

ACADEMIC OPTIMISM AND ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATE:  
AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS TEST  
OF TWO MEASURES

by

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## ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship of two climate constructs in academic optimism and organizational climate as each relates to school effectiveness. Academic optimism is an academic environment comprised of three dimensions: academic emphasis, collective efficacy, and faculty trust (Hoy, Tarter, & Hoy, 2006). The Organizational Climate Index (OCI) is a short organizational climate descriptive measure for schools. The index is made up of four dimensions: principal leadership, teacher professionalism, achievement press for students to perform academically, and vulnerability to the community (Hoy et al., 2002). An examination was conducted on each framework. Their relationship was tested and analyzed how they would predict overall effectiveness and student performance.

It was hypothesized that academic optimism and the organizational climate index are positively correlated. To test this hypothesis, elementary school teachers at 67 schools located in the northern half of Alabama responded to surveys that measured academic optimism, organizational climate index (OCI), and school effectiveness. Effectiveness was measured by student performance, in particular, the 4th grade Stanford Achievement Test and by overall effectiveness, the index of perceived organizational effectiveness (IPOE) in the 2009-2010 school year. Reliabilities for all measures ranged from .82 to .92, indicating acceptable levels of reliability.

As predicted in hypothesis 1, academic optimism and organizational climate index were related. Hypothesis 2 predicted that academic optimism is a stronger predictor in student achievement and it was found to be significant and supported. However, hypothesis 3 did

not indicate that OCI is a better predictor in overall effectiveness. Academic optimism was found to be a significant and stronger predictor in overall effectiveness.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The current study examines two effective school research theories: academic optimism and organizational climate as each relates to school effectiveness. In this chapter, the background for the study is presented, the need and purpose clearly outlined, and key concepts and terms are defined. Finally, the research questions guiding this empirical study are stated and the limitations are specified.

#### Background of the Study

Administrators and researchers throughout the nation have searched for characteristics and variables that affect student achievement. Some contend that student achievement is the end result of superb instructional leadership; that there is a direct positive correlation between instructional leadership and student achievement. When characteristics of strong instructional leadership are present, then the higher student achievement is. Other researchers, such as Edmonds (1979), proposed that student achievement is simply a consequence of school characteristics including active administrative leadership, elevated expectations of student achievement, renewed emphasis on basic skills, creation of a logical and orderly learning environment, and frequent, systematic evaluation of students. These characteristics were identified in Edmonds's effective schools research. Conversely, Coleman et al. (1966) were the first to suggest that schools are not the key determinant in the acquisition of student achievement. It is not a factor that can explain how a student achieves goals and becomes successful in

academic pursuits. Coleman argued that socioeconomic status is the primary and most significant factor that impacts student achievement. Hoy and his colleagues (Hoy, Tarter, & Hoy, 2006; Hoy, Tarter, Kottkamp, 1991) conducted research into the effect of socioeconomic status, or SES, and concur that the factors of SES are powerful. However, they also argue that there are other factors that significantly impact student achievement as well; some of which include academic optimism and the organizational climate index which are both relevant for this study.

Academic optimism and the organizational climate index have become key tools used by educators to predict student achievement. Each framework is made up of individual properties that have been extensively researched over the past few decades. These properties, which will later be discussed in greater detail, have been known to help shape norms and behavioral expectations (Hoy, Tarter, & Hoy, 2006). Coleman (1985) explained that groups have some degree of control over individuals when individuals act in such a way that deviates from the group norm. For example, groups can sanction individual teachers who are not motivating students to achieve elevated goals. Group sanctions can lead to conformity which will help create a cohesive environment where all participants will become equal sharers of student achievement goals.

As academic optimism increases, schools are most likely to have teachers who believe in themselves and each other. They believe their efforts as a whole will have a positive impact on student achievement (Goddard, Hoy, & Hoy, 2000). Positive teachers are committed to their job and believe they can overcome most anything in order to facilitate student achievement. Trust makes it easier for teachers to be open about their ideas without fear of embarrassment or ridicule. Academic achievement can additionally be attributed in part to trust (Goddard, Tschannen-Moran, & Hoy, 2001). Schools with higher levels of academic optimism also

emphasize academics. Teachers, students, and parents alike realize that academics are the top priority. The school is also driven by academic excellence (Goddard, Sweetland, & Hoy, 2000). Clear and obtainable goals have been set and identified throughout the school and community. Everyone knows his or her role and performs as expected.

The organizational climate index is a tool that measures the health and openness of a school; each of which are considered critical for school quality. Hoy and Tarter (1997) argue that health and openness are predictors of an atmosphere of trust, commitment, effectiveness, and student achievement. These predictions are measured through the individual properties of the organizational climate index which include institutional vulnerability, collegial leadership, professional teacher behavior, and achievement press.

Schools perceived as open and healthy are most likely to have teacher trust among colleagues and administrators such as the principal (Hoffman, Sabo, Bliss, & Hoy, 1994). Schools with high levels of trust are perceived as good places to work and learn. These schools will have committed teachers who can be counted on for extra effort (Hoy, Tarter, & Bliss, 1990). Teachers working in healthy and open schools are apt to take risks without humiliation and have support from the principal (Hoy & Tarter, 1997). Furthermore, healthy and open schools lead to high-achieving students. Student achievement is an important dimension to its effectiveness (Hoy, Hoffman, Sabo, & Bliss, 1996).

Organizational climate index and academic optimism are two theories that are arguably effective in helping one understand what makes schools effective as well as produce high levels of student achievement. Presumably, each theory will have the ability to illustrate, independently, whether or not a school is effective and capable of producing increased student

achievement. However, strong presumptions can be made where each exist and work interdependently of each other as well.

### Problem Statement and Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to fill in the gaps in the literature so as to present a clearer picture of the relationship between academic optimism and organizational climate index. Understanding these two variables and how they work together in schools is important because it has been argued that each variable is a major factor in contributing to enhanced effectiveness. Furthermore, each has been shown to be positively correlated with student achievement (Hoy, Tarter, & Hoy, 2006; Hoy, Smith, & Sweetland, 2002). Finally, due to these two frameworks being similar in nature as they relate to climate, it would be practical to gain insight into which framework is a stronger predictor of school effectiveness.

### Definition of Concepts

*Academic emphasis*--the extent to which a school is driven by academic excellence (Goddard, Sweetland, & Hoy, 2000).

*Academic optimism*--an academic environment comprised of three dimensions: academic emphasis, collective efficacy, and faculty trust (Hoy, Tarter, & Hoy, 2006, p.431)

*Achievement press*--describes a school that sets high but achievable academic standards and goals. Student's persist, strive to achieve, and are respected by each other and teachers for their academic success. Parents, teachers, and the principal exert pressure for high standards and school improvement (Hoy et al., 2002)

*Collective efficacy*--the perceptions of teachers, in a school, that the efforts of the faculty as whole will have a positive effect on students (Goddard, Hoy, & Hoy, 2000).

*Collegial leadership*--directed toward both meeting the social needs of the faculty and achieving the goals of the school. The principal treats teachers as professional colleagues, is open, egalitarian, and friendly, but at the same time sets clear teacher expectations and standards of performance (Hoy et al., 2002).

*Effectiveness*—effectiveness will be measured and conceived in two ways. The first dimension of effectiveness will be measured by the Index of Perceived Organizational Effectiveness (IPOE) while the second is measured using student achievement. The IPOE will be used to measure a school's overall effectiveness while student achievement indicators will be based on 4th grade SAT student achievement data collected from the state.

*Faculty trust in parents and students*--one party's willingness to be vulnerable to another party based on the confidence that the latter party is (a) benevolent, (b) reliable, (c) competent, (d) honest, and (e) open (Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 1999).

*Institutional vulnerability*--the extent to which the school is susceptible to a few vocal parents and citizen groups. High vulnerability suggests that both teachers and principals are unprotected and put on the defensive (Hoy et al., 2002).

*Organizational Climate Index (OCI)*--The Organizational Climate Index (OCI) is a short organizational climate descriptive measure for schools. The index has four dimensions: principal leadership, teacher professionalism, achievement press for students to perform academically, and vulnerability to the community. (Hoy et al., 2002).

*Professional teacher behavior*--is marked by respect for colleague competence, commitment to students, autonomous judgment, and mutual cooperation and support (Hoy et al., 2002).

*Student achievement*--student achievement data in reading will be defined by the Standardized Achievement Test given to all 4th graders in the state of Alabama.

### Research Questions

1. What is the relationship between academic optimism and the organizational climate index?
2. Is academic optimism a stronger predictor of school performance than organizational climate index?
3. Is organizational climate index a stronger predictor in overall effectiveness than academic optimism?

### Limitations and Delimitations

The study was limited by its sample of schools. Although attempts were made to collect data throughout the state of Alabama, data collected came mostly from elementary schools in the northern half of Alabama. A second limitation was that the sampling of schools was not systematically random. However, attempts were made to include a diverse collection of schools representing students from various demographic backgrounds. Assumptions can be made that school effectiveness identified in the state of Alabama based on school climate measurements will produce similar results to schools in other parts of the nation; but still, caution is advised. A third limitation is that the nature of sampling was not perfect. This study was based on the assumption that all teachers were in attendance, had experienced a normal day less drastic events

that may have changed behavior, and were honest in regard to their responses. Finally, this study was limited because it was a cross-sectional study and not longitudinal. It is always better to examine a study over a period of time rather than one point in time.

### Summary

It is important for school leaders to understand characteristics that affect academic optimism and organizational climate as these can have a direct impact on overall effectiveness and student achievement. Each framework is commonly identified with schools that are labeled as effective. Furthermore, the variables have been explained as to their individual importance and combined influence in student achievement and overall effectiveness. In conclusion, these results can be used by teachers and school administrators to create the learning climate that will allow them to achieve organizational effectiveness which makes possible academic achievement.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter will present the research history of academic optimism and organizational climate. A theory describing how these concepts work together will be proposed. Finally, a hypothesis will be derived to test the theoretical explanation.

#### Conceptual Framework

Academic Optimism is a collective set of beliefs concerning the strengths and capabilities within a school for achievement. These beliefs are based on academic emphasis, efficacy, and trust. They work in tandem order to create a positive school environment. Hoy, Tarter, and Hoy (2006) labeled academic optimism as “a powerful force that explains student performance” (p. 427). Although little research has been completed within the academic optimism construct, it has been suggested that this framework has the potential to overcome socioeconomic issues as they relate to educational practices.

Coleman et al. (1966) focused on SES, or socioeconomic status, as the primary, perhaps, singular characteristic that drives student performance. He expressed the view that schools have a slight isolated effect in relation to student performance. Coleman conducted substantial research and collected data, which he used to suggest that a student’s control of his environment is of paramount importance to his achievement. A student’s lack of environmental control is one of the characteristics that encumber student achievement. When a child feels he or she is unable to alter his environment to succeed, he or she is likely to give up and stop trying.

According to Coleman et al. (1966), such behavior was typically found within the African American learning community. After suffering through many years of having no control over their learning climate, it became engrained in their nature to surrender attempts at control when overwhelmed with the inability to effect positive changes in the learning environment. As a result of this data, Coleman concluded SES is often too powerful to overcome (p. 288). Therefore, according to Coleman, achievement is principally based on student background or socioeconomic factors. Hoy and his colleagues (2006) refuted Coleman's claims that SES is the sole factor.

In addition to socioeconomic factors, Hoy and his colleagues (Hoy et al., 2006; Hoy, Hoy, & Kurz, 2007) discerned that there were, in fact, other characteristics of the school environment that influence student performance. In their model, credence was given to the thought that student performance is motivated by other sources through academic optimism as a powerful component of student learning.

