDFULNESS AND ACADEMIC OPTIMISM:
A TEST OF THEIR RELATIONSHIP

by

ROBERT SIMS

A DISSERTATION

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Education in the
Department of Educational Leadership, Policy,
and Technology Studies
in the Graduate School of
The University of Alabama

TUSCALOOSA, ALABAMA

2011

Copyright Robert Sims 2011
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

ABSTRACT

The relationship between mindfulness and academic optimism was investigated. Further, mindfulness and the three properties of academic optimism (collective efficacy, faculty trust in parents and student, and academic emphasis) were examined to determine if a unique and significant relationship exist with one of these three properties. A total of 67 elementary schools were surveyed and 1353 teachers participated in this study. The instruments used in this study were the School Academic Optimism Scale (SAOS) and the Mindfulness Scale (M-Scale).

The results indicated that a significant reciprocal relationship exist between mindfulness and academic optimism. A unique and significant relationship was found between mindfulness and academic emphasis. The findings between mindfulness and academic optimism provide theory that does not exist which relates these two constructs. Other findings are congruent with previous theory that mindfulness and academic emphasis have a significant relationship. Un-hypothesized findings showed that socio economic status coupled with mindfulness is a strong predictor of academic optimism.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS

- a* Cronbach's index of internal consistency
- df* Degrees of freedom: number of values free to vary after certain restrictions have been placed on the data
- F* Fisher's *F* ratio: A ration of two variances
- M* Mean: the sum of a set of measurements divided by the number of measurements in the set
- p* Probability associated with the occurrence under the null hypothesis of a value as extreme as or more extreme than the observed value
- r* Pearson product-moment correlation
- t* Computed value of *t* test
- < Less than
- = Equal to

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This process began 17 years ago when a high school graduate had a dream of what his future could hold. The fulfillment of dreams does not come without goals, sacrifice and hard work. More important than all of these is having the support of family and friends. First and foremost thank you to my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ whose grace and mercy is sufficient. This achievement would not have happened without the support and love that my wife, Ellen, has shown me. Even when discouragement found me, she continued to encourage me and pushed me when times were tough and has sacrificed equally if not more than I have. To my two boys, Noah and Eli, who were born at the beginning of my graduate studies and right in the middle of the dissertation. As hard as I tried to not let graduate studies affect me, I know that my patience was often thin and my attitude was not always as it should be. It was my love for them and their unconditional love for me that allowed me to push through when I thought it was not possible. I am very thankful for all of my family and friends who have always been encouraging, but a special thank you to my mom and dad who always believed in me and reminded me that I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength.

I would also like to thank my dissertation committee: Dr. John Tarter, Dr. David Dagley, Dr. Rosemary Newton, Dr. Roxanne Mitchell, and Dr. Beverly Dyer. To Dr. Tarter, my dissertation chair, thank you for your patience with me when I grew weary at the end. I would also like to thank the data collection team, Bart Reeves, Michael Douglas, Richard Rutledge, and Sylvia Dean, for their assistance and friendship over the past several years.

CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	ii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS	iii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	iv
LIST OF TABLES	viii
I INTRODUCTION	1
Introduction.....	1
Background of the Study	1
Problem Statement and Purpose of the Study.....	2
Definition of Concepts.....	3
Research Questions.....	4
Scope and Limitations.....	4
Summary.....	5
II REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE	6
Introduction.....	6
Mindfulness.....	6
Academic Optimism	14
Collective Efficacy.....	20
Faculty Trust in Parents and Students.....	28
Academic Emphasis.....	32
Mindfulness and Academic Optimism.....	34

Summary	35
III METHODOLOGY	36
Introduction.....	36
Population and Sample	36
Instrumentation	37
Data Analysis Procedures	37
IV RESULTS	39
Descriptive Statistics.....	39
Reliability.....	40
Correlations.....	41
Hypotheses Testing.....	41
Un-hypothesized Findings	43
Conclusion	44
V DISCUSSION OF RESULTS.....	45
Introduction.....	45
Summary of Findings.....	45
Theoretical Implications	46
Mindfulness and Academic Optimism.....	46
Mindfulness and Collective Efficacy.....	46
Mindfulness and Faculty Trust	47
Mindfulness and Academic Emphasis	48
Practical Applications	50
Mindful and Academic Optimism Applications.....	51

Recommendations for Future Research	54
Conclusion	56
REFERENCES	57
APPENDICES:	
A SCHOOL ACADEMIC OPTIMISM SURVEY (SAOS).....	60
B MINFULNESS SCALE (M-SCALE).....	65

LIST OF TABLES

1	Descriptive Characteristics of the Measures	40
2	Alpha Reliabilities by Scale	40
3	Correlations among all Major Variables Examined in the Study.....	41
4	Regression Coefficient of Mindfulness on Elements of Academic Optimism	42
5	Regression Coefficient of Mindfulness on Elements of Academic Optimism and SES.....	43
6	Regression Coefficient of Academic Optimism on Mindfulness and SES	43

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

This dissertation focuses on a study of the relationship of school mindfulness and academic optimism. Recent research (Bandura, 1993; Hoy, Tarter, Hoy, 2006; Hoy, Gage, Tarter, 2004) argued that school effectiveness can be predicted by both a continuing scrutiny of school operations (school mindfulness) and a combination of efficacy, trust, and academic emphasis (academic optimism); however there is little empirical evidence that academic optimism and mindfulness are related. It is anticipated that these two constructs are interrelated and that a study of the concepts and their relationship is warranted.

Background of the Study

This study examined school mindfulness in an attempt to connect it with a model of school culture, academic optimism. The organizational characteristic that was examined is school mindfulness. The model of school culture examined was grounded in the empirical research of a construct known as academic optimism. The demand placed on administrators to make better use of research data to implement important changes in programs has led to the discussion of school mindfulness and its relationship to academic optimism within school culture. This study will provide educators with an understanding of how these constructs, when working in a relationship, could increase student performance in school. An investigation of the impact of mindfulness on academic optimism will provide educators with a valuable tool to use

in the improvement of programs for students. Once this relationship is understood, along with other factors such as the socioeconomic status of the students, an overall picture will emerge that will become the guiding force for educators as they plan strategies and programs.

School organization and culture may possibly be just the key needed to unlock student achievement. Part of the problem with student achievement comes from the fact that socioeconomic status often plays a part in how students perceive school and the skills they possess to learn. The question for educators has been whether or not they possessed the knowledge and tools necessary to overcome socioeconomic differences in order to provide students with the necessary skills for achievement.

Problem Statement and Purpose of the Study

Mindfulness and academic optimism are two relatively new constructs thus there are gaps in the literature. First, the relationship between the two constructs must be understood before they can be used by administrators. The purpose of this study was to determine whether school mindfulness will lead to academic optimism. It also looked at the relationship between mindfulness and each of the components of academic optimism, which are collective efficacy, faculty trust in clients, and academic emphasis. The benefit of this study is that it will add useful information to the bank of knowledge already in existence in relation to mindfulness and academic optimism. Thus, it will be a tool for administrators to use as they create sound methods of advancing student achievement.

Definition of Concepts

Mindfulness--Constitutive Definition: Teachers and administrators develop the ability to anticipate surprise by focusing on failure, avoiding simplification, and remaining sensitive to operations (Hoy, Gage, & Tarter, 2006, p. 240). Operational Definition: Mindfulness is operationalized using the M-Scale.

Academic optimism--Constitutive Definition: Academic emphasis, collective efficacy, and faculty trust are tightly woven together and appear to reinforce each other as they positively constrain student performance (Hoy, Tarter & Hoy, 2006, p. 426). Operational Definition: The SAOS will be used to measure academic optimism. The SAOS has questions concerning collective efficacy, academic emphasis, and faculty trust in parents and students.

Collective efficacy--Constitutive Definition: The judgment of teachers in a school that the faculty as a whole can organize and execute the courses of action required to have an apposite effect on students (Goddard, Hoy, & Hoy, 2004, p. 4). Operational Definition: Collective efficacy will be measured using the results from the SAOS.

Faculty trust in parents and students--Constitutive Definition: one party's willingness to be vulnerable to another party based on the confidence that the latter party is benevolent, reliable, competent, honest, and open (Hoy & Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 1999). Operational Definition: Faculty trust in parents and students will be measured using the SAOS.

Academic emphasis--The extent to which a school is driven by a quest for academic excellence--a press for academic achievement (Hoy, Tarter, & Hoy, 2006, p. 427). Operational Definition: Academic emphasis will be measured through the SAOS.

Research Questions

1. What is the relationship between academic optimism and mindfulness?
2. What is the relationship between mindfulness and collective efficacy, faculty trust in clients, and academic emphasis?

Scope and Limitations

There are some issues to consider upon completion of this study. The years of experience of the participants were not factored into the data. The participants were limited to only 67 public schools in Alabama but generalizations can be made that the findings of this study should represent other schools in the state and/or across the nation. Data were collected in elementary schools mostly from the northern half of Alabama. Attempts were made to include sampling from a variety of student populations in both rural and urban schools. Another limitation is that the sampling of schools was not systematically random. It is assumed that data were correctly collected and reported to the researcher in the requested manner and the teachers who participated in the study were honest and open with their responses. All results will remain private; however, schools may receive data from the overall findings from the study, but will not receive individual school data. The final limitation is that this was a cross-sectional study as opposed to a longitudinal study. This is only a “snap shot” of select schools, not a long-term study.

Summary

The purpose of Chapter 1 was to outline and present a study as it pertains to mindfulness in schools and establish a connection with another variable in the field, academic optimism. A

definition of terms was generated to give the reader a better understanding of some of the concepts used. The purpose of this study was to determine whether school mindfulness will lead to academic optimism. It will also look at the relationship between mindfulness and each of the components of academic optimism: collective efficacy, faculty trust in clients, and academic emphasis. The following chapter will include a review of the pertinent literature that will give the reader a better understanding of the relationship between mindfulness and academic optimism.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

This chapter provides a literature review of the research history and development of mindfulness and academic optimism. Next, there will be a presentation of theoretical framework to explain how mindfulness and academic optimism work together. Finally, a hypothesis will be derived to test the theoretical explanation.

Mindfulness

Mindfulness is the constant inspection of present expectations. It is the ongoing improvement of those expectations based on new understandings, appreciation of the subtleties of the situation, and identification of novel aspects of context that can improve foresight and functioning (Hoy, 2003).

Weick and Sutcliffe (2001) studied mindfulness at the organizational level and identified it as having both individual and collective properties. Some have argued that reliability-seeking organizations can have a positive effect on environment relations through the practice of mindfulness. Furthermore, mindfulness is appropriate for reliability-seeking organizations because it places a focus on complexity, scrutiny, and inspection of their environments always searching for ways to stay ahead. Thus, according to this rationale, organizations were considered mindful if they evaded key obstacles and errors. Mindful organizations are apparent in High Reliability Organizations (HROs) such as nuclear reactor plants, aircraft carriers,

municipal power grids, and similar organizations. Any one of these groups would face devastating repercussions in the event of any disaster, much less one that was completely unexpected. Karl Weick (2001) observed that organizations must continuously guard against the negative impact of unexpected events. They must remain mindful and often must expect the worst case scenario in order to stay prepared. According to Weick (2001), expectation is to envision something and be mentally ready for action. The nature of unexpected events can be one of three types: failure that is expected and planned for, occurrence of an event that was not expected, and failure that was never considered. One major aspect of mindfulness is dealing with failures that were not considered. Using mindful practices can raise the awareness of all the possible failures. Weick and Sutcliffe (2001), identified two categories of five practices that support a mindful organization. The categories involve mindful awareness and anticipation of the unexpected as well as mindful containment of the unexpected. The various practices include those involved in awareness and anticipation of surprises including, preoccupation with failure, reluctance to oversimplification, and sensitivity to operations. Those in the category of containment are commitment to resilience and deference to expertise (Weick & Sutcliffe, 2001).