Although the academic optimism construct is considered to be relatively new to educational research, its individual properties have been extensively researched for decades. These properties include academic emphasis, collective efficacy, and faculty trust. Lee and Bryk (1989) first highlighted the significance academic emphasis has on student achievement. Later, Hoy et al. (1991), as a part of their organizational climate model, identified that academic emphasis was possibly the single most significant predictor of student achievement. Collective efficacy is an idea that originated out of Bandura's social cognitive theory relating to the individual and self-efficacy (Bandura, 1986). It is the idea that how an individual perceives a task relates to how well the individual will be able to perform that very task. The behavioral model of the notion of trust can be traced back to the beginnings of the Cold War (Deutsch,

1958). The term was studied in relation to events as they unfolded between nations and how those nations dealt with each other politically and diplomatically, yet wearily, because of issues related to trust and mistrust. Later, the term was further analyzed and redefined to better relate to the field of education (Tschannen-Moran, 1999).

Each of the aforementioned school components have been broadly researched by experts over a period of several decades. Thus the initial theories relating to academic optimism by Hoy and his colleagues (2006) have been expanded through the years to better fit the school models of today.

Hoy and his colleagues (Hoy, Tarter, & Hoy, 2006; Hoy et al., 2007; Smith & Hoy, 2007) arrived at the conclusion that collective school properties appear to make a difference in student achievement. When working together, these components help mold school norms and transform behavioral expectations. Coleman (1985) was among the first to suggest that group norms influence the entire group. For example, he expounded the view that when individual teachers are not conforming to the expectations of the entire faculty concerning academic standards, then sanctions become an inevitable tool that is used to encourage those teachers to meet the group's expectations. The opposite is seen if individuals conform to the expectations of the group.

In this model, academic success can be predicted. People, in overall general terms, tend to respond directly to how others perceive them; sometimes conformity to the group's expectations is a result of peer expectations (Harris & Willower, 1998).

Academic emphasis, collective efficacy, and faculty trust are all interrelated. While each works together to create academic optimism they also stand independently as factors that can be measured apart from the whole. Faculty trust is dependent upon the collective efficacy and the belief the faculty has in one another that each will ensure a high quality of education and success

for their students. When trust and belief in parents and students is significant, as well as in the faculty, then academic emphasis is predicted to be significant to the educational experience (Hoy, Tarter, & Hoy, 2006).

Seligman (1998) argues that optimism plays a significant role in students' success and learning. Optimism is a trait that can be learned and enhanced regardless of ability or motivation. Optimism is the basis for positive thinking, which leads to positive actions and results. Undoubtedly, positive thinking plays a significant role in academic optimism. In its absence, expectations and goals are rarely achieved. Success cannot be anticipated if optimism is not a part of the equation.

In addition, Peterson (2000) maintained that optimism is dependent on what the individual perceives as desirable; for example, if teachers have little desire to impact student learning, then pessimistic behaviors will prevail; resulting in goals that are less likely to be achieved. In order to meet successful outcomes, certain attainable goals must be clearly defined for the full group. Not only must the goals be clearly defined but they must be collective and embraced by the whole in order for success to be an outcome.

Peterson (2000) recognized the need to proceed with caution when emphasizing the importance of setting realistic goals. Goals that are beyond an individual's reach could have a negative impact on the individual which could result in the individual becoming more pessimistic. If pessimism is the outcome then failure is a by-product. Seeing the glass half-empty as opposed to half-full would result in just that level of achievement. It should be mentioned that research on optimism thus far has been on the level of the individual as opposed to the group; however, it is inherently implied that the same characteristics that affect a singular individual can and do affect the group as well, thus making it a collective property.

### *Academic Emphasis*

The first attribute of academic optimism is academic emphasis. Academic emphasis, which is sometimes referred to as academic press, is defined as “the extent to which a school is driven by academic excellence” (Goddard, Sweetland, & Hoy, 2000, p. 684). It is the belief held by administrators, faculty, staff, and students that academics are important. Schools that demonstrate academic emphasis are those that practice and prepare orderly and serious learning environments. Teachers in these schools set high but achievable learning goals and expectations. Student learning and achievement are central themes throughout the building as well as the primary focus of all of the groups’ members. Instructional time is protected and sacred. Principals, teachers, and students all pursue and protect academic success. In such schools, students who devalue or demean academics by teasing their peers who are successful are quickly admonished (Goddard, Sweetland, & Hoy, 2000; Licatta & Harper, 1998).

Parsons, Bales, and Shils (1953) as stated in Hoy and Hoy (2006) cleared the path for the emergence of what Hoy et al. (1991) labeled as academic emphasis. Parsons and his colleagues conducted research into the area of social systems. Results from the study concluded there are four imperative functions that are necessary in order to solve basic problems. The four functions must be in place if social systems, are to survive, grow, and develop. These functions are labeled as: adaptation, goal attainment, integration, and latency. Parsons (1967) argues that schools do have the ability to control the attainment of these vital functions. He breaks the functions into three distinct levels of control: technical, managerial, and institutional. The technical level is focused on the learning process achieving learning goals and standards. The focal point of the managerial level is in the role of administrative functions within the organization. The institutional level connects the school with the community and community support for the

school. Hoy and his colleagues (1991) recognized that the technical level is where academic emphasis emerges. This emergence is due in part to the primary function of the school to produce student achievement.

Hoy et al. (1991) adopted three out of six effective characteristics that Edmonds (1979) argues influence student achievement. Edmonds was among the first effective schools' researchers to argue that achievement is influenced by factors other than socioeconomic status alone. His findings revealed five school properties that predicted a significant correlation in student achievement: strong administrative leadership, emphasis on basic skills, an orderly learning environment, high expectations for students, and frequent evaluation of students.

In summary, Edmonds (1979) arrived at the conclusion that student learning was imperative and as such a basis for future success. Such learning takes precedence over all school activities. If schools are practicing the aforementioned properties then student achievement will increase.

Hoy and his colleagues (Goddard, Sweetland, & Hoy, 2000; Hoy & Hannum, 1997; Hoy & Sabo, 1998, Hoy et al., 1991) illustrated the impact academic emphasis has on student achievement. They made their case in each level of education: elementary, middle, and high schools. Academic emphasis was a significant factor in student achievement in each of their studies, even when controlling for socioeconomic status.

Lee and Bryk (1989) affirmed the significance that academic emphasis can have on student achievement, regardless of race and SES. Schools that are orderly and structured with a focus on academics will prevail in student success and achievement.

### *Collective Efficacy*

The second attribute of academic optimism is perceived collective efficacy. Collective efficacy is defined as “the perceptions of teachers in a school that the efforts of the faculty as a whole will have a positive impact on student achievement” (Goddard, Hoy, & Hoy, 2000, p. 480). Collective efficacy is based on Bandura’s (1977, 1986) social cognitive theory and self-efficacy research. Self-efficacy and collective efficacy share very similar characteristics when closely inspected.

Individual self-efficacy is the ability to exercise control over events and actions in daily life (Bandura, 1977; Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara, & Pastorelli, 1996). In essence, it is at the root of our self-control and our self-image. Self-efficacy is central to the idea behind collective efficacy (Bandura, 1993). An individual must first value something on a personal level before that individual can act to promote it at the level of the group. Bandura (1977) discovered that beliefs concerning efficacy are highly influential to the formation of self. These beliefs influence the way the individual feels, thinks, approaches tasks, and sets goals. If efficacy beliefs are strong and vital to the individual then goals and objectives will be met. If efficacy beliefs are limited, then certain objectives are not accomplished. This is true at both the individual and collective levels of efficacy.

Bandura (1993) suggested that individuals first imagine the various scenarios of an action or event paying particular attention in their minds as to how those actions or events will unfold. Those who have a high sense of efficacy will be successful and achieve the task or goal at hand because they have visualized positive results. Those who have low efficacy will struggle. When anticipated scenarios are visualized, individuals who practice positive thinking and reinforcement will succeed in their quest for goal attainment. These individuals can picture a

positive result and recognize the actions needed to reach a positive resolution. It becomes self-actualizing in a positive direction.

In contrast, dwelling on the things that will go wrong will cause self-doubt, which makes it very difficult to succeed. The tendency to focus on the negative elements or possible outcomes focuses the individual on the worst case scenario and therefore the individual may not discover ways of action to create success. It is easier to believe the negative, and individuals with those tendencies often do not have the mental drive to put forth the additional effort to succeed. To them they do not see the point and therefore do not strive for the same success that is expected of those with higher self-efficacy values.

The substantial body of research on efficacy is summarized below. Efficacy expectation is the belief one can execute the behavior required to produce the outcome (Bandura, 1977; Zimmerman, Bandura, & Martinez-Pons, 1992). Individuals who have a strong perception in their abilities to achieve will set challenging goals to attain, which results in a firmer commitment to complete tasks on a positive level (Bandura, 1993). Efficacy expectations “determine how much effort people will expend and how long they will persist in the face of obstacles and adverse situations (Bandura, 1977, p. 194; Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara, & Pastorelli, 2001).

Efficacy levels will affect whether or not one even has the ability to cope with a given situation. If they perceive an event to be threatening or have negative consequences, then they will avoid that situation. However, if they perceive themselves as being capable in handling a situation, they are much more likely to get involved and perform with assuredness Bandura, (1977). These individuals are given the additional incentives needed to push toward a successful

resolution. Once established, “efficacy beliefs contribute significantly to the level and quality of human functioning” (Bandura, 1993, p. 145).

Bandura (1993) characterized individual self-efficacy from four major processes. These processes include cognitive, motivational, affective, and selection. The cognitive development is accomplished through goal setting and the complexity of the thought process. Through goal setting, individuals are influenced through self-appraisal of capabilities (Bandura et al., 2001). The individual either believes he can do it or he cannot do it and this forms the basis for how he acts. Thought is one’s ability to predict events and develop ways to control those events that affect our lives. Those with varying levels of this ability will control events in opposite ways. The motivational process occurs when individuals form their beliefs in their abilities, motivate themselves, and guide their actions through forethought. They plan to achieve their goal and thus they succeed. Sometimes incentives are given to motivate individuals to assist them in achieving their goal.

The emotional mediator behind Bandura’s (1977) self-efficacy model is the affective process. People’s perceptions of their abilities will determine the amount of stress and anxiety they will experience. People who believe they can exercise control over threats and negative events will not allow disturbing images to run through their scenarios or affect their outcomes. It follows that these are the individuals who experience less stress and anxiety and are therefore inherently more capable of reaching goals and motivating others to succeed. Allowing darker imagery and thoughts to possess the individual’s consciousness would be detrimental and significantly impair the individual’s level of functioning.

Self-efficacy is controlled through the selection process. Individuals have the opportunity to avoid threatening or potentially negative situations yet participate in others they believe are

less threatening, involve fewer negative outcomes, or that they could control. It is, therefore, up to the individual to make the choice and in so doing choose the outcome. The choices individuals make can profoundly affect the direction of personal development due to competencies, values, and interests experienced through the environmental network (Bandura, 1993). Competencies influence the choices individuals make and the courses of action they pursue (Pajares, 1996).

According to Bandura (1993), people use four sources of information to judge their level of self-efficacy: performance accomplishments, vicarious experience, social (verbal) persuasion, and emotional arousal (affective).

First, performance accomplishments are especially influential because they are based on personal mastery. If one has repeated success, then mastery expectations will increase; likewise, repeated failures, especially early in a given situation, tend to indicate lower levels of efficacy. Repeated success strengthens one's belief that a situation can be mastered. If it becomes a strong belief then it becomes inherent to the individual who will use it when situations arise.

The second source of information that people use come from vicarious experiences. Individuals who see others perform positively in what is perceived to be an adverse situation will overcome their own obstacles because they viewed another person being successful. It is a motivation and a modeled behavior. Basically, "if others can do it, so can I" becomes an inferred motivator.

Third, verbal (social) persuasion is comparable to words of encouragement. People are led to believe they can accomplish any particular task because others believe in them and comment on their ability to succeed.

Finally, emotional (affective) arousal can impact one's judgment. For example, if fear or thought of failing are prevalent in adverse situations, then one is more likely to fail. Stress and

anxiety play a debilitating role in performance. The inability to overcome such incapacitating emotions will lead the individual down a path of spiraling negative expectations thus decreasing the level of efficacy within the individual and potentially the group.

A major development in Bandura's work occurred when he formally linked efficacy to student achievement (Bandura, 1993; Bandura et al., 1996; Zimmerman et al., 1992). Bandura addressed the condition that students with low efficacy tend to struggle with academics due to stress and anxiety, particularly in test-taking situations. As a result, these students underachieve. If this continues unabated over an extended period of time then the individual will become a chronic underachiever and find it more difficult to be successful.