The first category focuses on the expectancy of surprise events. Preoccupation with failure comes from a concern that something will go wrong. The concept of being preoccupied with failure will lead planners to anticipate and prepare. In the process, they will eliminate complacency, arrogance, and laziness. Success can do the opposite and breed such characteristics. Success can lead to overconfidence and doing things one way, even if the leader suggests a different point of view. If success is the primary focus, organizations will begin to only focus on organizational goals and become driven by the data. Mindful organizations will take heed of the small failures so as not to be overwhelmed when a larger, more pressing

problem arises. High Reliability Organizations encourage the reporting of small failures in order to enhance awareness of the broader picture of staying mindful. Often, organizations try to cover up mistakes so that problems will not be seen by the public. If this is the case, nothing is learned and mindfulness cannot occur. A pertinent example of preoccupation with failure is found in the event of two aircrafts experiencing a near-miss in mid air. Highly effective HROs see this type of event as the kind of failure that reveals potential danger to be studied and used to create a plan of action. Less effective HROs, celebrate the near miss as evidence of success and their ability to avoid disaster. HROs desire the opportunity to analyze and fix those mistakes to ensure that the same problem does not occur in the future (Weick & Sutcliffe, 2001).

In a school setting, it is okay to “air out your dirty laundry.” Focusing on only your success can breed complacency, arrogance, and laziness. When a school is preoccupied with failure you will find a constant scrutiny of the day-to-day operations of the school.

Another category of best practices involves the theory that oversimplification of problems actually creates more problems down the line. When examining the reluctance to oversimplify interpretations, it is found that people in HROs are consummate in their relentless attack on simplification. Mindful HROs recognize that simplification creates the danger of complacency. According to Weick and Sutcliffe (2001), Simple expectations will lead to simple thinking and miss what is vital to an organization. For example, an architect of a nuclear power plant will not trust the drawing from a blueprint to show how to shut off the air supply in a non-operating unit. A mindful engineer will make the effort to personally check out the entire system, looking for the unexpected issues that could create the potential for disaster. Constant interactions, especially among those who have diverse expectations, decreases simplification and increases mindfulness. When an organization simplifies less, they will actually see more. An

organizational climate that is reluctant to simplify will foster organizations that do not limit themselves by cutting out key information. It should be a primary goal of every organization to make the most of the information available and not limit it to merely what is easy to see (Weick & Sutcliffe, 2001).

In schools, the normal decision-making body consists of the principal, assistant principal, counselor, and the leadership team or department heads. The reluctance to simplify model might include parents, students, community leaders, custodian, or other teachers in the decision-making process. This will give you a diversity of opinions. Questioning is encouraged when there is a reluctance to simplify.

The third area of mindful anticipation involves being perceptive to operations. Sensitivity to operations points to the ongoing concern with the unexpected. It engages the organization in the focus of concerns upon situations rather than strategies. Operations become more than mundane repetitive motions; seeing the big picture is a key in maintaining awareness of performance. Many failures that occur within organizations are discovered only after the accident. HROs distinguish themselves by being attentive to the front-line workers getting the job done. Relationship development is a key to success. Situational awareness is the key concept in making continuous adjustments that can prevent mistakes from compounding. In schools, the administrators should communicate to teachers and be available and accessible for required assistance. Giving full attention to real time information helps to identify problems early on in order to take action before the difficulty becomes too large to handle (Weick & Sutcliffe, 2001).

Containment is the second category identified as a hallmark of High Reliability Organizations. The first principle is a commitment to resilience. Commitment to resilience is the ability to detect, contain, and bounce back from those inevitable errors that are part of an

indeterminate world. It is to be mindful of errors that have already occurred and correct those errors before they cause serious damage. Errors are inevitable; therefore, managers need to be concerned with the cure and not just the prevention. Procedures cannot be written that will anticipate all different scenarios that could happen in any area. Resilience encourages people to act while at the same time thinking of solutions. Resilient organizations invest in the knowledge needed to overcome obstacles, and they command resources to help them in dealing with unexpected events (Weick & Sutcliffe, 2001).

A school example in commitment to resilience would be when leaders make decisions, which on paper, seem great but in reality have caused many problems. Commitment to resilience tells us that it is okay to scrap your “good idea” and go back to the old way of doing whatever it was that you changed.

The final principle of HROs is deference to expertise. Simply put, it is the process of placing decision-making responsibilities on the shoulders of those who have expertise and not necessarily rank or authority. Expertise and experience tend to be more important than rank. Decisions have to be made quickly and accurately, so lower-level members are often empowered and held accountable for important decisions that they make. This pattern is known as coordinate leadership and involves removing the problem to the arena of those who currently hold the solution and not just the title or rank of authority. Mindful organizations believe in the loosening of hierarchical constraints in order to generate solutions to potential problems (Weick & Sutcliffe, 2001).

A deference to expertise school example is finding those members of your staff, even if they are the lowest paid members, and allowing those individuals to participate in the decision-making process. If you are having problems with your floors keeping their shine and holding the

wax, you should include the custodians in solving this problem. The principal or supervisor should not change machines, cleaning processes, or chemicals without first being mindful that those experts who deal with these issues everyday should be included in the solution of the problem.

While much focus has been placed on the use of mindfulness with HROs, the theory can also be used in the climate of school culture. Hoy (2003) analyzed enabling and mindful school structures. He suggested that mindfulness is found in abundance in public schools and suggested that in order to have a more mindful school you need fewer explicit rules. These rules will focus more clearly on perceived problems ahead of time in order to deal with them as they arise. An emphasis is placed on learning from mistakes. While an abundance of rules is unnecessary, it is essential to have organizational rules. Hoy (2003) gave 10 guidelines that would promote mindfulness:

- (1) there are exceptions to most rules; find them;
- (2) there are times when the rules do not work; suspend them;
- (3) some rules encourage mindlessness; avoid them;
- (4) some rules support mindfulness; seize on them;
- (5) some rules become unnecessary; eliminate them;
- (6) routine rules lead to mindlessness; question them;
- (7) some rules create dependence; beware them;
- (8) some rules encourage a playful approach; invent them;
- (9) rules set precedents; if the precedents are bad, change the rules;
- (10) rules are best to guide but not to dictate. (p. 105)

“When teachers and administrators ritually follow rules or comply with senseless orders, they are mindless, but when they substitute their judgments for routine responses, they turn mindful”

(Hoy, 2003, p. 95). When schools become a mindful organization they become preoccupied with failure, are reluctant to simplify, are sensitive to operations, they commit to resilience, and they defer to expertise.

Mindful organizations have personnel that work mindfully. This would include faculty leaders, administrators, teachers, and students. With these mindful people in place, positive outcomes in student achievement are possible (Hoy, 2003). Individual teacher mindfulness should be directed at influencing students to think and act creatively. “Mindful teaching also encourages conditional teaching and thinking. When statements of fact are viewed as conditional, then conclusions are implicitly conditional” (Hoy, 2003, p. 103). In addition, teacher mindfulness will facilitate a positive correlation with teacher self-efficacy. The enhancement of teacher self-efficacy will lead to more positive executions of tasks.

Bellamy, Crawford, Marshall, and Coulter (2005) used the HRO model to develop a set of norms to identify a fail-safe school. The researchers built on Weick and Sutcliffe’s (2001) work involving mindfulness and applied it directly to the school setting. According to the researchers, a fail-safe school would have leadership that practiced a sense of skepticism. This skepticism would serve to aid leaders in the recognition of potential surprises and unanticipated circumstances. Readiness would enable leaders to promote a better climate for learning by anticipating worst-case scenarios ahead of time. Even when an administrator has confidence in the school’s programs, it is imperative to remain vigilant in order to detect potential problems early. Weick called this “preoccupation with failure” (Weick & Sutcliffe, 2001).

Successful administrators look at all the programs, curriculum, and instructional strategies, as well as the quality of their staff. They examine their potential for danger by keeping in mind that each component is susceptible to failure, all people and programs are fallible. The preoccupation with failure, taken with sensitivity to operations, will lead the administration toward the creation of a mindful organization. These leaders know that it is in the best interest of the program to assume that research-based procedures and excellent teachers can still produce

inconsistent results. With this in mind, they will create a backup plan to aid students who could potentially fall through the cracks of a fallible program. It must be kept in mind that not all programs will benefit all students. If school administrators arrange their schools in ways that embrace mindful organizational theories, they will become better at recognizing the unexpected and be able to focus on restoring the function of the system (Weick & Sutcliffe, 2001).

“School based detection involves processes for identifying learning problems quickly enough to intervene before they escalate into failures” (Bellamy et al, 2005, p. 393). To help solve potential problems, a structure should be put into place for the development of mechanisms to deal with continuing opportunities for failure. Structural support for detection and recovery should be implemented as part of policy. This will also work against oversimplification and create a commitment to resilience. Administrators who are the most mindful will turn to those who have solutions to problems when creating programs and working with curriculum, instead of relying solely on those personnel who are in positions of authority. In this way, administrators not only defer to expertise but they also foster a sense of collaboration and admiration for skills and abilities. By deferring to expertise instead of rank, administrators further enhance teacher self-efficacy and trust. These support structures will enhance the learning climate and diversify teaching and learning (Bellamy et al., 2005).

The issue of faculty trust is interwoven with mindfulness in the study of school climates involving mindful structures for student achievement. A study by Hoy, Gage, and Tarter (2006) put forth the notion that individual mindfulness requires people to look at their habits and reflect upon them. It is because of habits that people are comfortable with the formality of rules and regulations. The problem with this is that people tend to “blindly” follow these rigid rules and procedures instead of being more open and willing to challenge policies that do not work. Rigid

bureaucracies are not conducive to mindfulness. Within such a structure there is also no room for trust.

Hoy, Gage, and Tarter (2006) tested the theory that school mindfulness and faculty trust were necessary conditions for each other. Theoretically, these two constructs go hand in hand and are necessary conditions for each. They found a strong relationship between mindfulness and trust. Thus, they claimed this proved that schools with a faculty that trusted the group's willingness to be vulnerable to another party (students and parents) would also demonstrate mindfulness. In turn, schools possessing a highly reliable organization with an atmosphere that was open and honest, with competent leaders, would show a high level of trust. Mindful administrators make the most out of situations where they find themselves unpleasantly surprised and trapped by the unexpected. Mindful organizations are better able to handle unexpected results in earlier stages to minimize the damage. This inherently creates an atmosphere of openness and trust because those who publicize unexpected results in an effort to create solutions are themselves more open and honest. Others respond to these qualities and will mirror them in their own efforts. Trust is necessary for mindfulness (Hoy et al., 2006).