In contrast, students with higher self-efficacy tend to do well on assessments and handle stressful situations within the educational framework to a better degree. As they gain the ability to control and redirect stress into energy they find success more easily than do their more stress-prone peers. Bandura (1993) revealed that student beliefs or efficacy become predictors to academic performance.

Furthermore, Bandura (1993) arrived at the conclusion that students with increased levels of efficacy tend to be more socially skilled, popular among classmates and teachers, and are less likely to be rejected. He proposed that teachers should build instructional techniques that teach children to be successful by improving efficacy. Using research-based strategies that guide students to positive outcomes and provide them with various learning modes and opportunities for success, the students will not only become more motivated but will experience higher levels of self-efficacy. This self-efficacy will guide them to promote the group and reach not only individual goals but also the goals and objectives of the group. If children are successful, their

belief system will increase in a positive direction. Students who believe in themselves have historically been found to have higher levels of student achievement.

Tschannen-Moran, Hoy, and Hoy (1998) expanded the research into teacher efficacy. Teacher efficacy is similar to self-efficacy, except here, teachers have certain beliefs about their individual capabilities as teachers. As with students and academic performance, teachers who have a high sense of instructional efficacy will create mastery experiences for their students. Teachers who place emphasis on success and positive behavioral models are those that believe they can and will impact student learning and do so in a positive way.

Gibson and Dembo (1984 as cited in Bandura, 1993) found that these teachers devote more time to instruction, identify and help students who were more apt to struggle, and praise students for their accomplishments. In contrast, teachers with low instructional efficacy do the opposite. Such teachers devote more time to nonacademic issues, give up rather quickly on their students, and criticize often and repeatedly. They use negative words, are quick to become defensive, and tend to experience more stress and anxiety. Teachers have a tremendous impact on the classroom atmosphere. To a large extent, teachers are the models of classroom atmosphere and can help it or do great harm.

According to Bandura (1993), classrooms that support confidence, a high sense of efficacy, and an environment that is conducive to learning will realize positive student achievement. This type of classroom climate is typically inviting, encouraging, and supportive. Students go above and beyond expectations in these classrooms because their teachers believe in them. Bandura acknowledged that the same theory could be applied to parental roles and impacts on the home environment. The same factors affect the climate of the homes in which the students live as well as they affect those of the school environment. If parents create a positive

environment within their household with certain beliefs and high expectations being central to the design, students meet those identified expectations. Households that are not centered on strong expectations of success are not likely to produce students who appear in the classroom with tendencies to strive for achievement.

Teacher-efficacy is affected by two dimensions: analysis of the teaching task and assessment of personal competence (Tschannen-Moran, 1999). Analyzing the teaching task involves the assessment teachers give to themselves in determining the difficulty of the lesson and what it would take for a person to be successful in this context. Here, teachers give consideration to areas such as student motivation and ability, instructional strategies, technology, and classroom management. The second dimension, assessing personal competence, is when teachers assess their current capabilities and whether they can successfully accomplish a specific teaching task. Teaching professionals determine whether they have the ability to successfully teach an objective that will lead to student success. This measure is often taken informally through thought processes or can be measured during formal assessments such as those administered through an evaluation process.

Self- and teacher efficacy are very powerful factors in shaping their respective domains as they relate to the individual. The same impact can be assigned to group efficacy. Group actions are based on the individual reactions of those members that make up the group hierarchy. Here, Bandura (1977) identified the groups' shared belief in its conjoined capacity to organize and execute courses of action required to produce given levels of attainment. Goddard, Hoy, and Hoy (2000) additionally explored the issue further by integrating individual, teacher, and group efficacy into what they called collective efficacy, or the belief that teachers, as a whole, could

positively impact student achievement. Teachers who share positive reinforcement with their students are more likely to realize objectives and find success in meeting goals.

Goddard, Hoy, and Hoy (2000) related self-efficacy to teacher efficacy and collective efficacy (Ware & Kitsantas, 2007). Each is associated with tasks, level of effort, persistence, shared thoughts, stress levels, and achievement of groups (Goddard, Hoy, & Hoy, 2004). Self-efficacy explains the belief the individual has in his own ability to accomplish a specific task (Bandura, 1977). Teacher efficacy may explain, to some degree, the effects the teacher has on the class and student achievement. Yet, the organizational perspective showed that the collective efficacy would have a larger say about the differential effect that schools have on student achievement (Goddard, Hoy, & Hoy, 2000; Tschannen-Moran, 1999).

However, collective efficacy is considered a school property that impacts the entire school population and not just an individual class (Schechter & Tschannen-Moran, 2006). The majority of group members must choose to support a goal or objective in order for it to be properly promoted in order to reach a high level of achievement.

According to Bandura (1993), collective teacher efficacy is an important school property because it correlates to student achievement. Goddard, Hoy, and Hoy (2000) agree with Bandura's claims thus prompting them to develop a scale that would accurately measure collective teacher efficacy. Gibson and Dembo (1984) were the first to develop a teacher efficacy scale. They developed a Likert-type scale with 30 items that measured teacher efficacy. The items in this scale were individually based whereas Goddard et al. used group oriented items. For example, an individual question used by Gibson and Dembo would state, "I can get through to difficult students," where Goddard et al. stated, "Teachers in this school can get through to difficult students." The goal was to have teachers evaluate their own abilities and not the overall

measure of the group. By conducting the study in this manner, it provided individual feedback for improvement to teachers.

Goddard, Hoy, and Hoy (2000) developed a 21-item questionnaire with a 6-point Likert-type scale ranging with responses from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree.” Example survey items included the following examples:

- Teachers in this school have what it takes to get the children to learn.
- Teachers in this school are able to get through to difficult students.
- If a child doesn’t want to learn teachers here give up.
- Teachers in this school really believe every child can learn.
- Teachers in this school are skilled in various methods of teaching.

Goddard, Hoy, and Hoy (2000) confirmed Bandura’s (1993) belief that collective teacher efficacy perceptions could be used to predict student achievement in their study of 47 schools. The results explained differences in mathematics and reading achievement between schools even when controlling for students’ SES. Additional studies were also conducted with each suggesting that collective efficacy could be used to predict student achievement (Adams & Forsyth, 2006; Goddard 2002; Goddard, Hoy, & Hoy, 2004; Goddard, LoGerfo, & Hoy, 2004; Goddard & Skrla, 2006; Hoy et al., 2002).

### *Faculty Trust in Students and Parents*

The third attribute of academic optimism is faculty trust in students and parents. Like collective efficacy and academic emphasis, it is a variable that consistently predicts student achievement, especially in and among open and healthy school environments (Hoy & Tarter, 1992; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 1998, 2000, 2001; Hoy et al., 2001). Academic achievement

can additionally be attributed in part to trust (Goddard et al., 2001). Trust is essential in effective schools research (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 1998; Tschannen-Moran, 1999). Trust is referred to as the foundation to effective schools (Cunningham & Gresso, 1993). The overall environment in schools must be one of trust where integrity, openness, consistency, and fairness are evident (Newcombe & McCormick, 2001).

Trust has long been noted as a variable with a variety of definitions. Hosmer (1995) advanced the notion that there is a consensual agreement on the importance of trust in human conduct but a suitable definition agreed upon by all is virtually impossible. The first empirical study concentrating on the importance of trust began at the onset of the Cold War during the middle of the 20th century (Deutsch, 1958). Unrelated to education, it was the first of its kind to define trust from a behavioral perspective. According to Deutsch, “trust refers to expectations with regard to an event whose occurrence is not detrimental to the individual, i.e., in reference to a benevolent or desired event” (p. 266). In other words, a person has nothing to gain from untrustworthy behavior. Zand (1971), in later studies, defined trust with a behavioral perspective; primarily in that an individual’s actions increase one’s vulnerability to or acceptance of another.

Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (1998) acknowledged trust as complex. Four decades of research on trust has yielded very little clarity on the exact meaning of trust. Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2000) exhaustingly reviewed endless definitions over the course of the past 4 decades as to how trust relates to various disciplines and contexts such as philosophy, social, economic, organizational, and individual. Their finding concluded that recurring themes emerge regardless of respective discipline. Building trust requires attention to the five facets of trust. Trust, as it relates to education, is one party’s willingness to be vulnerable to another party based on the

confidence that the latter party is (a) benevolent, (b) reliable, (c) competent, (d) honest, and (e) open (Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 1999, 2003; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000).

These facets of trust “are based on the belief that individuals or groups act in ways that are in the best interest of the concerned parties” (Hoy, Gage, & Tarter, 2006, p. 240). Each of these dimensions is described in the following paragraphs.

*Vulnerability.* The “willingness to be vulnerable” is an important dimension of trust. Vulnerability implies one party is vulnerable and will rely on the other party to perform actions that are perceived to be risk-taking. If actions are completed, then trust is being executed (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000).

*Confidence.* The decision to place someone or something at risk is based on confidence. For example, most would agree that leaving a child with a babysitter comes with some risk, but there is confidence that emerges from such risk which translates into trust (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000).

*Benevolence.* The most common form of trust is benevolence (Baier, 1996). It is the sense of trust that something or someone is protected by the trusted party. It is the faith and confidence one places in the trusted party to do what is right in the area of protection (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000). Teachers become very concerned when they feel a lack of trust involving benevolence of their administrators as they feel unprotected and vulnerable (Hoy, Gage, & Tarter, 2006).

*Reliability.* Reliability is based on the prediction that people will do as they say; but it is also combined with benevolence. People can be expected to perform distrustful actions, but where benevolence is concerned, it is almost certain the action will be successful. Individuals or groups are thus entrusted to perform the actions agreed upon (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000).

*Competence.* Competence deals with skill and the ability to accomplish the task. For example, a student may feel that a teacher is genuine in the efforts to help that student achieve, but the student may feel incapable of success thus creating a lack of perceived trust between the student and the teacher (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000).

*Honesty.* Honesty is aligned with one's character, integrity, and authenticity. It has been said that honesty is a precondition of trust and reliability. Verbal and written statements sometimes cannot be relied upon in the absence of trust; in contrast, trust is present when one is said to be honest (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000).

*Openness.* Openness helps create trust. When organizations are open with two-way communication where ideas and beliefs are communicated daily, then there is a sense of trust. The organization is free to create new ideas and is not constrained in this creation, which often suggests distrust (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000).

Hoy and Tschannen-Moran (2003) developed a 26-item Omnibus T-scale to measure trust. This scale is a measure of faculty trust, which has three subtests: trust in principals, trust in colleagues, and trust in clients (parents and students). Teachers were asked to respond to each item as to how it relates to their schools along a 6-point Likert-type scale, with responses ranging from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*. Example survey items included the following:

- Teachers in this school trust the principal
- Teachers in this school trust each other
- Teachers in this school trust their students
- Teachers in the this school trust parents
- Teachers in this school believe in one another

Hoy and Tschannen-Moran (1999) discovered that trust in principals and other administrators, trust in colleagues, and trust in clients were interrelated, each of which helped predict student achievement.

Goddard et al. (2001) determined in their study of 47 urban elementary schools that trust was a positive predictor in the variance among schools. Furthermore, the researchers were able to discount socioeconomic factors that are commonly the reason behind a lack of school performance. They extrapolated that the amount of trust teachers have in students and parents far outweighs the effects of poverty when looking at student achievement. The consideration of trust has the ability to prevail over influential effects of SES.

Forsythe, Barnes, and Adams (2005) underscored that the “strength of relational trust inherent in role groups . . . of the school organization does indeed appear to predict school effectiveness and thus student achievement” (p. 137). When levels of trust are elevated within and among the various groups, then student achievement is positively impacted (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 1998, 2000, 2001; Goddard et al., 2001; Hoy et al., 2002).

### Organizational Climate Index

Although organizational climate originated in the late 1950s, it was not until the 1960s that it began to be researched from an educational perspective (Halpin, 1966; Halpin & Croft, 1963). Researchers have spent 4 decades attempting to create generalities as to the exact nature of organizational climate yet they have yielded few results (Halpin, 1966; Miskel & Ogawa, 1988; Taguiri, 1968). Perhaps, by providing a brief history on organizational climate as it relates to the components of personality and health, and explaining how Hoy and his colleagues (2003)

formulated a standard definition of the complex term will help one to clarify meaning and rise of the organizational climate index.

Researchers typically use two metaphors to describe school climate: personality and health. These are used to accurately depict school climate and appear to make it easier to understand and define (Halpin & Croft, 1963; Miles, 1969). Halpin and Croft (1963) are credited with identifying personality factors while Miles (1969) is attributed with outlining ways in which the concept of health relates to school climate.

Halpin and Croft (1963) first introduced the idea of the organizational climate by developing the Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire (OCDQ). The questionnaire was developed for and used initially in elementary schools, only later being extended to high school climate research (Hoy et al., 1991). Halpin (1966) affirmed that all schools are different and that each school has a personality all its own. Halpin was intrigued by what he saw relating to school climate on his visits to various schools. The realization that schools do exhibit differing personalities became the driving force behind his desire to conduct OCDQ research. The resulting survey was the primary tool used for decades to capture the atmosphere at elementary, middle, and high school levels (Hoy et al., 1990).

Initially, the original OCDQ contained eight dimensions: four described faculty characteristics, while four involved principal and teacher interaction. Once analyzed, the 64-item survey yielded results on a continuum from open to closed climates. Open climates were defined by authentic relationships between teachers and the principal. Such climates produced committed faculties with high achievement levels. Rules and regulations in this climate are both minimal and unnecessary. Teachers in this type of school environment are treated as professionals and are

viewed as truly committed to both the job and the organization (Hoy et al., 1990). At this level, efficacy is high and thus so is achievement and realization of goals and objectives.

Over time, the original OCDQ lost its luster and was considered by many to be outdated. By the mid 1980s many reasons contributed to the statement that “. . . school conditions and changes in society have eroded the utility of the instrument. Weaknesses have been noted: unionization and contractual requirements have rendered many of the items inappropriate . . . and validity of several dimensions is questionable” (Hoy et al., 1990, p. 262). Consequently, the original OCDQ was completely revised and modified for the elementary level. The OCDQ-RE is a 42-item instrument with six dimensions that describe the behavior of elementary principals and teachers. It should also be noted that reliability is greater among the scales than the original OCDQ (Hoy, Tarter, & Kottkamp, 1991).

The six dimensions of the OCDQ-RE, as found in Hoy et al. (1991), are summarized in the following paragraphs.

*Supportive principal behavior* reflects a basic concern for teachers. The principal listens and is open to concerns and suggestions. This can be characterized by limited rules and regulations. These teachers understand what it takes to be successful and work hard for the respect they are given and find success in mastering their objectives.

*Directive principal behavior* is when the principal monitors everything a teacher does. There is close supervision with many rules and regulations. Teachers in this method could still be successful if they are given incentives to attain self-efficacy and direct it toward the growth of classroom goals.

*Restrictive principal behavior* is when the principal hinders teachers in their ability to do their job and do it with success. As a result, teachers are burdened with paperwork, unnecessary

tasks, routine duties, and other concerns that interfere with regular instructional responsibilities.

Teachers do not feel efficacy and therefore are less likely than teachers in other models to exhibit the desire or ability to attain superior levels of objectives and goals.

*Collegial teacher behavior* supports open and professional interactions. Teachers enjoy their job and working with one another. They are enthusiastic and proud of their school. All members of the team are active and equal partners who work for the good of the whole. Achievement is high because members feel high levels of efficacy and direct this toward reaching goals and objectives set forth by the group. Objectives for this group tend to be fairly elevated but attainable because of the work ethic of the individual members.

*Intimate teacher behavior* is when teachers know one another well on a personal level. They are close colleagues and friends. They socialize regularly with one another outside of normal school hours. Achievement can be high due to the fact that all members feel regard for the others in the group and want to promote the objectives important to the organization.

*Disengaged teacher behavior* is demonstrated through a lack of vision and goals. Behavior is often negative and individuals in the groups are highly critical of their colleagues. There is no focus on professional activities. Success is rarely, if ever, possible in this scenario.

Miles (1969) defined a healthy school as one that can sufficiently overcome the long haul. It has the capability to develop and expand coping skills and strategies. As such, schools can survive and endure by aligning themselves to what Parsons (1967) identifies as school needs: adaptation, goal attainment, integration, and latency. If these needs are met through instrumental requirements of input and allocation along with expressive desires of social and normative integration then schools will overcome and endure all the while maintaining a healthy environment (Etzioni, 1975; Parsons, 1967).

Parsons (1967) highlighted the fact that schools use three levels of authority to meet the aforementioned needs. These levels include technical, managerial, and institutional. The technical needs of the school are primarily concerned with achievement and student learning. The acquisition of technical needs is accomplished through the process of teachers and administrators working coherently together in the improvement of educating their students. The second level is the managerial level; it deals primarily with administrators and administrative functions. At this stage, administrators are concerned with allocating resources, coordinating work, and building trustworthy relationships with teachers. The final instructional level links the school to the community. Schools must be accepted and supported by the community. When the community is supportive, healthy schools will thrive. Others have the opportunity to emerge as healthy schools if the community joins together to build support and trust central to the promotion of a positive learning environment. When these levels are in harmony, “the school meets its imperative needs as it successfully copes with disruptive external forces and directs its energy towards its mission” (Hoy et al., 1990, p. 261).

Miles (1969), in addition to creating the health component, proposed 10 attributes of healthy organizations. Hoy and Feldman (1987) used the 10 properties to create seven dimensions of organizational health: institutional integrity, principal influence, consideration, initiating structure, resource support, moral, and academic emphasis. Each dimension can be placed within one of the three levels of authority proposed by Parsons (1967). The seven dimensions, as found in Hoy et al. (1991) are summarized below.

*Institutional integrity* is the school’s ability to cope with its environment. Teachers are protected from unreasonable community and parental demands. An inner-atmosphere of trust ensues and leads to the attainment of higher goals and demands.

*Principal influence* is the ability of the principal to influence the actions of superiors. Being able to persuade superiors, to get additional consideration, and to proceed unimpeded by the hierarchy are important aspects of school administration. Once given unilateral support from higher authorities, administrations become more effective and pass this down the line to the teachers in the organization.

*Consideration* is friendly and supportive behavior. The principal has a genuine concern for his teachers. This is shown in a number of ways including informal and formal methods. Teachers feel that they are valued and will work harder to promote the welfare of the organization.

*Initiating structure* is principal behavior that is both task and achievement oriented. Work expectations, standards of performance, and procedures are articulated clearly by the principal. Matters that are important to organization and structure are clearly defined and stated. This provides each member of the group with the knowledge needed to promote the growth of the association.

*Resource support* refers to a school where adequate classroom supplies are readily available. Resources must be available if research-based strategies are to become commonplace in the classrooms.

*Morale* is a collective sense of friendliness, openness, enthusiasm, and trust among faculty members. Teachers like one another and their job. They are apt to help one another when another is in need.

*Academic emphasis* is the extent to which a school is driven by academic excellence. High but achievable learning goals are set by the group and promoted by all members.

Hoy and Feldman (1987) expanded Miles' (1969) research by constructing the organizational health concept and its measurement. In healthy schools they claim, teachers enjoy their job, colleagues, students, and their school. They believe in themselves and their students. Principal behavior is also supportive; that is, it is friendly and supportive. Expectations are high throughout the building and shared by all stakeholders. These characteristics help define a healthy school.

Researchers agree that both OCDQ and OHI are valid and reliable instruments in measuring a school's health and personality, in particular one's climate. Hoy et al. (2002) maintained the correlation between personality and health and suggested that while there is some difference there are also some areas that overlap in their framework and their measures. For example, open schools tend to be healthy ones and healthy schools tend to be open. Their research guided them in the development of the organizational climate index.

The organizational climate index (OCI) is a 27-item descriptive questionnaire "that measures four critical aspects of school climate: the relationship between the school and community (institutional vulnerability), the relationship between the principal and teachers (collegial leadership), the relationship among teachers (professional teacher behavior), and teacher, parental, and principal press for achievement (achievement press)" (Hoy et al., 2002, p. 42). The organizational climate index is comprised of four general dimensions that were reduced from the OCDQ and the OHI. Hoy, Smith, and Sweetland (2002) found the four dimensions, which are summarized below, to be reliable and valid in measuring school climate.

*Academic press* describes a school that sets high but achievable learning goals. Students persevere, strive to achieve, and are respected by both students and teachers for their academic

success. High standards and school improvement are well supported by students, parents, and school officials.

*Collegial leadership* is principal behavior directed at meeting social needs of the faculty and achieving the goals of the school. Goals are clearly set forth and stated by the principal. He treats his faculty with respect and views them as colleagues. He is open and friendly.

*Institutional vulnerability* is the extent to which a school is prone to a few vocal parents and community members. Vulnerability perceived to be high indicates that teachers and principals are somewhat unprotected from community demands; which may place them on the defensive.

*Professional teacher behavior* is marked by respect toward colleagues. It is the crucial belief that colleagues are committed to students and can achieve soaring results in the classroom. There is also seen a large amount of cooperation and support among colleagues.

### School Effectiveness

Traditionally, organizational effectiveness has been defined relative to the degree of goal attainment (Hoy & Miskel, 2008). Mott (1972) defined effective organizations in his hospital research as “those that produce more and higher quality outputs and adapt more effectively to environmental and internal problems than do other similar organizations” (p. 17). Schools are organizations and can relate to the preceding organizational effectiveness theories.

In essence, effective schools are efficient, flexible, adaptable, and innovative (Hoy & Miskel, 2008; Miskel et al., 1979; Mott, 1972; Uline, Miller, & Tschannen-Moran, 1998). In schools, there are a variety of products and services that are aimed to meet instructional needs, learning, and extracurricular activities; the question is whether they are effective. Miskel and his

colleagues (1979) emphasize quality, quantity, and efficiency of production in schools as essential components in measuring organizational effectiveness.

Miskel et al. (1979) asserts that organizational effectiveness of schools is simply not just one thing, it is complex and multifaceted. He argues that a school can range from effective and ineffective on a large number of different and, in many cases, independent criteria. For example, one school may excel in student achievement while another excels in lower dropout rates or perhaps staff morale. Other effectiveness indicators may include the following: for students, academic achievement, creativity, self-confidence, aspirations, expectations, attendance, graduation, and drop-out rates; for teachers, job satisfaction, absenteeism, and turnover; for administrators, job satisfaction, balanced budgets, and commitment to school; and for society, perceptions of school effectiveness (Hoy & Miskel, 2005).

Hoy and Miskel (1996) integrated a goal model (Steers, 1977) with a system-resource model (Goodman & Pennings, 1977) to determine school effectiveness. The goal model postulates that organizations are effective to the extent they reach the goals specified by stakeholders, which, in this study, was student achievement. The system-resource model is concerned with the internal aspects of the schools which promote harmony and efficiency. Building on Hoy and Miskel's (1996), research, Uline et al. (1998) combined the two models testing not only for instrumental outcomes such as student achievement but also the more subjective or expressive outcomes such as cohesiveness and harmony. Their findings revealed that effectiveness correlates highly with both instrumental (student achievement) and expressive (harmony) functions.

While Mott's (1972) effectiveness research concentrated on the medical and science fields, it was Miskel et al. (1979) who adapted his research to fit the school situation. Miskel

(Hoy & Miskel, 1996; Miskel et al., 1979; Miskel, McDonald, & Bloom, 1983) and his colleagues modified Mott's index of perceived organizational effectiveness (IPOE) to form a dynamic measure of school effectiveness.

The index of perceived organizational effectiveness (IPOE) is an 8-item Likert-type scale used to measure school effectiveness (Miskel et al., 1979). Expressive activities, efficiency, and harmony within the organization are identified here. Examples of effectiveness items include the following: "How good is the quality of products or services produced by people you know in your school," "How good a job do people in your school do in coping with emergencies and disruptions," "How informed are the people in your school about innovations that could affect the way they do their work?" Although the measurement itself is subjective, reliability and validity have been demonstrated in earlier studies (Mott, 1972; Uline et al., 1998).