Leaders can be mindful of one another's actions without necessarily being in agreement or responding in a way that is supportive of those actions. Mindfulness does not necessarily mean agreement or support but indicates the way that attention and responsiveness enhance actions (Spilane, 2006).

Academic Optimism

Hoy, Tarter, and Hoy (2006) identified three collective properties that when working together, create a positive academic environment. This type of environment was given the name

academic optimism. The three school properties that they believe support each other to create this construct are academic emphasis, collective efficacy, and faculty trust. Hoy and his colleagues examined the research on each of these characteristics to identify how each created the construct of academic optimism as well as how they impacted school performance. Their research led to the conclusion that together the properties did, in fact, create the new construct known as academic optimism (Hoy, Tarter, Hoy, 2006). Thus, academic optimism is

a teacher's positive belief that he or she can make a difference in the academic performance of students by emphasizing academics and learning, by trusting parents and students to cooperate in the process, and by believing in his or her own capacity to overcome difficulties and react to failure with resilience and perseverance. (Hoy, Hoy, & Kurz, 2007, p. 822)

The basic assumption, pertinent to the study of academic optimism, is that not only are academic emphasis, faculty trust, and collective efficacy very similar by nature and function, but they each have a very powerful and constructive impact on overall student achievement. In fact, each element is dependent on the others.

Academic optimism can be something that is learned so that even schools who demonstrate pessimism can learn to be optimistic. It is formed around the idea that teachers, administrators, and students are all capable of overcoming difficulties including socioeconomic status (Hoy, Tarter, & Hoy, 2006). A school that demonstrates high academic optimism has a faculty who believe they can make a difference, students can learn, and this will lead to academic performance (Hoy et al., 2006).

To understand the overall construct of academic optimism, one must first understand its individual components. The idea of academic optimism includes cognitive, affective, and behavioral elements. Efficacy is cognitive in nature because it is a group belief. Trust is affective because it deals with emotions particularly the idea that another can be believed to be capable of

carrying out their part of the process. Academic emphasis is the push for particular behaviors in the school workplace. Thus, when the elements are working in tandem, academic optimism is in place and student achievement becomes more than mere test scores. Instead, achievement is seen as part of each element of the construct of optimism. Achievement is gained when behaviors are present that are part of the group's beliefs and that have created a sense of trust among the participants (Hoy, Tarter, & Hoy, 2006).

There is a distinct correlation seen in the academic optimism construct. Each of the three constructs (faculty trust, collective efficacy, and academic emphasis) enhances and interacts with each other. Faculty trust in parents and students gives the faculty an idea that they as a whole can make a difference. This sense of efficacy, in turn, develops trust. They are dependent upon each other. When this trust is evident, teachers can encourage and expect a higher set of academic standards without the fear that the parents will not support the teacher's efforts of emphasizing academics. Again, this, in turn, supports and reinforces trust. When the faculty has this freedom and sense that they can implement these actions that positively impact student achievement, academic achievement is accentuated and this will result in the faculty experiencing a well-built sensation of collective efficacy (Hoy, Tarter, & Hoy, 2006). When the administrators and teachers create a new program or curriculum to enhance student performance, all members must believe in it and have an equal part. This involves the ability to trust the other members of the group. If each can trust that the others are going to make the effort then success is more likely. If all are equal participants, success is more likely. If a set of behaviors is created and adhered to by the members of the group, then trust and belief in the system will follow. When all three are in place, success in increased student performance is possible.

An example would be in the creation of a grade recovery program. The purpose of the program would be to create an opportunity for students to learn material before moving forward while at the same time improving their grade on the material. To create such a program, administrators and teachers have to work together to create a framework that all believe in and are willing to uphold. Every member has to be on board and targeted professional development should be utilized and mastery experience should be considered. Once efficacy and trust have been established among the faculty, they must get the students and parents on board. Parents must be willing to allow students to return to school at times stated for remediation of material not learned and students must be open to the idea of individual improvement and performance. Once everyone is part of the program and all are adhering to the parameters, then achievement and success can begin to take place. If any part of this fails, success will not be possible.

Hoy, Tarter, and Hoy (2006) advanced the notion of optimism being a cognitive characteristic involving knowledge and critical thinking. They arrived at this conclusion in their study that not only is optimism a cognitive characteristic but it has an affective or emotional dimension as well. The addition of trust in their study is based on affective responses.

Teachers and administrators have a reason to be optimistic about the potential of their students to overcome socioeconomic hardships. This notion was examined by Smith and Hoy (2007) and the results of the study demonstrated that socioeconomic status affected student achievement but that academic optimism could lessen or remove its affect. Academic optimism can be learned and it has the ability to empower school administrators to press forward in their attempt to overcome social barriers (Hoy, Tarter, & Hoy, 2006).

Hoy and his colleagues affirmed the fact that academic optimism did have a positive impact on mathematics and science achievement. They determined that SES and prior student

achievement had both a direct and indirect impact on student achievement through academic optimism. After collective efficacy, academic emphasis, and faculty trust were analyzed. It was concluded that these three, when placed together, create a climate of high energy and motivation. When this is applied to schools, it creates the idea that students can accomplish high academic achievement no matter what other difficulties, including SES, are present. When these three properties are brought together, it opens up the possibilities of enhanced student learning and gives further emphasis on using academic optimism for improving school performance (Hoy, Tarter, & Hoy, 2006).

The study on academic optimism was supported by a sample size of 96 mid-western state schools that were 65% of the original schools asked to participate. These schools were a balanced representation of socioeconomic status and urban, suburban, and rural schools. The data were randomly selected at a regularly scheduled faculty meeting, which further supported the validity of the study (Hoy, Tarter, & Hoy, 2006).

Hoy, Hoy, and Kurz (2007) continued the work of Hoy, Tarter, and Hoy (2007) and focused their study on teachers' academic optimism in the development of this new construct. Their study supported earlier research on academic optimism showing that trust, collective efficacy, and academic emphasis formed a second order latent construct known as individual teacher academic optimism. A profile was developed during this study that would give predictors of teachers who are academically optimistic. These teachers would direct their students in trusting and humanistic ways, involve students in the planning and evaluation of their work, use informal assessments, welcome parents to the classroom, and give extra time, energy, and help to students in need. When teachers judge themselves to be capable of affecting student learning,

they are then capable of doing just that. This sense of teacher self-efficacy is one of the few teacher characteristics related to student learning and thus becomes a central part of that process.

Kurz, Hoy, and Hoy (2007) identified and reported on the predictors of academic optimism as they relate to teachers' instructional beliefs and professional commitment. It was determined that humanistic classroom management, student-centered teaching, and professional commitment were all predictors of academic optimism after controlling for SES.

Smith and Hoy (2007) also conducted a study on the impact that academic optimism had on student achievement in urban elementary schools. The purpose of this study was to “demonstrate a general construct of schools involving academic optimism and to show it was related to student achievement in urban elementary schools even when controlling for socioeconomic factors” (Smith & Hoy, 2007). After completing a multiple regression analysis, it was found that their hypothesis was supported. Controlling for SES, academic optimism had a positive correlation with student achievement, specifically in the area of mathematics.

Mascall, Leithwood, Straus, and Sacks (2008) identified and reported on the relationship between distributed leadership and teachers' academic optimism. It was found that the trust component of academic optimism had the strongest relationship to distributed leadership while the other components (efficacy and organizational citizenship behavior in this study) had only a weak association. The authors determined that the trust component was related to the trust that the teacher has in the leadership. The conclusion was that if the teachers were academically optimistic they were more likely to report that the leadership in the school was distributed. It could not be determined that academic optimism was neither a cause nor effect of distributed leadership but rather academic optimism was a consequence of this form of leadership.

To better understand the construct of academic optimism, the elements comprising it must be examined: collective efficacy, faculty trust, and academic emphasis.

Collective Efficacy

To better understand collective efficacy, one should look at the history of efficacy in general. Self-efficacy is conceptually defined as a person's conviction that he or she can be successful in executing those needed behaviors required to produce the outcomes (Bandura, 1977). Bandura (1977) developed the conceptual framework of the collective efficacy (examined later in this chapter) construct through his research of self-efficacy. He believed that a person will estimate that a given behavior will lead to an outcome.

Zimmerman, Bandura, and Martinez-Pons (1992) inquired into the role of self-efficacy beliefs and personal goal setting. They found that parents' academic goals for their children did not match up with what the children had set forth as a personal academic goal. The child's self-motivating influences were the largest factor of academic attainment. The researchers found that simply setting high standards for the child was not sufficient. To have a positive impact, the parent or teacher needs to structure academic experiences in a way that improves the student's self-efficacy." From a social cognitive perspective, self-regulated learners direct their learning processes and attainments by setting challenging goals for themselves by applying appropriate strategies to achieve their goals and by enlisting self-regulative influences that motivate and guide their efforts"(Zimmerman et al., 1992). Those learners who are able to guide their own learning show a greater sense of efficacy in their own abilities. This, in turn, influences the goals involving skills and knowledge that they set for themselves. It also helps them to establish a level of commitment to fulfill those challenges they have set for themselves. This extends beyond

motivation to the entire learning environment. For example, teaching low-achieving students to set goals for themselves improves their own sense of efficacy. Further research shows that learners who are self-regulated make better use of varying learning strategies and achieve more than their non-self-regulating peers (Zimmerman et al., 1992).

Bandura (1993) established a connection between ways that perceived self-efficacy contributed to cognitive development and functioning. He determined that a person can have skill and knowledge and not perform well when pushed to do so. A person must have a self-belief that he or she can use their skills and knowledge well when required. If a person does not have the confidence in themselves to use the ability, then poor performance is likely. People may perform poorly because they lack the skills or they may lack the ability to believe that they can effectively use the skills that they do possess.

Bandura (1993) examined the effect of self-efficacy on the classroom teacher as well. He found that teachers who have a high sense of instructional efficacy devoted more emphasis on academics. Those who had a low sense spent more time on non-academics and gave up quickly on their students. This led to criticism of the students for their failures.

In his study, Bandura (1993) also discovered that teachers operate collectively within the social school setting. This creates a school culture that can have either a positive effect on the school climate or can be detrimental on how well a school functions as a social system. To test this theory, he conducted a path analysis using student SES, student body composition, and teacher longevity as it relates to collective efficacy and student achievement. Prior academic achievement and collective efficacy had the highest impact toward academic achievement. SES resulted as a negative impact toward prior student achievement, collective efficacy, and academic achievement.

Hoy and Woolfolk (1993) produced information concerning teachers' sense of efficacy and the organizational health of schools. In this study, it was determined that principal influence, academic emphasis, and educational level had significant effects on the personal efficacy of a teacher. This meant that if a principal was perceived to have influence with superiors on their behalf, the environment was academically centered, and the teachers had taken extra graduate work then the teachers would be more likely to feel like they could motivate students who would otherwise be more difficult to reach.

Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara, and Pastorelli (1996) provided some insight into the impact of self-efficacy beliefs on academic functioning. Their main findings were related to parents' beliefs in their efficacy to promote their children's intellectual development and it was found that the aspirations that the parents had for their children were influential factors of the academic process. These children oftentimes had a tendency to stay out of trouble and were better equipped to resist peer pressures. This research supports the idea that children who have parents with high aspirations will be more successful academically than others.

In a more recent study, Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara, and Pastorelli (2001) focused on the self-efficacy beliefs as a determining factor or a shaper of a child's aspiration and career predictor. The authors provided empirical support to their notion that SES, familial, academic, and self-referent influences work together to influence and shape children's career trajectories. It was found that SES only had an indirect effect on a child's perception of future occupation and career choice. The children's efficacy beliefs steered children to careers that aligned with their apparent capabilities and drove the student away from careers that did not coincide with these beliefs.

Teacher efficacy builds upon past experience. When a teacher accomplishes a task with a level of persistence and effort influenced by teacher efficacy, it then becomes the past. The teacher will then refer to those past experiences to develop future efficacy. Little analysis is needed for the teacher to handle a task with efficacy and thus integrate efficacy into a routine. Inexperienced teachers tend to have a need to analyze each task. This analysis is looking at what other teachers would do to gauge their success (Tschannen-Moran, Hoy, and Hoy, 1998). When teachers as well as students can become self-directed, motivated believers then collective efficacy is the result.

Collective efficacy is defined as the perceptions of teachers in a specific school that the faculty as a whole can execute courses of action required to positively affect student achievement (Hoy, Sweetland, & Smith, 2002).

Changing the culture of the school is not a simple task; however, improving collective efficacy at the school can be accomplished by activities that the leader of the school provides. Some of those activities are allowing the teachers to be successful at a given task, visiting schools with high efficacy, communicating, and building an open/healthy climate where teachers do not feel threatened (Dipola & Hoy, 2008).

Goddard, Hoy, and Hoy (2000) concentrated on collective teacher efficacy and the impact on student achievement. The author's findings showed that collective teacher efficacy is a significant predictor of student achievement in both mathematics and reading. A one unit increase in CE resulted in an increase of more than 40% of a standard deviation in student achievement. The findings supported the notion that collective teacher efficacy had a greater impact than any of the demographic controls in the achievement variable. They demonstrated

that the negative association between achievement and socioeconomic status was eliminated by positive collective teacher efficacy.

Hoy, Sweetland, and Smith (2002) reached a similar conclusion about the significance of collective efficacy. Their hypothesis that collective efficacy has a positive impact on school achievement in mathematics was supported. Their discussion provided some insight on the effectiveness of collective efficacy. When collective efficacy is strong, an emphasis on academics reinforces a common goal held by teachers and students.

Goddard, LoGerfo, and Hoy (2004) tested the impact of collective efficacy on high school performance and found that collective efficacy did indeed affect student achievement. After they controlled for various school contexts, perceived collective efficacy was a significant indicator and predictor of 12th grade student achievement in mathematic and verbal domains. The authors discussed in the study that, perceived collective efficacy was significant in determining the level of achievement and can be an invaluable tool for educators in the attempt to enhance school and student achievement.

Goddard (2002) presented a study that reexamined the measure used for collective efficacy. It was designed to evaluate the level to which a given faculty believes in its ability to work together to positively affect student learning. Thus, cognitive processing by the group will create cognitive efficacy. The original 21-item CES was scrutinized and a more reliable version was created.

As a result of the study, the more effective 12-item test short form was created. The 12-item test was more consistent and kept a strong relation to the original. This shortened version remained a solid and valid measure when studying student achievement (Goddard, 2002).

Goddard, Hoy, and Hoy (2004) gave attention to the theoretical developments, empirical evidence, and future directions of collective efficacy. Their study has shown the importance of collective efficacy as it relates to an organization's functioning culture. Their research suggested that faculties with collective efficacy gain a sense of empowerment to be able to deal with difficulties they face as they pursue high standards of achievement. In fact, the choices that teachers make are strongly influenced by collective efficacy beliefs (Goddard, Hoy, & Hoy, 2004).

A study by Schechter and Tschannen-Moran (2006) expresses the need to examine teacher collective efficacy outside of the United States of America. They looked at the contextual and demographic factors that made a difference in the teacher perception of collective efficacy. The data supported strong statistical significance in the differences in collective efficacy for teachers from suburban schools and urban schools. Urban school teachers had a higher sense of collective teacher efficacy than suburban teachers. In regard to the demographics of the teachers, it was determined that years of classroom experience at the current school, general teaching experience, or teacher's workload did not have an impact on teacher collective efficacy.

Goddard and LoGerfo (2007) advanced the notion that teacher collective efficacy improved student achievement. The results using the group referent operationalization showed that a 1.00 standard deviation increase in perceived CE led to an increase of .21 standard deviation increase in reading achievement and .22 standard deviation increase in mathematics. This also showed that SES and prior mastery experience had a positive relationship with CE. Urbanicity was a negative predictor of reading achievement, while it was a positive predictor of math achievement. When using the self-referent operationalization they found no evidence that CE was a predictor of student achievement. This supports the idea that teachers' beliefs about

their own abilities do not reflect collective efficacy but in fact it is the teacher's belief of what the group is capable of that leads to collective efficacy.

Goddard and Skrla (2006) conducted a study on the influence of a school's social composition and collective efficacy. They referred to collective efficacy as a social cognitive construct theory that is constitutively defined as the belief that members of an organization are capable of working together as a group and attaining a desired outcome.

Goddard and Skrla (2006) took the position that if an organization had strong collective efficacy beliefs, then the members of that organization would put forth more of an effort to reach these goals. It would give the members of the organization a sense of purpose. They would start viewing obstacles as opportunities to overcome and demonstrate their sense of efficacy. When groups or individuals believe that they are capable of reaching any goals that have been put before them, the group is more likely to be creative, put forth greater effort, and persist until success is achieved (Goddard & Skrla, 2006).

Goddard and Skrla (2006) also pointed out the effectiveness of social persuasion in athletics when teammates challenge each other to rise above adversity and challenges. They related this relationship to the encouragement that teachers, principals, and other school people may encounter that would lead to collective efficacy. This social persuasion is further evidence of the effectiveness of collective efficacy.

Goddard and Skrla (2006) provided some insight into collective efficacy through the results of their study. Teacher race/ethnicity was found to make a difference in the amount of collective efficacy that was shown. Hispanic teachers displayed high levels of collective efficacy beliefs. The other major determining factor was the years of experience that a teacher had. It was

determined that teachers with more than 10 years of experience exhibited higher levels of perceived collective efficacy.

Adams and Forsyth (2006) shared insight on the influences of socioeconomic status, school level, and the school structure on a teacher's perception of collective efficacy. They examined the influence of the three contextual variables and provided data that showed that SES, enabling school structure, and school level did positively influence the level of collective teacher efficacy. External conditions in explaining efficacy are not stressed in current studies. Adams and Forsyth (2006), however, did not neglect to examine the external conditions that influence teacher outcomes. School structure was found to have a greater effect on perceived collective efficacy than that of SES and school level. School structures can be either enabling or hindering, and a school has the ability to organize their formal organizational structure so that it facilitates efficacy. This organizational structure will lead to a greater likelihood of increasing collective action and motivation. This, in turn, "brings people together and creates opportunities for collaboration, encourages problem solving by all stakeholders, fosters trust, and promotes collective ownership" (Adams & Forsyth, 2006).

Ware and Kitsantas (2007) has shown that teacher and collective efficacy beliefs are predictors of professional commitment. Their results indicated that a teacher's commitment to teaching can be explained by three forms of efficacy. Those are efficacy connected with the enlistment of administrative direction, influencing decision making, and the individual form of efficacy linked with classroom management. Using this information, the recommendation was made that principals need to set goals and develop strategies that facilitate their communication of those goals and expectations to teachers.

Ware and Kitsantas (2007) pointed out four facts that they derived from their results. First, their data set made it possible to generalize the results to teachers nationwide. Second, a blueprint was established for educators in terms of creating work environments for the culture of the school. Third, guidance was established for training the leaders of the school. Finally, this study illustrated a relationship between efficacy beliefs and professional commitment prior to No Child Left Behind. Thus, a baseline was established that would demonstrate a relationship between efficacy beliefs and professional commitment before it was mandated (Ware & Kitsantas, 2007).

Faculty Trust in Parents and Students

For collective efficacy to be effective in the area of academic optimism, faculty trust in parents and students must also be present. Trust in general is the foundation of faculty trust in parents and students. An examination of trust builds the foundation of faculty trust in parents and students, which is the trust portion of academic optimism.

Tarter, Bliss, and Hoy (1989) expounded the idea that the “concept of trust is complex.” In their study of faculty trust, they provided some insights into school characteristics involving faculty trust within secondary schools. Their hypothesis, that teachers’ trust in the principal would have a positive correlation to the principal’s supportive behavior, was valid. The authors also hypothesized that the opposite would be true in that directive leadership by the principal would lead to distrust. This was also supported by the data. It was further determined that when teachers were engaged there was a higher level of trust in colleagues present, and when teachers are frustrated, they tend to not trust their fellow teachers.

Further, Tarter, Bliss, and Hoy (1989) expressed that, in fact, there were two specific aspects of trust including faculty trust in principal and faculty trust in colleagues. They described faculty trust in principals as having the confidence that the administrator would keep his or her word and act in the best interest of the faculty. Faculty trust in colleagues was described as the faculty belief that teachers can depend on one another in a difficult situation and that teachers can rely on the integrity of their colleagues (Tarter et al., 1989). Of the two, faculty trust in colleagues is the more decisive and becomes the driving force behind developing a climate of trust.

Hoy and Tarter (1997) suggested, according to their research, that trust is a direct link to school effectiveness and successful leadership. If the culture of the school fosters trust, then those are good places to work and learn. Teachers are happy and more willing to try to improve without fear of failure or criticism. They take more risks because they do not fear lack of support from the administration or colleagues. Students find this culture a place they like to be rather than a place they have to be.

Without a culture of trust, schools are likely to find a great deal of suspicion, personal agendas, and manipulation. Teachers cannot rely on the administration for support, the expertise of teachers, or the good intentions of the students (Hoy & Tarter, 1997).

Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (1998) used the two trust scales developed in 1985 by Hoy and Koppersmith in their study of the measurement of trust. One important finding was that the principal's behavior had little to do with the trust that teachers have in each other. It was found that trust in the principal comes directly from the professionalism that the principal displays.

Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2000) gave credence to the validity of trust and its effectiveness on school improvement. They noted that without this trust, there is a distortion and

breakdown in communication. This breakdown makes problem resolution more complicated. The researchers expressed the importance of trust for schools as without it, schools will fail. School teachers must trust each other to create a climate conducive to positive student learning that will lead to positive student achievement. Students must trust their teachers in order to learn.

Tschannen-Moran (2001) focused on collaboration and the need for trust in schools in her study of trust and collaboration variables. As she predicted, there was a strong correlation between collaboration and trust among all stakeholders. These findings argue for the importance of trust in nurturing collaborative relationships. When all stakeholders are involved in the problem-solving process, they have greater contact and opportunities for understanding.

Hoy, Smith, and Sweetland (2002) completed a study that examined the relationship between the organizational climate index and faculty trust. This general hypothesis led the authors to examine trust in more detail. They found the strongest correlation in the study to be between faculty trust in colleagues and trust in clients. There was also a significant correlation between faculty trust in the principal and colleagues. There was no relation in trust in clients and trust in the principal. As predicted in this study, it was found that aspects of faculty trust were related to a positive climate. This climate promotes the understanding among the participants that academic achievement is perhaps the most important purpose of schooling.