For the present study, two concepts will be used as indicators in school effectiveness: student performance (goal model) and overall effectiveness (system-resource). Performance indicators will be based on 4th grade SAT student achievement data collected from the state, while overall effectiveness will be derived from the index of perceived organizational effectiveness (IPOE).

## Theory

Generalizations can be extracted from the current research literature that indicates a relationship between academic optimism and organizational climate index properties. Evidence will be provided that suggests a strong correlation between the two frameworks, which will later lead to the chief hypothesis.

### *Academic Emphasis and Academic Press*

Academic emphasis, which is sometimes referred to as academic press, is defined as “the extent to which a school is driven by academic excellence” (Goddard, Sweetland, & Hoy, 2000, p. 684). By now, it should be noted that academic emphasis used in academic optimism is the same as academic press identified in the organizational climate index.

### *Academic Emphasis and Professional Teacher Behavior*

Goddard, Sweetland, and Hoy (2000) argue that academic press characterizes the normative and behavioral environments of the school. They conclude where academic press is high, there will be a strong influence on teacher behavior. Such influence will direct teachers to plan effectively, devote more time to lesson preparations, and reinforce a pattern of shared beliefs among the faculty, leading to academic press. Hoy, Sweetland, and Smith (2002) support this finding in their own study by concluding that both teachers and students in such a climate of strong academic press are strongly motivated toward student achievement. The goals for both groups begin to come together.

### *Collective Efficacy and Achievement Press*

Hoy et al. (2002) report that academic press is most potent when collective efficacy is strong. When teachers believe in themselves and their colleagues and understand that their efforts will lead to greater achievements, then a stronger focus will be placed on academic pursuits. Moreover, “strong collective efficacy leads teachers to be more persistent in their teaching efforts, set high and reasonable goals, and overcome temporary setbacks and failures” (p. 90).

### *Collective Efficacy and Professional Teacher Behavior*

Bandura (1993) discovered that efficacy expectations determine how much effort people will expend in a given situation. When faced with obstacles and barriers, he claims that individuals will overcome by expending additional time and energies to reach the goal or objective at hand. The same is affirmed from an organizational perspective, in particular, collective efficacy and professional teacher behavior. Here, teachers believe the faculty as a whole can execute courses of action required to positively affect student achievement. Such efficacy will guide teachers toward academic results that are favorable and desired. Furthermore, collective efficacy within the school can influence teacher behaviors (Hoy et al., 2002).

### *Faculty Trust and Collegial Leadership, Professional Teacher Behavior, and Achievement Press*

According to a high school study performed by Hoy et al. (2002), faculty trust is positively related to collegial leadership, professional teacher behavior, and achievement press. Their results provided evidence that indicated a stronger relationship with professional teacher behavior than with the other two. They concluded from the research that when teachers respect the competence of colleagues, support each other, and develop cooperative working arrangements then they are more apt to build trusting relationships. The researchers claim the two go hand in hand. Faculty trust is relatively unaffected by collegial leadership. Professional teacher behavior is the key to developing trust in colleagues.

Furthermore, Hoy, Smith, and Sweetland (2002) concluded from the research gathered that achievement press is the primary climate characteristic that promotes trust in parents and students. When each party is committed to academic achievement, trust is higher among the groups. Parents trust their child's teacher in full belief that the teacher will have the best interest

of their child in all educational matters. This relationship of trust results in higher student achievement.

#### *Academic Optimism and School Performance*

It is presumed that academic optimism is a stronger predictor of school performance than the organizational climate index. Hoy, Tarter, and Hoy (2006) demonstrated that the collective properties of academic optimism when working together can create a positive academic environment. Their objective was to find a framework that could explain student achievement in this age of accountability that principals and other school officials could easily administer in their respective schools.

Academic optimism was not created to identify the overall effectiveness of schools, simply the performance outcome. There are countless other effectiveness indicators mentioned earlier that are not included in Hoy's et al. (2006) academic optimism study, which would be needed in measuring a school's overall effectiveness.

#### *Organizational Climate Index and Overall School Effectiveness*

It is presumed that the organizational climate index is a stronger predictor of overall effectiveness than academic optimism. Recall the OCI is a broader measure that looks at institutional vulnerability, collegial leadership, professional teacher behavior, and achievement press. These are properties at first glance that look at many different effectiveness indicators. For example, institutional vulnerability is responsible for measuring the school's perception on being "at risk" to vocal parents and citizen groups. Collegial leadership addresses principal leadership of the school by determining whether her style of leadership is open and friendly. Professional

teacher behavior measures colleague competence and teachers overall commitment to the organization. Achievement press describes a school that sets high but achievable standards and goals for its students and is well received and known by its stakeholders. The OCI framework is more extensive than the academic optimism framework as it attempts to measure many indicators that deem a school as being effective (Hoy et. al, 2002)

### Rationale and Hypotheses

This study explored the relationship between academic optimism and the organizational climate index as they relate to schools and school success. The chief hypothesis for this study is as follows:

*Hypothesis 1: Academic Optimism and the organizational climate index are positively correlated.*

Evidence from the literature supports the idea that a strong relationship exists between the two factors. Each construct and the dimensions are reviewed as evidence of the relationship.

A strong relationship between academic optimism and the organizational climate index is also supported through achievement press. Achievement press is strongly related to another dimension of academic optimism known as faculty trust. Trust and achievement press are essential components of achievement. When high levels of achievement press are present within the school, and trust is evident among students, parents, and teachers, then achievement is greater (Hoy et al., 2002). Achievement press is also positively related to the collective efficacy dimension as well. Hoy et al. (2002) discovered in their study that achievement press is most potent when collective efficacy is strong. They assert that when collective efficacy is high, a strong focus will be placed on academic pursuits and that teachers will share a common belief as

to how best to reach high but obtainable achievement goals. Furthermore, their study led them to conclude that academic press works through collective efficacy.

Although academic optimism is a climate measure, it is assumed that it will correlate positively with student performance more so than overall school effectiveness. Recall academic emphasis is the extent to which a school is driven towards academic excellence (Hoy, Tarter, & Hoy, 2006). Collective efficacy has been positively related to student achievement (Goddard, Hoy, & Woolfork Hoy, 2000; Pajares, 1996). Faculty trust in parents and students are also positively related to student achievement (Goddard et al., 2001). Furthermore, the framework was initially designed to explain student performance. Hence, Hypothesis 2 follows:

*Hypothesis 2: Academic optimism is a stronger predictor of school performance than the organizational climate index.*

The organizational climate index is designed to look at broader elements of the organization whereas academic optimism is not as it is driven by student performance. There is some overlap in the two frameworks that pertains to student performance in academic press/emphasis, but OCI concerns itself with looking at the organization as a whole. “The goal of the OCI was to find four general dimensions of climate that link all levels of the school, that is, student-teacher, teacher-teacher, teacher-principal, and school-community interactions” (Hoy et al., 2002, p. 47). Following is Hypothesis 3:

*Hypothesis 3: The organizational climate index is a stronger predictor of overall effectiveness than academic optimism.*

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

This chapter briefly describes the research problem, data sample and collection procedures, instrumentation, and data analysis procedures.

The purpose of the study was to build upon an emergent body of research concerning academic optimism and its relationship to the organizational climate index in schools using a sample from public elementary schools in Alabama. Academic optimism and the organizational climate index both have been shown to have positive effects on student achievement, even after controlling for the effects of socioeconomic status. Understanding the relationship that exists between academic optimism and organizational climate may present an even clearer picture as to how student achievement and overall effectiveness are predicted.

#### Population and Sample

The population sample in this study came from 67 out of 80 public elementary schools invited to participate in North Alabama. Participants included full-time teachers serving Grades K-6 or a combination thereof provided that each school had a fourth grade class due to pulling state assessment data. Purposeful attempts were made to ensure an equitable sample of demographic and geographic populations.

Surveys were distributed to the faculty in each of the 67 schools participating. Consideration was only given to schools with 15 or more faculty members. Each respondent was

guaranteed anonymity, confidentiality, and the option to refuse participation. In addition, volunteers could skip any question or discontinue participation at any time during the survey.

### Instrumentation

Academic optimism and the organizational climate index were measured using survey items on a single instrument given to teachers during regularly scheduled faculty meetings. SAOS was used to test academic optimism. The reliability of the SAOS in this study was supported, with an alpha coefficient of .95. It should be noted that each item was part of an existing instrument that was previously tested for reliability and validity in prior research. It should also be noted that academic optimism is believed to be a single, unified construct made up of three dimensions: collective teacher efficacy, faculty trust, and academic emphasis.

The organizational climate index is made up of items from the OCDQ and OHI. Hoy et al. (2002) believed the index to be a better representation of school climate while measuring for the environmental press, collegial leadership, teacher professionalism, and academic press of the school. Survey items for each construct are described below. Each of these dimensions was measured by a subtest of the OCI. The reliability of the OCI in this study was supported, with an alpha coefficient of .89.

#### *Academic Emphasis*

Academic emphasis, also known as academic press, is defined as “the extent to which a school is driven by academic excellence” (Goddard, Sweetland, & Hoy, 2000, p. 684). Academic emphasis is the belief held by administrators, faculty, staff, and students that academics are important. This belief was measured using the academic emphasis subscale taken from the

Organizational Health Inventory (Hoy & Miskel, 2008; Hoy & Tarter, 1997; Hoy et al., 1991). The measure was taken from 8 Likert-type items scored on a 4-point scale ranging from *rarely occurs* (1) to *very frequently occurs* (4). Sample items included the following: The school sets high standards for performance; Students respect others who get good grades; Students seek extra work so they can get good grades; and The learning environment is orderly and serious. In prior research, Hoy and his colleagues (1990, 1991) established reliability and validity. The survey items for academic emphasis are located in Appendix A.

### *Collective Teacher Efficacy*

Collective efficacy is defined as “the perceptions of teachers in a school that the efforts of the faculty as a whole will have a positive impact on student achievement” (Goddard, Hoy, & Woolfolk Hoy, 2000, p. 480). In this study, collective efficacy is a group level characteristic based on Bandura’s (1977, 1986) social cognitive theory and self-efficacy research.

The construct was measured using the short version of the 12-item Collective Efficacy Scale, which was determined reliable and valid (Goddard, Hoy, & Woolfolk Hoy, 2000). Sample items include the following: If a child doesn’t want to learn, teachers here give up; Students here aren’t motivated to learn; Teachers in this school do not have the skills to deal with student disciplinary problems; and Learning is more difficult at this school because students are worried about their safety. Items were scored on a 6-point Likert-type scale ranging from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (6).

### *Faculty Trust in Students and Parents*

Trust is one's willingness to be vulnerable to another based upon the confidence that the other participant is benevolent, reliable, competent, open, and honest (Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 2003). Trust was measured using the Omnibus Trust Scale (Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 2003). Sample items include the following: Teachers in this school trust their students; Teachers in this school trust the parents; Students in this school care about each other; and Teachers can count upon parental support. Items will be scored on a 6-point Likert-type scale ranging from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (6). Each of the 10 items on this instrument had high construct reliability and validity as they were established and supported in previous research (Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 2003).

### The Organizational Climate Index (OCI)

The organizational climate index is a short, reliable, and valid measure of the climate of schools (Hoy et al., 2002). Hoy and his colleagues selected 30 items, which would later become 27 items, from both the OCDQ and OHI that would measure four dimensions of school climate. These include institutional vulnerability, collegial leadership, professional teacher behavior, and achievement press. Sample items include the following: The principal treats all faculty members as his or her equal; The principal is friendly and approachable; Teachers help and support each other; Students respect others who get good grades; and Teachers accomplish their work with enthusiasm. The Organizational Climate Index incorporates a 27-item Likert-type scale ranging from *rarely occurs* (RO) to *very frequently occurs* (VFO) that assesses the four climate dimensions. The survey items are listed in Appendix B.