Goddard, Tschannen-Moran, and Hoy (2001) presented an examination of the distribution and effects of teacher trust in students and parents in urban elementary schools. It was determined that teachers in this study did not differentiate trust in parents and trust in students. This formed a single measure of trust. The level of trust varied more between schools than within the schools. The statistics showed that the student socioeconomic class was the main determining factor in explaining the trust variation between schools. The lower the student social

class, the lower the trust by the faculty of students and parents. The next part of the study showed that trust was a significant positive predictor of the differences between schools in student achievement. The research team examined the effect of student economic status at the school level (as opposed to between schools), and SES was determined to be a non-significant factor. It was concluded that trust was the predictor of differences between schools in student mathematics and reading achievement.

Goddard (2003) elaborated on the theoretical rationale for relational networks, norms, and trust as structural and functional forms of social capital that can facilitate student achievement. The study concluded that there is a modest relationship between social capital and student achievement. Any social capital present may be limited to mathematics and writing achievement.

Goddard (2003) recognized the fact that schools that have teacher-student trust and teacher-parent trust and a sense of academic emphasis should have high academic success. His main point from the discussion is whether or not these collective conditions can be developed independent of disadvantaged socioeconomic status.

Principals affect the climate of the school either positively or negatively due to their power, authority, and position. If the principal can promote the constructive use of feedback, the climate can be positive. Trust, open communication and collegiality are essential for the principal to be an effective leader (Kelley, Thornton, & Daugherty, 2005).

Hoy, Smith, and Sweetland (2002) defined trust as an individual's or group's willingness to be vulnerable to another party based on the confidence that the latter party is benevolent, reliable, competent, honest, and open. These authors developed a study that looked at trust in relationship to different school climates. They examined trust in colleagues, trust in the principal,

and trust in parents and students. The data suggested that faculty trust in colleagues and trust in clients (parents and students) had the strongest correlation. Trust in the principal and colleagues were also significantly correlated. Trust in clients and trust in the principal were found to be unrelated. This correlated with earlier findings from Tarter, Bliss, and Hoy (1989) that stated the relationship with colleagues is more important than administrators when looking at faculty trust.

Hoy, Smith, and Sweetland (2003) used these findings to compare them to different aspects of school climate. It was determined that trust and climate are related. The implications are many but the authors looked at the importance that the climate of the school can positively effect student achievement. If trust fosters a positive climate then the data show that trust is an indicator of that encouraging learning environment (Hoy, Smith, & Sweetland, 2002).

Academic Emphasis

Goddard, Sweetland, and Hoy (2000) defined academic emphasis as a general perspective of the importance of academics in a school held by administrators, teachers, and students themselves. Hoy and Tarter (1992) conceptually defined academic emphasis as the extent to which the school is driven by a quest for excellence. In fact, it is more than a quest for excellence. It is the placement of academics as the primary focus of the administration, teachers, students, and parents. This emphasis on academics links productive teaching and student achievement. The researchers showed that healthy schools are better schools and academic emphasis is an integral part of the healthy school. The authors expressed that a healthy school can exist without high achievement but when a healthy school is coupled with teachers who strive for and push academics, schools are successful. These successful schools will have high

achievable goals set by the teachers, the learning environment is serious with order, the teachers believe in the students, and the students are committed to perform.

Hoy, Tarter, and Bliss (1990) determined that academic emphasis makes a significant and unique contribution to student achievement. This influence goes beyond the socioeconomic status of the school. It was also noted that the principal of the school only has an indirect impact on student achievement if he or she provides action that leads to the development of a climate that supports strong academic emphasis. This is considered to be expressive managerial behavior. This type of leadership will lead to a strong morale among the faculty that will increase motivation and engagement.

Academic emphasis is also defined by Goddard, Sweetland, and Hoy (2000) as a general perspective of the importance of academics in a school held by administrators, teachers, and students themselves. They found that academic emphasis led to a school climate that, in turn, fostered academic success by the students. In this atmosphere, teachers set reasonable goals and believed in their students' abilities to achieve, students worked hard to succeed and respected those who did the same, and the learning environment was orderly and serious.

Goddard, Sweetland, and Hoy (2000) examined the relationship of academic emphasis to elementary school student achievement. The study examined school culture and an atmosphere where teachers set obtainable goals and had a belief that their students could succeed in meeting these challenges. The authors found that a school climate that emphasized academics and had an orderly and serious environment led to improved student achievement in mathematics and reading. The study further confirmed the importance that academic emphasis had on urban elementary schools. The importance of a student's academic success and the effort to make it the

focus of the school makes a difference in academic achievement (Goddard, Sweetland, & Hoy, 2000).

Mindfulness and Academic Optimism

According to Weick and Sutcliffe (2001), an organizational culture emerges from a set of expectations. These expectations help to hold the group together and create the properties found in mindfulness and academic optimism.

Mindfulness will allow those involved in schools to identify potential problems with the goal of anticipating ways to deal with them when they arise. As the evidence of research has shown, a faculty must have efficacy, faculty trust, and an emphasis on academics in order to be successful. These are the components of academic optimism and as such will allow the members of the group to work together to create a mindful work structure.

It is the asset of the group taken together--not necessarily any one individual in the group--that can maintain the bubble of current operations. Because of their constant interactions, any one member of the group knows how the other members see things, which means any one has a bigger picture than before. (Weick & Sutcliffe, 2001, p. 155)

This coordinated effort is what optimism is all about. It both creates the ability to remain mindful of potential difficulties while at the same time encouraging optimism. The two work in tandem to create a successful organizational structure. Mindfulness is about constant inspection of unexpected events that can show up anywhere at any time and optimism allows the group to effectively and collectively deal with those events.

In the empirical phase of the investigation, I tested two hypotheses. They were based around the literature review and findings on mindfulness and academic optimism. The findings in the literature review led me to test mindfulness as an organizational construct in relationship to academic optimism. I also examined mindfulness and its relationship to the individual

constructs that make up academic optimism, which are collective efficacy, faculty trust in parents and students, and academic emphasis.

An analysis of the literature showed a gap in the literature where one might find a study linking mindfulness and academic optimism. The understanding of how these two variables could be related is important because each of these constructs have been proven to improve student performance. Therefore, my hypotheses were used to examine mindfulness as an independent variable to observe the impact that it has on the dependent variable, academic optimism. The second hypothesis utilizes mindfulness as the dependent variable and collective efficacy, faculty trust in parents and students, and academic emphasis as the independent variables.

Hypothesis 1: The greater the degree of mindfulness in the school the greater the degree of academic optimism.

Hypothesis 2: There is a positive relationship between mindfulness and collective efficacy, faculty trust in parents and students, and academic emphasis.

Summary

The literature revealed opinions on mindfulness and academic optimism expressed in terms of collective efficacy, faculty trust in parents and students, and academic emphasis. The literature suggested that there is a relationship between the components of academic optimism in the creation of the construct of academic optimism.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This study was quantitative in nature and investigated the relationships between school mindfulness and academic optimism. The independent variable was school mindfulness. The dependent variable was academic optimism. There were three sub-variables of academic optimism that were explored: academic emphasis, perceived teacher collective efficacy, and faculty trust in the client (students and parents).

Because mindfulness and academic optimism are organizational properties, the school was the unit of analysis and not the individual teacher. Some aspects of academic optimism were related to the individual teacher but as a whole the school was the focus. This is a study on organizational characteristics of the school and the effect they have upon the cultural characteristics of the school. This chapter will discuss the participants involved, instrumentation, procedures, hypotheses, and an explanation of the statistical methods used to analyze the data.

Population and Sample

Participants were recruited using a confidential and anonymous process. Full-time teachers at elementary schools in Grades K-6 were selected to participate. Those recruited were from the northern region of Alabama. A sample of 80 schools was identified and 67 of these schools participated in the study. I, or my designated representative, distributed the surveys at a

regularly scheduled faculty meeting. The designee randomly distributed the surveys to a random set of a minimum of 15 faculty members who returned the surveys at the conclusion of the meeting. The participants were guaranteed that neither individual names nor the names of the schools would be used in the study. The complete study results were made available to each participating school.

Instrumentation

Data used in this research effort were collected from the academic optimism and mindfulness surveys. The academic optimism measurement is a combination of measures that examine collective teacher efficacy, faculty trust in parents and students, and academic emphasis. This survey is known as the SAOS (school academic optimism survey; see Appendix A) and is comprised of 30 questions that are scored using a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*Strongly Disagree*) to 6 (*Strongly Agree*). The mindfulness survey, or the M-Scale (see Appendix B), consists of 14 questions scored on a 6-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*Strongly Disagree*) to 6 (*Strongly Agree*).

Data Analysis Procedures

The unit of analysis used in this study was at the school level, not the individual faculty member. The hypotheses were examined by calculating the descriptive and inferential statistics for each of the variables. The data were calculated using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Science). Statistical procedures used in this research included means, reliabilities of the measures, and standard deviations. A bivariate correlation and a linear regression were used in the data analysis. The relationship between academic optimism and mindfulness, as stated in

Hypothesis 1, was assessed using a bi-variant correlation. Hypothesis 2 was also tested using a bi-variant correlation, which is an analysis of the relationship between mindfulness and the different dimensions of academic optimism (collective teacher efficacy, faculty trust in parents and students, and academic emphasis). A linear regression was then used to determine if there was a unique and significant relationship between mindfulness and the 3 dimensions of academic optimism when controlling for overlapping effects. Beta weights, β , and significance were examined by completing the regression. Mean measures for each of the three dimensions of academic optimism (collective teacher efficacy, faculty trust in parents and students, and academic emphasis), the M-Scale, and each individual survey item is also included in the statistics. Descriptive and inferential statistics were utilized when analyzing the following research questions:

1. What is the relationship between academic optimism and mindfulness?
2. What is the relationship between mindfulness and collective efficacy, faculty trust in clients, and academic emphasis?

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

This chapter reports the findings of the relationship between mindfulness and academic optimism and the relationship between mindfulness and collective efficacy, faculty trust in parents and students, and academic emphasis. Included in this chapter are the descriptive, reliabilities, correlations, tested hypotheses, and un-hypothesized findings. Free and reduced lunch data were used to control for SES.

Descriptive Statistics

The study examined elementary schools in Northeast Alabama. Sixty-Seven out of the 80 elementary schools in north Alabama that were contacted participated in this study. Table 1 indicates the descriptive characteristics of the measures including SES. The number of respondents is represented. In this study, the school was the unit of analysis. The range, minimum, maximum, mean, and standard deviation is also found in the table below.

Table 1

Descriptive Characteristics of the Measures

Variable	<i>N</i>	Range	Minimum	Maximum	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Academic Optimism	67	2.06	3.06	5.12	4.09	.36
Collective Efficacy	67	1.92	3.61	5.53	4.67	.40
Faculty Trust	67	2.95	2.90	5.85	4.28	.53
Academic Emphasis	67	1.38	2.63	4.00	3.33	.23
Mindfulness	67	2.63	3.25	5.88	4.64	.55
SES	67	90.00	8.00	98.00	48.38	22.79
Valid N (listwise)	67					

Reliability

The alpha reliability of each of the measurements used is listed in Table 2. Mindfulness was measured using the M-Scale and academic optimism was measured using the SAOS (school academic optimism scale). The M-Scale is a 14-item Likert-type survey and the SAOS is a 30-item Likert-type survey. The alpha reliability for each of the measures is provided. Each of the measures were found to be highly reliable, according to the alpha coefficients, with the M-Scale at .88 and SAOS at .92, respectively. Subsets of the SAOS include measures of collective efficacy (CE), faculty trust (FT), and academic emphasis (AE). These measures were also found to be highly reliable according to the alpha coefficients, CE at .77, FT at .91, AE at .81.