## Effectiveness

### *Index of Perceived Organizational Effectiveness*

The index of perceived organizational effectiveness (IPOE) is an 8-item instrument used to measure school effectiveness (Miskel et al., 1979). The original scale was developed by Mott (1972) to determine organizational effectiveness within hospitals. Each scale, and more particular the adaption scale will measure expressive activities, efficiency, and harmony within the school organization. Examples of the perceived effectiveness items include the following: “How good is the quality of products or services produced by people you know in your school,” “How good a job do people in your school do in coping with emergencies and disruptions,” “How informed are the people in your school about innovations that could affect the way they do their work? Responses are given on a five-point scale with answers that vary depending on the individual question. Mott (1972) demonstrated validity in his hospital research. The alpha coefficient for IPOE in the present study was supported, with an alpha coefficient of .86.

### *Student Performance*

Student performance in reading was measured by utilizing the Stanford Achievement Test. The test is given to all fourth-grade students in the state. All achievement data were collected from the state department of education’s website.

## Data Analysis Procedures

The unit of analysis for this investigation was the school. Teacher survey questionnaires were aggregated to produce school level measures for each of the variables. Each response was entered into the Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) where school-level descriptive

statistics were calculated. Statistical procedures used in this research included means, standard deviations, and reliabilities of the measures. Data analysis included a bivariate correlation and a linear regression. A bivariate correlation was used to assess the relationship in Academic Optimism and the Organizational Climate Index as total constructs in hypotheses one. A linear regression was used in assessing multiple variables and subscales in testing hypotheses two and three. Regression procedures were completed to examine beta weights, B, and significance. Statistics also included mean measures for each of the three dimensions of academic optimism (collective teacher efficacy, academic emphasis, and faculty trust in students and parents), organizational climate index, and mean scores for each individual survey item. Descriptive and inferential statistics were utilized and analyzed in answering the following research questions:

1. What is the relationship between academic optimism and the organizational climate index? Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed: H1--Academic optimism and the organizational climate index are positively related.
2. Is academic optimism a stronger predictor of school performance than the organizational climate index? Therefore, the second hypothesis is proposed: H2--Academic optimism is a stronger predictor of school performance than the organizational climate index.
3. Is the organizational climate index a stronger predictor of overall effectiveness than academic optimism? Therefore, the final hypothesis is proposed: H3--The organizational climate index is a stronger predictor of overall effectiveness than academic optimism.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

This chapter sets forth the results of the data analyzing the relationship of academic optimism and climate to effectiveness. The chapter begins with a summary of the descriptive statistics for the sample and the variables in the study. The organizational climate index and academic optimism were examined to see the effect each construct has on the other and which construct is a better predictor in determining student achievement and overall school effectiveness in elementary schools. Of 80 schools contacted, 67 participated, yielding 1,353 respondents.

#### Description

Academic optimism, which is comprised of academic emphasis, collective efficacy, and faculty trust of parents and students, and the organizational climate index, which is comprised of academic press, collegial leadership, institutional vulnerability, and professional teacher behavior were each measured by a questionnaire using Likert-type items. Table 1 shows the characteristics of the measures, which include the mean, standard deviation, and ranges for all variables used in the study including the socioeconomic status and 4th grade reading achievement from the Stanford Achievement Test (SAT). The mean gives an average score based on the respondent's answers for each instrument and the standard deviation; in essence, it is the central location of

the data. Most variables represented in the study indicate a low variance from the mean with less than 1% standard deviation. See Table 1 for descriptive characteristics.

Table 1

*Descriptive Characteristics of the Measures*

Variable	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	M	SD
Academic Optimism	67	6.19	9.10	15.38	12.28	1.08
OCI	67	4.24	9.53	13.77	11.72	.90
Academic Emphasis	67	1.38	2.63	4.00	3.33	.23
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 Press	67	1.58	2.15	3.73	2.88	.30
Collegial Leadership	67	1.72	2.19	3.91	3.33	.41
Institutional Vulnerability	67	1.36	1.40	2.76	2.13	.30
Prof. Teacher Behavior	67	1.99	1.93	3.91	3.39	.34
Student Achievement	67	50.00	35.00	85.00	63.13	13.63
IPOE	67	1.66	3.15	4.80	3.95	.35
SES	67	90.00	8.00	98.00	48.38	22.79
Valid N	67					

The alpha reliability, or how consistently the participants respond, was calculated by scale for the index of perceived organizational effectiveness (IPOE), academic optimism (SAOS), and the organizational climate index (OCI). Table 2 depicts the alpha reliability for each of the research variables. Each variable fell well above the .70 needed to determine reliability.

Table 2

*Alpha Reliabilities by Scale*

Scale	Cases	Items	Alpha Coefficients
IPOE	444	8	.86
OCI	439	30	.89
SAOS	468	30	.95

Inter-variable correlations are illustrated in Table 3. Many of the variables show evidence of a positive correlation, while some employ a negative relationship. A negative relationship, for example was the -.18 correlation between institutional vulnerability and collegial leadership. As levels of institutional vulnerability increase, levels of collegial leadership decrease and vice versa. A positive correlation, for example was the .61 correlation between faculty trust and academic press. As levels of trust increase, then the higher academic press and vice versa. Correlations below are discussed in greater detail according to respective hypothesis.

Table 3

*Correlations among all Major Variables Examined in the Study*

Var.	CL	PTB	AP	IV	OCI	CE	FT	AE	AO	SES	IPOE	ACH
CL	--	.57**	.55**	-.18	.80	.22	.29*	.46**	.32**	.12	.38**	.24
PTB		--	.64**	-.21	.78**	.21	.28*	.46**	.31**	.28*	.48**	.43**
AP			--	.05	.84**	.49**	.62**	.61**	.62**	.58**	.49**	.63**
IV				--	.19	.13	.06	-.17	.04	.24*	-.17	.12
OCI					--	.38**	.47**	.53**	.49**	.48**	.47**	.52**
CE						--	.87**	.65**	.95**	.75**	.58**	.64**
FT							--	.67**	.97**	.75**	.59**	.67**
AE								--	.79**	.48**	.68**	.55**
AO									--	.75**	.66**	.69**
SES										--	.37**	.82**
IPOE											--	.37**
ACH												--

Notes: \*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). \*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Collegial Leadership (CL), Professional Teacher Behavior (PTB), Academic Press (AP), Institutional Vulnerability (IV), Organizational Climate Index (OCI), Collective Efficacy (CE), Faculty Trust (FT), Academic Emphasis (AE), Academic Optimism (AO), Socioeconomic Status (SES), Index of Perceived Overall Effectiveness (IPOE), Achievement (ACH)

## Testing Hypothesis 1

The first hypothesis, which predicted a positive relationship between the organizational climate and academic optimism was supported; that is, the better the organizational climate, the greater academic optimism. Table 3 illustrates a moderate and significant correlation between academic optimism and OCI ( $r = .49, p < .01$ ). Individual OCI dimensions produced significant but low to moderately high correlations with academic optimism. For example, academic optimism and collegial leadership ( $r = .32, p < .01$ ) and academic optimism and professional teacher behavior ( $r = .31, p < .01$ ) explained a low correlation of variance. The most significant and perhaps the strongest indicator was academic optimism and academic press ( $r = .62, p < .01$ ).

Table 4

### *Correlations among the Four Dimensions of OCI and Academic Optimism (AO)*

Var.	CL	PTB	AP	IV	OCI	AO
CL	--	.57**	.55**	-.18	.80	.32**
PTB		--	.64**	-.21	.78**	.31**
AP			--	.05	.84**	.62**
IV				--	.19	.04
OCI					--	.49**
AO						--

Notes: \*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). \*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

A regression analysis was performed to determine the unique contribution to academic optimism of the elements of OCI. Academic optimism was regressed on the four dimensions of OCI, only achievement press was uniquely significant (see Table 5). Table 5 shows beta weights (standardized regression coefficients),  $\beta$  (un-standardized regression coefficients), standard error,  $t$ , and significance, which explains whether the Beta is statically significant. In this regression,

the predictors accounted for 52% of the variance in academic optimism and the regression equation was significant,  $F(2,64) = 32.82, p < .001$ . Only academic press ( $\beta = .70, p < .01$ ) was a significant predictor of academic optimism.

Table 5

*Regression Coefficient of OCI on the Dependent Variable of Academic Optimism*

Predictor Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	$\beta$	Std. Error	$\beta$	$t$	Sig
(constant)					
Achievement Press	663.34	132.15	.70	5.02	.000**
Collegial Leadership	12.47	90.14	.02	.14	.89
Institutional Vulnerability	-17.22	101.24	-.02	-.17	.87
Professional Teacher Behavior	-126.70	120.05	-.149	-1.055	.30

\*\* Significant at  $p < 0.01$  (2 tailed),  $R = .72$ ,  $Adj R^2 = .51$

This hypothesis is supported by the data from the two tests, with academic press being the driving force behind the significant result. The greater the organizational climate index (OCI), the greater the degree of academic optimism.

### Testing Hypothesis 2

The second hypothesis, which predicted academic optimism as being a stronger predictor of school performance, was supported; that is, the greater academic optimism, the greater the increase in student achievement. The hypothesis was based around the research question of whether academic optimism was a stronger predictor than OCI in predicting student performance, in particular, 4th grade SAT reading achievement.

To test this hypothesis, correlations were run among the four dimensions of OCI and the three dimensions of academic optimism, and student achievement. Correlations are summarized

in Table 6. Overall academic optimism showed the strongest and most significant correlations with achievement ( $r = .69, p < .01$ ) than overall OCI ( $r = .52, p < .01$ ). Independently, each dimension of academic optimism explained a fairly strong and significant correlation with achievement ( $r = .55, .64, .67$  for academic emphasis, collective efficacy, and faculty trust, respectively). Whereas, the OCI components concluded a low to moderate correlation with achievement ( $r = .12, .38, .43, \text{ and } .63$  for institutional vulnerability, collegial leadership, professional teacher behavior, and academic press, respectively). Not only was institutional vulnerability the lowest correlation among the OCI components with achievement ( $r = .12$ ), it was also not significant.

Table 6

*Correlations among OCI and its Dimensions, Academic Optimism and its Dimensions, and Achievement*

Var.	CL	PTB	AP	IV	OCI	CE	FT	AE	AO	ACH
CL	--	.57**	.55**	-.18	.80	.22	.29*	.46**	.32**	.38**
PTB		--	.64**	-.21	.78**	.21	.28*	.46**	.31**	.43**
AP			--	.05	.84**	.49**	.62**	.61**	.62**	.63**
IV				--	.19	.13	.06	-.17	.04	.12
OCI					--	.38**	.47**	.53**	.49**	.52**
CE						--	.87**	.65**	.95**	.64**
FT							--	.67**	.97**	.67**
AE								--	.79**	.55**
AO									--	.69**
ACH										--

Notes: \*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). \*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Next, a regression analysis was conducted to determine the effect of OCI and academic optimism variable on achievement. Table 7 shows beta weights (standardized regression coefficients),  $\beta$  (unstandardized regression coefficients), standard error,  $t$ , and significance,

which explains whether the Beta is statically significant. To prevent an overlap of the variables academic press of OCI and academic emphasis of academic optimism, academic press was taken out of the OCI variable. The coefficient table showed a significant and stronger correlation between academic optimism and student achievement ( $\beta = .62, p < .001$ ) than OCI ( $\beta = .19$ ). Furthermore, only one component of the OCI was able to show a relationship, albeit a weak but significant relationship, between professional teacher behavior and student achievement ( $\beta = .23, p < .05$ ). In this regression, the predictors accounted for 51% of the variance in student achievement and the regression equation was significant,  $F(2,64) = 34.87, p < .001$ .

Table 7

*Regression Coefficients Examining Academic Optimism and OCI on the Dependent Variable of Student Achievement*

Predictor Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	$\beta$	Std. Error	$\beta$	<i>t</i>	Sig
(constant)	-67.05	17.95		-3.74	.000
SAOS	7.86	1.20	.62	6.54	.000**
OCI	3.81	1.94	.19	1.97	.053

Notes: \*\*Significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).  $R = .71, \text{Adj } R^2 = .49$

\*Significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Given that SES is a strong influence and we were interested in the relationship of variables while controlling for SES, a regression of the variables that included SES was tested. However, it was important first to run correlations among the three dimensions of OCI and its four dimensions, academic optimism and its three dimensions, student achievement, and SES. Correlations are summarized in Table 8. The correlational matrix below explains a strong relationship between SES and academic optimism ( $r = .75, p < .01$ ) while SES and OCI ( $r = .44, p < .01$ ) is relatively moderate.