Table 2

Alpha Reliabilities by Scale

Scale	Cases	Items	Alpha coefficients
M-Scale	440	14	.88
SAOS	468	30	.92
CE	468	12	.77
FT	468	10	.91
AE	468	8	.81

Correlations

Correlations among all variables examined in the study are given in Table 3. Each variable was shown to have a significant correlation at the .01 level. A positive correlation indicates that as one variable increases, so does the other. For example, a .49 correlation between mindfulness and academic emphasis implies that as teachers become more mindful, they place more emphasis placed on academics. Negative correlations were not found.

Table 3

Correlations among all Major Variables Examined in the Study

Var.	CE	FT	AE	AO	M	SES
CE	1	.87**	.65**	.95**	.28**	.75**
FT		1	.67**	.97**	.36**	.75**
AE			1	.79**	.49**	.48**
AO				1	.39**	.75**
M					1	.15**
SES						1

Notes. **Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Academic Optimism (AO), Collective Efficacy (CE), Mindfulness (M), Faculty Trust (FT), Academic Emphasis (AE), Socio Economic Status (SES).

Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis 1, which states the greater the degree of mindfulness in the school, then the greater degree of academic optimism, was supported. Table 3 indicates a low and significant correlation of variance between mindfulness and academic optimism ($r = .39, p < .01$).

To further test the relationship, a regression analysis was conducted to find out the unique contribution of mindfulness onto each element of academic optimism as stated in Hypothesis 2. Hypothesis 2 tested the relationship between mindfulness and the three elements of academic optimism, which are collective efficacy, faculty trust in parents and students, and academic

emphasis, and predicted that there would be a unique relationship. This hypothesis test found a unique relationship to mindfulness and the hypothesis was supported using the correlations in Table 3. While all variable were related, additional support of the hypothesis is shown by the zero-order correlation of collective efficacy, faculty trust, and academic emphasis to mindfulness

Mindfulness, which is illustrated in Table 4, was regressed on the three properties of academic optimism: collective efficacy, faculty trust in clients, and academic emphasis to control for overlapping effects and test a unique relationship. Table 4 illustrates the standardized regression coefficients (beta weights), un-standardized regression coefficient (β), standard error, t , and the significance. In this regression, the predictors accounted for 22% of the variance in academic optimism. The regression equation was significant, $F(3,63) = 7.08, p < .01$. Academic emphasis ($\beta = .48, p < .01$) was the only significant predictor of mindfulness. The negative finding of collective efficacy and academic optimism is a function of the multicollinearity of the independent variables in the equation (see Table 3). Collective efficacy and faculty trust are so highly correlated as to distort the relationships. The analysis was done to see if there would be an interpretable interaction, which there was not. The bivariate correlations establish the unique relationship of each of the optimism variables to mindfulness. The same problem of multicollinearity describes the negative relationship of SES and optimism in Table 5.

Table 4

Regression Coefficient of Mindfulness on Elements of Academic Optimism

Predictor Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	β	t	Sig.
(constant)	1.31	.98		1.34	.19
Collective Efficacy	-.35	.30	-.26	-1.14	.26
Faculty Trust	.27	.24	.26	1.13	.27
Academic Emphasis	1.14	.36	.48	3.20	.002**

** Significant at $p < 0.01$ (2 tailed), $R = .50, \text{Adj } R^2 = .22$.

Un-hypothesized Findings

Table 5 shows that when controlling for SES, academic emphasis ($\beta = .46, p < .01$) continued to show the only significant predictor of mindfulness. The predictors accounted for 22% of the variance in academic optimism. SES ($\beta = -.21, p < .01$) was not found to be a significant predictor of mindfulness.

Table 5

Regression Coefficient of Mindfulness on Elements of Academic Optimism and SES

Predictor Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	β	<i>t</i>	Sig.
(constant)	.72	1.09		.67	.51
SES	-.01	.00	-.21	-1.23	.22
Collective Efficacy	-.22	.32	-.16	-.69	.49
Faculty Trust	.36	.25	.35	1.45	.15
Academic Emphasis	1.10	.36	.46	3.08	.003**

** Significant at $p < 0.01$ (2 tailed), $R = .52$, $Adj R^2 = .22$.

Table 6 shows a second regression analysis that was conducted to determine the SES effect on academic optimism, while controlling for mindfulness. Academic optimism was regressed on mindfulness and SES. SES ($\beta = .71, p < .01$) in combination with mindfulness ($\beta = .28, p < .01$) showed to be a strong predictor of academic optimism ($Adj R^2 = .63, p < .01$).

Table 6

Regression Coefficient of Academic Optimism on Mindfulness and SES

Predictor Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	β	<i>T</i>	Sig.
(constant)	8.10	.69		11.75	.000
Mindfulness	.55	.15	.28	3.70	.000**
SES	.03	.00	.71	9.43	.000**

** Significant at $p < 0.01$ (2 tailed), $R = .80$, $Adj R^2 = .63$.

Conclusion

In this chapter, a statistical test of the relationship between mindfulness and academic optimism and the relationship between mindfulness and collective efficacy, faculty trust in clients, and academic emphasis was examined. Both correlation and regression data were used to establish these relationships. The first research question asked if there was a relationship between mindfulness and academic optimism. The inter-correlation data verified that there is a positive relationship between these two constructs.

The second research question asked if there was a relationship between mindfulness and collective efficacy, faculty trust in clients, and academic emphasis (three elements of academic optimism). A correlation was also used to test this relationship. The data suggested that there is a significant relationship between mindfulness and the three elements of academic optimism. A regression was used to examine the three elements of academic optimism to determine if there was a unique relationship to mindfulness when controlling for the overlapping effects of academic optimism and to test for the influence of SES. SES along with mindfulness showed to be a strong predictor of academic optimism.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Introduction

This chapter summarizes the purpose and findings of the study. It also gives theoretical and practical applications and finally it provides some suggestions to extend the findings of this inquiry. The literature review from Chapter 2 was used to support the theoretical implications. Practical applications are given for administrators to use when attempting to increase mindfulness, academic optimism, collective efficacy, faculty trust in clients, and academic emphasis. Suggestions for further research are given.

Summary of Findings

This study tested the relationship between mindfulness and academic optimism and the relationship between mindfulness and the three elements of academic optimism: collective efficacy, faculty trust in clients, and academic emphasis. Following are the hypothesized findings from this study.

1. Mindfulness and academic optimism are positively related to each other, even when controlling for SES.
2. Mindfulness and collective efficacy, faculty trust in clients, and academic emphasis are positively related to each other.
3. SES along with mindfulness is a strong predictor of academic optimism.

Theoretical Implications

Mindfulness and Academic Optimism

There was a positive correlation between mindfulness and academic optimism. If a school practiced mindful behaviors, would that increase the academic optimism? From this question, Hypothesis 1 postulated that the greater the degree of mindfulness in the school the greater the degree of academic optimism. The findings supported this hypothesis.

The literature review in chapter 2 offers an explanation and history of mindfulness and academic optimism. Recall that mindfulness is the constant inspection of present expectations (Hoy, 2003). Within mindfulness there are five practices that will be seen: preoccupation with failure, reluctance to oversimplification, sensitivity to operations, commitment to resilience, and deference to expertise (Weick & Sutcliffe, 2001). Academic optimism is defined as an academic environment comprised of three dimensions: academic emphasis, collective efficacy, and faculty trust (Hoy, Tarter, & Hoy, 2006, p. 431). Because academic optimism is a relatively new concept, the literature was unable to substantiate a link between mindfulness and academic optimism. Given that a relationship exists between academic optimism and mindfulness, does “constant inspection” benefit optimism? This question can be answered by taking a closer look at mindfulness and how this concept might explain, predict, or affect the three dimensions of optimism.

Mindfulness and Collective Efficacy

The body of research in chapter 2 indicates very little connection between mindfulness and collective efficacy. According to the data however, there is a significant relationship between mindfulness and collective teacher efficacy ($r = .28$, $p < .01$). This is the first study that

examined this relationship between mindfulness and collective efficacy, and while the bivariate correlation is theoretically important in that it links the two concepts, more explanatory theory is needed.

Mindfulness and collective efficacy support each other in that when faculty members of your school are mindful of what each of the other are doing, they can then develop a judgment that the faculty as a whole can organize and execute the courses of action required to have a positive effect on students (Goddard, Hoy, & Hoy, 2004). The more mindful the teachers are of what each are doing and not simply focused on themselves, they will develop collectively these beliefs that they can all make a difference together and collective efficacy will be high.

Mindfulness and Faculty Trust

Hoy, Gage, and Tarter (2006) tested a theory that school mindfulness and faculty trust were necessary conditions for each other. In their study, they found a strong relationship between mindfulness and faculty trust. According to the data, there is a significant relationship between mindfulness and faculty trust when using a zero-order correlation. However when controlling for the overlapping affects of collective efficacy and academic emphasis, there was not a unique relationship between mindfulness and faculty trust.

Theoretically the connection between mindfulness and faculty trust exists. If the faculty members are mindful of situations that exist outside of school, they may develop a higher sense of willingness to be vulnerable to another party based on the confidence that the latter party is reliable, competent, honest, and open (Hoy, Tschannen-Moran, & Hoy, 1999). Communication between the teacher, parents, and students can eliminate misconceptions and foster trust. For example, teachers need to establish criteria when giving homework. What is the purpose of the

homework? Is the homework necessary or is it given because that is what you have always done? Is the homework checked for accuracy or simply for completion? These questions could eliminate a common problem between teacher, student, and parent. If the teacher is mindful that the students will be participating or attending a ball game on Thursday night, can a check of concept mastery be given in the form of an exit slip at the end of class or another form of quick assessment? This mindfulness will lead to a positive relationship between teacher, student, and parent and trust can begin to develop. The parent will trust that the teacher has the student's best interest at heart, the student will trust the teacher that understanding is present, and the teacher can trust the student and parent that all are working to develop a well rounded student.

Mindfulness and Academic Emphasis

As with collective efficacy, there were no studies that examined the relationship between mindfulness and academic emphasis. The data in this study suggested a strong relationship between mindfulness and academic emphasis when using a zero-order correlation. To further understand the relationship, a regression showed that when controlling for the overlapping effects of collective efficacy and faculty trust, academic emphasis was the only element of the three to indicate a unique and significant effect in relationship to mindfulness. Upon further review of the literature, a strong argument can be made that many of the practices found in a mindful school would lend themselves to creating a general perspective of the importance of academics in a school held by administrators, teachers, and students themselves as noted by Goddard, Sweetland, and Hoy (2000). Hoy, Gage, and Tarter (2006) stated that when teachers and administrators develop the ability to anticipate surprise by focusing on failure, avoiding simplification, and remaining sensitive to operations, mindfulness is found. Given the findings in

the data, it is safe to state that these mindful practices will increase the extent to which a school is driven by a quest for academic excellence as stated by Hoy, Tarter, and Hoy (2006).

Assumptions can be made that mindfulness is connected to academic emphasis. Goddard, Sweetland, and Hoy (2000) found a relationship between mindfulness and how administrators, teachers, and students viewed the importance of academics. Weick and Sutcliffe (2001) looked at preoccupation with failure. This leads planners to anticipate and prepare and to not become complacent, arrogant, and lazy.

Continuous professional development is a great way to keep the faculty abreast of current educational practices and constantly anticipating and preparing for the unexpected. Often, schools tend to celebrate success and ignore areas of weakness. Success has the tendency to lead the school or organization to focus only on the organizational goals and be driven only by the data. If the school is placing high importance and emphasis on academics, then the administrators, teachers, and students are continuously anticipating and preparing for the possibility of failure and scrutinizing their day-to-day practice to avoid becoming complacent (Weick & Sutcliffe, 2001). Professional development should be more than just a one time event that teachers attend or participate. Site based professional development that is continuously occurring at the school is the best way to keep teachers prepared. Teachers observing other teachers, teachers teaching other teachers, and monthly subject meetings are some ways to make professional development pertinent to your faculty.

Sensitivity to operations and commitment to resilience also points to the ongoing concern with the unexpected and are strong predictors of mindfulness. Being attentive to the front line workers who are getting the job done is necessary for mindfulness. Giving them attention to real-time information so that they can identify problems early and take action before the problem

worsens are characteristics of the practices of a mindful organization (Weick & Sutcliffe, 2001). Classroom management is a great way for an administrator to practice sensitivity to operations. Being mindful of problems that teachers are experiencing in the classroom can allow the administration to identify problems early and take action before the problem gets worse. This practice can also be used by the teacher when he/she is able to identify a problem student and begin to develop strategies and action plans to eliminate problems down the road. Proper classroom management will include communication with parents and other stake holders. These classroom management practices will increase the flow of information and enable stakeholders in the school to keep the emphasis on academics and not just simply focusing on putting out fires.

Practical Applications

Mindfulness and academic optimism were found to be significantly related to one another. So what? It could be beneficial to a school administrator, given this study, to know if mindful practices are happening at the school. If so, according to this study, then that school would be high in academic optimism. Academic optimism has a reciprocal relationship to mindfulness. But the main purpose of the study was to examine a school to see if mindfulness and academic optimism are related. Academic optimism has been shown to improve student achievement; therefore this study can be used to test the theory that if an administrator practiced mindful behaviors, could those behaviors increase academic optimism in that school. This theory was supported by the data. It is reasonable to suggest that if an administrator practices mindful behaviors then that would result in academic optimism, which, in turn, would improve student achievement. Increased student achievement was not part of this study, in relation to the theory;

however, as stated in Chapter 2, academic optimism does lead to increased student achievement (Hoy, Tarter, & Hoy, 2006).

Mindful behaviors can easily be adapted by a school administrator. Weick and Sutcliffe (2001) identified five categories that involve mindful awareness and anticipation of the unexpected as well as mindful containment of the unexpected: preoccupation with failure, reluctance to oversimplification, sensitivity to operations, commitment to resilience, and deference to expertise. These mindful behaviors show a relationship to the three dimensions of academic optimism: collective efficacy, faculty trust in clients, and academic emphasis. Practical applications in a school setting are seen in the following discussion of mindful behaviors and academic optimism.

Mindful and Academic Optimism Applications

Preoccupation with failure is one of the five facets of mindfulness. These schools take heed of small failures so as not to be overwhelmed when a large, more pressing problem arises and do not make success your primary focus. If you have a drug problem in your school, do not run away from this problem. It is okay to air out your dirty laundry so to speak. Take failures and mistakes as opportunities to learn and be mindful. If your school made adequate yearly progress by a few points, do not celebrate the fact that you made AYP but welcome the opportunity to analyze and fix mistakes so this near miss will not happen again. When doing this, teachers begin to develop collective efficacy. The teachers see where the problems lie and what needs to be done to remedy these problems. In this case, it was barely making AYP. When doing this, the teachers begin to develop the judgment that faculties as a whole are doing what is necessary to have a positive effect on students.

Reluctance to oversimplification is another facet of mindfulness. These schools believe simplification creates the danger of complacency. Constant interactions with stakeholders decreases simplification and increases mindfulness. When developing decision-making teams, include those who may share diverse opinions, such as parents, students, community leaders, or even custodians. This will give you the diversity needed to avoid oversimplification. Common decision-making models are made up of the principal, assistant principal, counselor, and maybe a member of a leadership team. Participants in this model have a tendency to not question the norm. Questioning is encouraged and this will lead to mindfulness. When these mindful practices begin to show up in a school, faculty trust in parents and students will begin to form. When teachers interact with the clients (parents and students) in a decision-making setting, trust will be established. The teacher will be willing to be vulnerable to the parents and students and have confidence that they are reliable, competent, honest, and open (Hoy & Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 1999).

Another facet of mindfulness is sensitivity to operations. These mindful schools are concerned with situational awareness instead of the mundane repetitive motions that operations tend to cause. Sensitivity to operations encourages your school to avoid discovering failures after they occur. A principal should be constantly available and communicate with teachers in a way that teachers can count on the principal to give them assistance when needed. Relationship development is one of the keys in creating a mindful environment in relation to sensitivity to operations. Principals must know all of the front-line workers and the job that they are doing, in order to be able to take necessary action before a problem or difficulties become too large to handle. Sensitivity to operations can be practiced by the teachers as well. If the teacher acts toward the parents and students the way the principal acts toward the teachers in sensitivity to

operations, they will begin developing a relationship that will encourage trust. The teacher should be constantly available and communicate with the parents and students in a way that they can count on the teacher to give them assistance when needed (Weick & Sutcliffe, 2001).

“Unlike anticipation, which encourages people to think and then act, resilience encourages people to act while thinking or to act in order to think more clearly” (Weick & Sutcliffe, 2001, pp. 69-70). No Child Left Behind states that by the year 2014, all students will be on grade level. As an administrator, it is important to go beyond planning, vision, strategy, and anticipation that this goal may not be reached. Administrators and teachers must be resilient and focus on a cure rather than prevention of this potential failure. This attention promotes mindfulness and also encourages collective efficacy, faculty trust, and academic emphasis. The group of teachers will be encouraged that each teacher is able to perform their duties in order to affect students in a positive way. Teachers will have to trust students and parents to be reliable, competent, honest and open if this goal is to be reached. And ultimately academic emphasis will increase because the extent to which a school is driven by a quest for academic excellence will increase in order to meet the lofty expectations outlined by No Child Left Behind.

Deference to expertise is a facet of mindfulness and is increased when responsibilities are given to the people who have expertise and not necessarily rank or authority. When teachers are given real responsibility and decision-making capabilities, this will also increase the collective efficacy of the school, or the judgment of the teachers that the faculty as a whole are doing their job effectively and improving the students. To further expand this point one can look at a budget meeting where decisions are being made on where to spend certain funds. I do not expect the baseball coach to make decisions on where money should be spent to improve the science lab facilities. In turn, I would not think that the science teacher would have the expertise to tell the

baseball coach where he should spend his funds. Being mindful of these different experts and giving them real input can help lead teachers to have that judgment that they are collectively doing their job effectively to improve students.

This mindful concept can be applied to all areas of your school, not just with your teachers. If a decision needs to be made about the types of chemicals needed to clean the floors of the school, the custodians should be given responsibility to make these decisions due to their expertise. Many times decisions have to be made quickly and accurately and the ones who are closest to the problem (usually lower in rank or authority) should be given the power to make the important decisions and should be held highly accountable for those decisions (Weick & Sutcliffe, 2001). Giving this authority to others requires the closest inspection and trust by a mindful administrator.

Recommendations for Future Research

The data suggested that there is a significant relationship between mindfulness and academic optimism. Additional studies should be done to further verify these findings because this is the only one that compared the two constructs. When the elements of academic optimism were broken out and compared individually to mindfulness, only one of the properties showed a unique and significant contribution. Individually, collective efficacy and faculty trust did not show a significant relationship with mindfulness. The findings related to mindfulness and faculty trust do not support the findings of Hoy, Gage, and Tarter (2006). Their study found that there is a strong relationship between faculty trust and mindfulness. According to that particular study, mindful organizations are better able to handle unexpected results in earlier stages to minimize damage. In turn, this creates an atmosphere of openness and trust because those who publicize

unexpected results in an effort to create solutions are themselves more open and honest. Further research should be done to add clarity to the findings from this study and the study completed by Hoy, Gage, and Tarter (2006).

A strong argument in favor of academic optimism showing improvement on student achievement was shown by Hoy, Tarter and Hoy (2006). Teacher academic optimism was also shown to have a positive effect on academic performance in the study conducted by Kurz, Hoy, and Hoy (2007). Further, academic emphasis corresponds to improved student achievement. Hoy and Tarter (1992) found that emphasis on academics is a link to productive teaching techniques and student achievement. Academic emphasis is directly attributable to making a significant and unique contribution to student achievement (Hoy, Tarter, & Bliss, 1990). Because the current study indicates that high levels of mindfulness indicate high levels of academic optimism and academic emphasis, further research should be conducted that links mindfulness to improved academic performance and student achievement.

Hoy, Tarter, and Hoy (2006) recognized that academic optimism is capable of overcoming the effects of socioeconomic status in relation to academic performance. Smith and Hoy (2007) offer an explanation in their study that academic optimism could lessen or remove the effects of SES on student achievement. With this being the case, research should be conducted to determine the effect that mindfulness makes on student performance with socioeconomic status being a factor on achievement. Though not hypothesized in this study, SES along with mindfulness was shown to be a strong predictor of academic optimism. A mindful school with increasing wealth is a determinate factor of academic optimism. These findings could be further studied to determine factors that lead to strong academic optimism.

Conclusion

“Among the most attentive and mindful people in the world are those who cycle between action and interpretation on nuclear aircraft carriers” (Weick & Sutcliffe, 2001, p. 25).

Administrators and teachers may not have the same responsibilities of those who spend their days on nuclear aircraft carriers, but they do have a tremendous influence and impact on student achievement. Mindfulness and academic optimism, when present in schools, are means to an end of success for these students. Mindfulness has now found a place in discussions that may occur with academic optimism. Administrators can determine the presence of optimism and mindfulness and bring them into administrative practice as a guide and use the design set forth in these findings to implement necessary changes.