Table 8

*Correlations among OCI and its Dimensions, Academic Optimism and its Dimensions, Achievement, and SES*

Var.	CL	PTB	AP	IV	OCI	CE	FT	AE	AO	ACH	SES
CL	--	.57**	.55**	-.18	.80	.22	.29*	.46**	.32**	.24	.12
PTB		--	.64**	-.21	.78**	.21	.28*	.46**	.31**	.43**	.28*
AP			--	.05	.84**	.49**	.62**	.61**	.62**	.63**	.58**
IV				--	.19	.13	.06	-.17	.04	.12	.24*
OCI					--	.38**	.47**	.53**	.49**	.52**	.44**
CE						--	.87**	.65**	.95**	.64**	.75**
FT							--	.67**	.97**	.67**	.75**
AE								--	.79**	.55**	.48**
AO									--	.69**	.75**
ACH										--	.82**
SES											--

Notes: \*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). \*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

A second regression with the dependent variable achievement and the predictors of academic optimism, OCI, and socioeconomic status (SES) was conducted to examine if the significance of the original predictors from the first regression would change due to the additional variable of SES. See Table 9 for a summary of the results such as beta weights,  $\beta$ , standard error,  $t$ , and significance.

In this regression, the addition of SES changed the relationship greatly, according to the coefficient table. Only OCI ( $\beta = .15, p < .05$ ) was significant with a slightly less correlation with achievement. Conversely, academic optimism ( $\beta = .12$ ), while controlling for SES, correlated much less with student achievement than before and was found not significant. Academic optimism seems more influenced by SES, more so than in Hoy, Tarter, and Hoy (2006). Here, the predictors accounted for 71% of the variance in achievement. The multiple  $R$  increased because the inclusion of the SES explained more of the variance. This particular test of regression does not support Hypothesis 2.

Table 9

*Regression Coefficients Examining Academic Optimism and OCI, and SES on the Dependent Variable of Student Achievement*

Predictor Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients			Standardized Coefficients		
	<i>R</i>	$\beta$	Std. Error	$\beta$	<i>t</i>	Sig
(constant)		-2.38	16.93		-.14	0.89
SAOS	.69**	1.45	1.33	.12	1.09	0.28
OCI	.52**	3.14	1.50	.15	2.09	0.04*
SES	.82**	0.41	0.06	.69	6.66	0.000**

Notes: \*\*Significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed),  $R = .84$ , Adj  $R^2 = .70$

\*Significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

However, two of the three tests support the second hypothesis. Academic optimism is a stronger predictor for student achievement than OCI.

### Testing Hypothesis 3

The third hypothesis, which predicted organizational climate as being a stronger predictor of overall effectiveness (IPOE) than academic optimism, was not supported. To test this hypothesis, correlations were run among OCI and its four dimensions, academic optimism and its three dimensions, and overall effectiveness (IPOE). Correlations are summarized in Table 10. Overall academic optimism showed the strongest and most significant correlations with the index of perceived organizational effectiveness ( $r = .66$ ,  $p < .01$ ) than overall OCI ( $r = .47$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Independently, each dimension of academic optimism explained a fairly strong and significant correlation with overall effectiveness ( $r = .58$ ,  $.59$ , and  $.68$  for collective efficacy, faculty trust, and academic emphasis, respectively). Whereas, the OCI components explained a low to moderate correlation with overall effectiveness ( $r = -.17$ ,  $.38$ ,  $.48$ , and  $.49$  for institutional vulnerability, collegial leadership, professional teacher behavior, and academic press,

respectively). Not only was institutional vulnerability the lowest correlation among the OCI components with overall effectiveness, it was also the only component that was not significant. The correlation table indicates a stronger relationship between academic optimism and overall effectiveness than OCI and overall effectiveness; therefore, this particular test does not support Hypothesis 3.

Table 10

*Correlations among OCI and its Dimensions, Academic Optimism and its Dimensions, and Overall Effectiveness (IPOE)*

Var.	CL	PTB	AP	IV	OCI	CE	FT	AE	AO	IPOE
CL	--	.57**	.55**	-.18	.80	.22	.29*	.46**	.32**	.38**
PTB		--	.64**	-.21	.78**	.21	.28*	.46**	.31**	.48**
AP			--	.05	.84**	.49**	.62**	.61**	.62**	.49**
IV				--	.19	.13	.06	-.17	.04	-.17
OCI					--	.38**	.47**	.53**	.49**	.47**
CE						--	.87**	.65**	.95**	.58**
FT							--	.67**	.97**	.59**
AE								--	.79**	.68**
AO									--	.66**
IPOE										--

Notes: \*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). \*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

To test this hypothesis, the correlation table was examined from the multiple regression analysis. Table 11 shows beta weights (standardized regression coefficients),  $\beta$  (unstandardized regression coefficients), standard error,  $t$ , and significance, which explains whether the Beta is statically significant. The coefficient table showed a significant and stronger correlation between academic optimism and overall effectiveness ( $\beta = .59, p < .001$ ) than OCI ( $\beta = .19$ ), which was non-significant. Furthermore, the OCI was only able to show a weak but significant relationship between professional teacher behavior and student achievement ( $\beta = .23, p < .05$ ).

Table 11

*Regression Coefficients Examining Academic Optimism and OCI on the Dependent Variable of Overall Effectiveness (IPOE)*

Predictor Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	$\beta$	Std. Error	$\beta$	t	Sig
(constant)	.76	.48		1.59	0.12
SAOS	.19	.03	.59	5.90	0.000**
OCI	.10	.05	.19	1.88	0.06

Notes: \*\*Significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed),  $R = .68$ ,  $\text{Adj } R^2 = .44$

\*Significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

In this regression, the predictors accounted for 46% of the variance in overall effectiveness and the regression equation was significant,  $F(2,64) = 27.81$ ,  $p < .001$ . This particular regression test does not support the third hypothesis. It indicates academic optimism as being a stronger predictor than OCI in overall effectiveness as OCI was non-significant.

An additional regression was run to control for SES. First, correlations were run among OCI and its four dimensions, academic optimism and its three dimensions, overall effectiveness, and SES. Correlations are summarized in Table 12. The correlational matrix below explains a strong relationship between SES and academic optimism ( $r = .75$ ,  $p < .01$ ), while SES and OCI ( $r = .44$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and SES and IPOE ( $r = .37$ ,  $p < .01$ ) were relatively moderate in their correlation.

Table 12

*Correlations among OCI and its Dimensions, Academic Optimism and its Dimensions, Achievement, and SES*

Var.	CL	PTB	AP	IV	OCI	CE	FT	AE	AO	IPOE	SES
CL	--	.57**	.55**	-.18	.80	.22	.29*	.46**	.32**	.38**	.12
PTB		--	.64**	-.21	.78**	.21	.28*	.46**	.31**	.48**	.28*
AP			--	.05	.84**	.49**	.62**	.61**	.62**	.49**	.58**
IV				--	.19	.13	.06	-.17	.04	-.17	.24*
OCI					--	.38**	.47**	.53**	.49**	.47**	.44**
CE						--	.87**	.65**	.95**	.58**	.75**
FT							--	.67**	.97**	.59**	.75**
AE								--	.79**	.68**	.48**
AO									--	.66**	.75**
IPOE										--	.37**
SES											--

Notes: \*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). \*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

A second regression with the dependent variable overall effectiveness and the predictors of academic optimism, OCI, and socioeconomic (SES) was conducted to examine whether the explained variance of the original predictors from the first regression would change due to the additional variable of SES (see Table 13). In this regression, the predictors accounted for 50% of the variance in achievement or about 5% more than without SES and the regression equation was significant,  $F(3,63) = 20.89$ . While controlling for SES, academic optimism increased its correlational and significant effect on overall effectiveness ( $\beta = .80, p < .001$ ) while OCI ( $\beta = .22, p < .05$ ) increased slightly and was now found significant. A negative correlation existed between OCI and overall effectiveness ( $\beta = -.30, p < .05$ ). In other words, as the resources in the school district drop, perceived effectiveness tends to drop as well. This test of regression while controlling for SES does not support Hypothesis 3.

Table 13

*Regression Coefficients Examining Academic Optimism, the Four Components of OCI, and SES on the Dependent Variable of Overall Effectiveness (IPOE)*

Predictor Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients			Standardized Coefficients		
	<i>r</i>	$\beta$	Std. Error	$\beta$	<i>t</i>	Sig
(Constant)		.04	.57		.07	.95
SAOS	.66**	.26	.05	.80	5.82	.000**
OCI	.47**	.11	.05	.20	2.09	.04*
SES	.37**	-.05	.00	-.30	-2.23	.03*

Notes: \*\*Significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed),  $R = .71$ , Adj  $R^2 = .48$

\*Significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Evidence from the three tests did not indicate where OCI is a stronger predictor for overall effectiveness. In contrast, the tests concluded that academic optimism is a stronger predictor for overall effectiveness.

### Conclusion

This chapter presented the results from the statistical procedures used to examine academic optimism and OCI. Correlation and regression analysis were employed. In the analyses, attempts were made to answer the three research questions that were at the onset of this study. The first question asked whether there was a relationship between academic optimism and the organizational climate index. The data analysis suggested a strong relationship between the two. As the organizational climate increases in elementary schools, so does academic optimism.

The second question asked whether academic optimism or OCI was a stronger predictor in school performance, in particular 4th grade SAT reading scores. Although both variables explained a positive relationship where each was significant, it was academic optimism that

doubled its effect on student achievement therefore suggesting a stronger relationship than OCI on achievement.

The third question asked whether the OCI or academic optimism was a stronger predictor in overall effectiveness as measured by their relationship with the index of perceived organizational effectiveness (IPOE). The result from the analysis argues that academic optimism is a stronger predictor in overall effectiveness and not OCI. Therefore, the third hypothesis of the study is rejected due to non-significance in OCI and IPOE.

## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION

#### Introduction

This chapter presents a discussion from the results of the current study. The purpose of the study was to explore the relationship between academic optimism and the organizational climate index as each relates to school effectiveness. The first section of the chapter presents an introduction to the study that includes the problem addressed and the purpose of the study. Then a summary of the findings is introduced along with theoretical and practical implications. Finally, recommendations for future research are reported that may lead one to extend this study.

The primary purpose of this research was to examine the relationships between academic optimism and organizational climate to school effectiveness at the elementary school level. The general problem of the study dealt with two school climate frameworks in academic optimism and organizational climate index and their effectiveness in elementary education. The literature review suggested that academic optimism would be a better predictor for student achievement and OCI a better predictor for overall effectiveness, but the data did not support this assertion. Because school effectiveness is multidimensional, two dimensions were chosen to narrow effectiveness into two distinct but universal measurements. For this study, school effectiveness was defined by student achievement as measured by 4th grade SAT reading, and overall organizational effectiveness was measured by the IPOE. Finally, which framework would be a better predictor in each area of effectiveness.

## Summary of Findings

1. Academic optimism and organizational climate are positively correlated to each other and to both measures of effectiveness.

2. Collegial leadership, professional teacher behavior, and academic press are positively related to academic optimism. Each has a unique and significant relationship with optimism when controlling for the others in that set.

3. Institutional integrity has no relationship to optimism.

4. Academic optimism is a stronger predictor of school performance than organizational climate. However, organizational climate contributes more to the explanation of student achievement than academic optimism, while controlling for SES.

5. Academic optimism contributes more to the explanation of overall effectiveness than organizational climate, while controlling for SES.