REFERENCES

- Adams, C. M., & Forsyth, P. (2006). *Proximate sources of collective teacher efficacy*, 44(6), 625-642.
- Bandura, A. (1977). Self-efficacy: Toward a unifying theory of behavioral change. *Psychological Review*, 84, 191-215.
- Bandura, A. (1993). Perceived self-efficacy in cognitive development and functioning. *Educational Psychologist*, 28(2), 117-148.
- Bandura, A., Barbaranelli, C., & Caprara, G. V., Pastorelli, C. (1996). Multifaceted impact of self-efficacy beliefs on academic functioning. *Child Development*, 67(3), 1206-1222.
- Bandura, A., Barbaranelli, C., Caprara, G. V., & Pastorelli, C. (2001). Self-efficacy beliefs as shapers of children's aspirations and career trajectories. *Child Development*, 71(1), 187-206.
- Bellamy, G., Crawford, L., Marshall, L., & Coulter, G. (2005). The fail-safe schools challenge: Leadership possibilities from high reliability organizations. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 41(3), 383-412.
- Dipola, M., & Hoy, W. (2008). *Principals improving instruction*. Boston: Pearson.
- Goddard, R. (2002). A theoretical and empirical analysis of the measurement of collective efficacy: The development of a short form. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 62, 97-110.
- Goddard, R. (2003). Relational networks, social trust, and norms: A social capital perspective on students' chances of academic success. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 25, 59-74.
- Goddard, R. D., Hoy, W. K., & Hoy, A. W. (2000). Collective efficacy: Its meaning, measure, and impact on student achievement. *American Educational Research Journal*, 37, 479-507.
- Goddard, R. D., Hoy, W. K., & Hoy, A. W. (2004). Collective efficacy beliefs: Theoretical developments, empirical evidence, and future directions. *Educational Research*, 33(3), 3-13.
- Goddard, R. D., & LoGerfo, L. (2007). Measuring emergent organizational properties. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 67, 845-857.

- Goddard, R. D., LoGerfo, L., & Hoy, W. (2004). High school accountability: the role of perceived collective efficacy. *Educational Policy*, 18, 403-425.
- Goddard, R. D., & Skrla, L. (2006). The influence of school social composition on teachers' collective efficacy beliefs. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 42, 216-235.
- Goddard, R. D., Sweetland, S., & Hoy, W. K. (2000). Academic emphasis of urban elementary schools and student achievement in reading and mathematics. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 36, 683-702.
- Goddard, R., Tschannen-Moran, M., & Hoy, W., (2001). A multilevel examination of the distribution and effects of teacher trust in students and parents in urban elementary schools. *The Elementary School Journal*, 102(1), 3-17.
- Hoy, W. (2003). An analysis of enabling and mindful school structures. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 41(1), 87-108.
- Hoy, W. K., & Hannum, J. (1998). Middle school climate and student achievement. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 33, 290-311.
- Hoy, A., Hoy, W., & Kurz, N. (2007). Teacher's academic optimism: The development and test of a new construct. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 24, 821-835.
- Hoy, W. K., Gage, C. Q., & Tarter, C. J. (2004). An explanatory analysis of faculty trust in higher education. In W. K. Hoy & C. G. Miskel (Eds.), *Educational administration, policy, and reform* (pp. 279-303). Greenwich, CT: IAP.
- Hoy, W. K., Gage, C. Q., & Tarter, C. J. (2006). School mindfulness and faculty trust: Necessary conditions for each other? *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 42, 236-255.
- Hoy, W., Smith, P., & Sweetland, S. (2002). The development of the organizational climate index for high schools: Its measure and relationship to faculty trust. *High School Journal*, 86(2), 38-50.
- Hoy, W., & Sweetland, S. R. (2001). Designing better schools: the meaning and measure of enabling school structures. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 37, 296-321.
- Hoy, W., Sweetland, S. R., & Smith, P. (2002). Toward an organizational model of achievement in high schools: The significance of collective efficacy. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 38, 77-93
- Hoy, W. K., & Tarter, C. J., (1992). Measuring the health of the school climate: A conceptual framework. *NASSP Bulletin*, November, 74-79.
- Hoy, W. K., & Tarter, C. J., (1997). *The road to open and healthy schools*. California: Corwin Press.

- Hoy, W., Tarter, C. J., & Bliss, J. (1990). Organizational climate, school health, and effectiveness: A comparative analysis. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 26(3), 260-279.
- Hoy, W., Tarter, C. J., & Hoy, A. (2006). Academic optimism of schools: A force for student achievement. *American Educational Research Journal*, 43, 425-446.
- Hoy, W., & Woolfolk, A. (1993). Teachers' sense of efficacy and the organizational health of schools. *The Elementary School Journal*, 93(4), 355-372.
- Kelley, R., Thornton, B., & Daugherty, R. (2005). Relationships between measures of leadership and school climate. *Education*, 126, 17-25.
- Schechter, C., & Tschannen-Moran, M. (2006). Teachers' sense of collective efficacy: An international view. *IJEM*, 20(6), 480-489.
- Smith, P., & Hoy, W. (2007). Academic optimism and student achievement in urban elementary schools. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 45(5), 556-568.
- Spillane, J. P. (2006). *Distributed Leadership*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Tarter, C. J., Bliss, J., & Hoy, W. (1989). School characteristics and faculty trust in secondary schools. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 25(3), 294-308.
- Tschannen-Moran, M. (2001). Collaboration and the need for trust. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 39(4), 308-331.
- Tschannen-Moran, M., & Hoy, W. K. (1998). Trust in schools: A conceptual and empirical analysis. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 36, 334-352.
- Tschannen-Moran, M., & Hoy, W. K. (2000). A multidisciplinary analysis of the nature, meaning, and measurement of trust. *Review of Educational Research*, 70, 547-593.
- Tschannen-Moran, M., Hoy, A., & Hoy, W. (1998). Teacher efficacy: Its meaning and measure. *Review of Educational Research*, 68(2), 202-248.
- Ware, H., & Kitsantas, A. (2007). Teacher and collective efficacy beliefs as predictors of professional commitment. *The Journal of Educational Research*, 100(5), 303-310.
- Weick, K. E., & Sutcliffe, K. M. (2001). *Managing the unexpected*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Zimmerman, B., Bandura, A., & Martinez-Pons, M. (1992). Self-motivation for academic attainment: The role of self-efficacy beliefs and personal goal setting. *American Educational Research Journal*, 29(3), 663-666.

APPENDIX A
SCHOOL ACADEMIC OPTIMISM SURVEY (SAOS)

SAOS

Directions: Please indicate your degree of with each of the statements about your school from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (6). Your answers are confidential.	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Agree
1. Teachers in this school are able to get through to the most difficult students.	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6)	
2. Teachers here are confident they will be able to motivate their students.	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6)	
3. If a child doesn't want to learn teachers here give up.	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6)	
4. Teachers here don't have the skills needed to produce meaningful results.	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6)	
5. Teachers in this school believe that every child can learn.	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6)	
6. These students come to school ready to learn.	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6)	
7. Home life provides so many advantages that students are bound to learn.	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6)	
8. Students here just aren't motivated to learn.	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6)	
9. Teachers in this school do not have the skills to deal with student disciplinary problems.	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6)	
10. The opportunities in this community help ensure that these students will learn.	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6)	
11. Learning is more difficult at this school because students are worried about their safety.	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6)	
12. Drug and alcohol abuse in the community make learning difficult for students here.	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6)	
13. Teachers in this school trust their students.	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6)	
14. Teachers in this school trust the parents.	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6)	
15. Students in this school care about each other.	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6)	
16. Parents in this school are reliable in their commitments.	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6)	
17. Students in this school can be counted upon to do their work.	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6)	
18. Teachers can count upon parental support.	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6)	
19. Teachers here believe that students are competent learners.	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6)	
20. Teachers think that most of the parents do a good job.	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6)	
21. Teachers can believe what parents tell them.	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6)	
22. Students here are secretive.	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6)	

SAOS (cont)

Directions: Please indicate the degree to which the following statements characterize your school from Rarely Occurs (1) to Very Often Occurs (4).	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often
23. The school sets high standards for performance.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
24. Students respect others who get good grades.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
25. Students seek extra work so they can get good grades.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
26. Academic achievement is recognized and acknowledged by the school.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
27. Students try hard to improve on previous work.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
28. The learning environment is orderly and orderly.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
29. The students in this school can achieve the goals that have been set for them.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
30. Teachers in this school believe that their students have the ability to achieve academically.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)

Scoring the SAOS:

I. Collective Efficacy (CE) of the School (items 1-12)

1. First, reverse scores on the following items: 3, 4, 8, 9, 11, 12, that is, score 1=6, 2=5, 3=4, 4=3 5=2, 6=1.
2. Next, compute the average score for each individual on the first 12 items; that is, for each person, sum all the scores on the first 12 items and divide by the number of items for which you have responses.
3. Finally, sum the average individual scores for all teachers and divide by the number of teachers in the school who responded; this is the average collective efficacy (CE) score for the school and will be between 1 and 6.

II. Faculty Trust (FT) in Parents and Teachers (items 13-22)

1. First, reverse scores on item 22, that is, 1=6, 2=5, 3=4, 4=3 5=2, 6=1.
2. Next, compute the average score for each individual on the items 13 through 22; that is, for each person, sum all the scores on those 10 items and divide by the number of items for which you have responses.
3. Finally, sum the average individual scores for all teachers and divide by the number of teachers in the school who responded; this is the average Faculty Trust in Parents and Teachers score (FT) score for the school and will be between 1 and 6.

III. Academic Emphasis (AE) of the School (items 23-30)

1. Score all the items with a score from 1 to 4.
2. Next, compute the average score for each individual on the items 23 through 30; that is, for each person, sum all the scores on those 8 items and divide by the number of items for which you have responses.
3. Finally, sum the average individual scores for all teachers and divide by the number of teachers in the school who responded; this is the average Faculty Trust in Parents and Teachers score (AE) score for the school and will be between 1 and 4.

Compute Academic Optimism Score—Secondary Schools

1. Create standardized (Std) scores for each component as follows:

- Std for Collective Efficacy (**Std CE**) = $(3.96-CE)/.33$
- Std for Faculty Trust (**Std FT**) = $(3.65-FT)/.39$
- Std for Academic Emphasis (**Std AE**) = $(2.75-AE)/.26$

2. Then compute an Academic Optimism Score as follows:

$$\text{Academic Optimism} = [.99X(\text{Std CE})] + [.92X(\text{Std FT})] + [.75X(\text{Std AE})]$$

Note: This formula is based on our work of a fairly representative sample of 96 secondary schools from Ohio.

APPENDIX B
MINDFULNESS SCALE (M-SCALE)

M Scale

DIRECTIONS

The following statements are about your school. Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each of the following statements along a scale from STRONGLY DISAGREE (1) to STRONGLY AGREE (6).

1. My principal often jumps to conclusions 1 2 3 4 5 6
2. When a crisis occurs the principal deals with it so we can get
back to teaching 1 2 3 4 5 6
3. In this school teachers welcome feedback about ways to improve ... 1 2 3 4 5 6
4. Teachers do not trust the principal enough to admit their mistakes.. 1 2 3 4 5 6
5. The principal of this school does not value the opinions of
the teachers 1 2 3 4 5 6
6. My principal is an expert on teaching and learning 1 2 3 4 5 6
7. Teachers in this school jump to conclusions..... 1 2 3 4 5 6
8. People in this school respect power more than knowledge 1 2 3 4 5 6
9. Teachers in my building learn from their mistakes and
change so they do not happen again 1 2 3 4 5 6
10. My principal negotiates faculty differences without destroying
the diversity of opinions 1 2 3 4 5 6
11. Too many teachers in my building give up when things go bad 1 2 3 4 5 6
12. The principal welcomes challenges from teachers 1 2 3 4 5 6
13. When things go badly teachers bounce back quickly 1 2 3 4 5 6
14. Most teachers in this building are reluctant to change 1 2 3 4 5 6