6. SES is a strong predictor of student achievement but a weak predictor of overall effectiveness.

## Theoretical Implications

### *Academic Optimism and Organizational Climate Index*

Evidence from the literature, established in Chapter 2, supported the idea that a strong relationship exists between academic optimism and organizational climate index, which was Hypothesis 1. Goddard, Sweetland, and Hoy (2000) argued that academic press characterizes the normative and behavioral environments of the school. When academic press is high, teachers will devote more time to lesson preparations and collaboration among colleagues. Hoy and colleagues (2002) reported academic press is most potent when collective efficacy is strong.

Academic press was the driving factor that explained the strong relationship between it and academic optimism. It was Hoy et al. (2002) who argued that academic press is strongly related to collective efficacy and faculty trust, which are dimensions of academic optimism.

This study maintains the idea and supports previous research (Hoy et al, 2006) that schools with high levels of academic press have teachers who will work hard together to help meet academic goals set forth by the faculty and administration. These academic goals will be high but achievable. Teachers will be more efficient in their work. They will collaborate and plan to ensure 100% student engagement by coordinating lessons that promote content interest and retention. This will help create a climate where teachers believe in one another and their work, which relates well to collective efficacy. Furthermore, when academic press is evident, reciprocal trust will emerge between faculty, parents, and students in pursuing these academic goals. This study confirmed the literature in implying that all but one OCI dimension supported strong and significant correlations with academic optimism at the  $p < .01$  levels; the only exception being institutional vulnerability.

Institutional vulnerability is the extent to which a school is influenced to a few vocal parents and community members. High vulnerability indicates that teachers and principals are unprotected from community. Vulnerability did not correlate with academic optimism because collective efficacy and academic press are internal in nature within the school setting, while trust is external and is limited to trust in parents only and not community members. Maybe teachers work hard to build trust with parents so that any ill will would be nullified toward parents and community members in their responses.

There are times when educators feel pressured and make decisions based more on parent requests rather than on what is best for the child. One example would be math placement scores

that indicate whether students are placed in algebra or pre-algebra. Parents of influence, regardless of data and teachers' professional opinion, get their way in schools perceived as vulnerable, which can impair a school's climate. Teachers in these schools may not give full effort if they perceive that parents and administrators don't recognize teachers' expertise.

The findings here confirm that there is a positive correlation between academic optimism and OCI. Further, the data demonstrate the independent contribution that professional teacher behavior, academic press, and collegial leadership have on academic optimism. Collectively, all variables were strong predictors of the organizational climate index.

#### *Academic Optimism, Organizational Climate Index, and Student Achievement*

Student achievement is a mainstay in American education. It will remain the basis for almost every decision administrators will make in their respective schools. Therefore, it was important to determine which climate construct was a better predictor of student achievement, thus leads to the second research question. Is academic optimism a stronger predictor in student achievement than organizational climate index (OCI)?

Academic optimism was initially designed to explain student performance. Recall that academic emphasis is the extent to which a school is driven towards academic excellence (Hoy, Tarter, & Hoy, 2006). Collective efficacy was positively related to student achievement (Goddard, Hoy, & Woolfork Hoy, 2000; Pajares, 1996). Faculty trust in parents and students was also positively related to student achievement (Goddard et al., 2001). All three dimensions in this study individually contributed to student achievement.

Conversely, the organizational climate index was designed to look at broader elements of the organization. "The goal of the OCI was to find four general dimensions of climate that link

all levels of the school, that is, student-teacher, teacher-teacher, teacher-principal, and school-community interactions” (Hoy et al., 2002, p. 47). Although there is some overlap in the two frameworks that pertain to student performance in academic press/emphasis, historically, the OCI positioned itself in looking at the organization as a whole.

This finding showed that academic optimism has the edge and is a stronger predictor than OCI in predicting student achievement. Perhaps, it is largely due to the interconnection of the academic optimism variables. Academic optimism is a composite of collective efficacy, academic emphasis, and faculty trust and was subject to a confirmation factor analysis. Each variable seems to follow and interrelate well with the other. For example, Hoy et al. (2002) reported that academic emphasis is most potent when collective efficacy is strong. When teachers believe in themselves and their colleagues and understand that their efforts will lead to greater achievements, then a stronger focus will be placed on academic pursuits. Plus, trust will emerge in such a climate because everyone is working toward the same goal including teachers, parents, and students. In this study, all academic optimism dimensions were identified as having strong and significant correlational values in explaining student achievement. OCI variables were considerably lower with the exception of academic press. A second reason is that academic optimism is closer to classroom practice.

The bivariate finding confirms that academic optimism is a stronger predictor of student achievement ( $r = .69, p < .01$ ) than OCI ( $r = .52, p < .01$ ) (see Table 3). Further, the data demonstrate the independent contribution that collective efficacy, faculty trust, and academic emphasis have with student achievement. Collectively, all variables were stronger predictors of student achievement than the organizational climate index.

Generally academic optimism makes a direct effect on student achievement. However, when controlling academic optimism, OCI, and SES, then OCI becomes the significant predictor of student achievement. Academic optimism is somehow pushed aside by SES allowing for OCI to possess a higher beta. In the absence of previous achievement data, SES is a proxy for previous achievement, which predicts student achievement; therefore, a different finding from Hoy, Tarter, and Hoy (2006). Previous achievement is linked to SES. For example, students who have a track record as being high or low in achievement will continue this trend as would be the case while controlling for SES. Significant drops or increases in achievement would be rare from one year to the next.

#### *Academic Optimism, Organizational Climate Index, and IPOE*

While postulating that academic optimism was a stronger predictor in student performance, one would assume that the organizational climate index would be a better predictor of overall effectiveness. OCI looks at the organization as a whole, while academic optimism describes events closer to student performance, and not necessarily overall effectiveness. This hypothesis led to the third and final research question. Is OCI a stronger predictor of overall effectiveness (IPOE) than academic optimism?

Academic optimism showed the stronger beta with the index of perceived organizational effectiveness than the organizational climate. Independently, each dimension of academic optimism explained a strong and significant correlation with overall effectiveness, whereas the OCI components explained a low to moderate correlation with overall effectiveness. Collectively, academic optimism indicated a stronger beta with overall effectiveness than OCI as well.

This finding suggests that academic optimism is strong in predicting overall effectiveness as well. Perhaps, it is due to its dimensions illustrating the strongest correlations to IPOE with academic emphasis leading the way ( $r = .66$ ). Academic emphasis itself has remained a potent force in many school effectiveness models including teacher commitment, teachers' judgments of the effectiveness of the school, and student achievement (Hoy et al., 2006). It can be argued that when the learning environment is perceived as orderly and serious by all stakeholders, students are motivated to work hard, and respect achievement. Educators who practice said behaviors can have a stronghold on what is perceived as organizational effectiveness as identified by teachers in this study. Furthermore, faculty trust in parents and students, along with collective efficacy, can only strengthen organizational effectiveness. Teachers who have high levels of trust and believe all teachers can make a difference may explain increased levels of perceived organizational effectiveness.

Institutional vulnerability was another area of interest, especially with its relationship to overall school effectiveness (IPOE), collegial leadership, and academic emphasis. All three had a negative relationship with institutional vulnerability. The negative relationship of institutional vulnerability and IPOE indicate that teachers feel less effective when susceptible to vocal parent and citizen groups. Schools may feel helpless in making decisions if they believe their decisions will be reversed due to pressure by hostile citizen groups. Fear can lead a school into making decisions that are ineffective for both the school and its students. Teachers will become less likely to generate new ideas and belief systems knowing that they are unprotected from parents and community members who oppose their professional judgment from time to time.

Collegial leadership and academic emphasis were negatively related with institutional vulnerability. When schools are vulnerable to various vocal groups such as parents, then

collegial leadership and academic emphasis may drop. For example, teachers are less likely to work and plan with one another knowing that their work can be trumped by community members. Again, teachers feel unprotected from such groups and think that their principal will yield to these groups. Teachers then believe their efforts are futile; a belief system that leads to ineffective.

SES and IPOE were negatively correlated ( $r = -.30, p < .05$ ). One possibility for the finding is the state of the economy. The nation was experiencing a static economy while the surveys were being collected, with jobless rates approaching 11%. In addition, schools in the state of Alabama were on proration. Hundreds of teachers were non-renewed across the state the year before and teacher supply money was zero for the first time in over 10 years; whereas the year before, teacher supply money was at an all time high of \$525 per unit. Certainly, the perception of effectiveness is influenced by academic optimism and SES. It is possible that the schools' perception of effectiveness, even when there is a lack of materials and SES is low, was best predicted by academic optimism when controlling for SES. Such argument could conclude that teacher materials and resources are essential in predicting overall effectiveness (IPOE) but not as important as academic optimism when economic downturns are present.

Here, it can be argued that as schools have fewer resources and lower levels of SES, then the perception of overall effectiveness is low. These schools find it difficult to overcome obstacles faced in education due to lean budgets and a lack of support that generally is evident among lower SES schools.

### *SES, Student Achievement, and IPOE*

Another find in this study, albeit un-hypothesized, was that SES is a strong predictor in achievement but a weak predictor of overall effectiveness. Perhaps, it is due to a lack of support students may receive from their parents in regard to their education. Maybe, parents' efforts concentrate mostly on surviving life than with helping their child succeed and be successful in school. When such support is lacking at home, students will most likely fail or underperform in their academic studies. As SES decreases from school to school, unfortunately, there is a decrease in their student achievement. Coleman et al (1966) and Hoy and his colleagues (Hoy, Tarter, & Hoy, 2006; Hoy, Tarter, & Kottkamp, 1991) all concur that SES is a powerful shaper in determining student achievement.

SES was a weak predictor of overall effectiveness. Perhaps, it is due to the questions posed by the IPOE, maybe the questions were too subjective. Questions from the IPOE include the following: "How good is the quality of products or services produced by people you know in your school," "How good a job do the people in your school do in coping with emergencies and disruptions," "How informed are the people in your school about innovations that could affect they way they do their work?" Although these questions represent only three of the eight items, with the other five items similar, it is possible that teachers still perceive their school as being effective, regardless of their SES indicator.

The subjective nature of IPOE may be independent of SES because the measure is internal. For example, if you take an upper SES school and a lower SES school and look at the output percentage of students going to college, the higher SES school will have the higher percentage. SES will indicate the perception of the school and how well things are going in the school. Administrators would want to know if they are getting the maximum benefit of the

resource available to their school. In neither case will student achievement give administrators this information. The IPOE taps the effective operation of the school in a way school performance never will. How well the school is being run is not only an internal perspective but one that is subjective as well. The subjective nature focuses on the internal effects of the operation. The lower SES will never have the same rate going to college, but will, perhaps have the same distribution of intelligence.

### Practical Implications

Academic optimism and the organizational climate index were positively related. There is a reciprocal relationship in academic optimism and OCI--when OCI increases, academic optimism levels will increase as well. This is an important contribution to research because it suggests that schools can increase their level of effectiveness by concentrating efforts on one or both climate structures that they can control. If schools feel as if they have no control within their school, then their efforts are perceived as ineffective, as Coleman (1966) believes is the case with schools that indicate low levels of SES.

Academic optimism is a theoretical guide for school leaders in designing effective schools and improving student achievement. In addition, it is an area that school administrators can control. Administrators can take academic optimism or OCI and apply it to their respective schools while endeavoring to build a climate that emulates an effective school. As found in the study, academic optimism is potent in predicting not only student achievement but also overall effectiveness. School officials should consider its usage in helping their respective schools become more efficient in student achievement and overall organization effectiveness.

In Alabama, schools are put on alert or school improvement if adequate gains are not made in student achievement. The results from the current and related studies suggest, however, that schools, especially those on alert, can examine effective climate studies such as academic optimism and implement it in their school to impact student performance. Furthermore, school districts in the state of Alabama can take this study and assist in the development of the continuous improvement plan (CIP), which is required by the state as well. The CIP, which is academic goal-oriented, is intended to look at weak areas of performance of the school and then decide how these academic goals will be achieved. There will surely be areas of concentration that are subject-specific, but climate should be heavily evaluated as well. If students or teachers or both feel that academics are not a priority, then they are less apt to work in meeting specific goals. In essence, the school climate will determine the school's effectiveness, regardless of whether or not the course of study is completely and efficiently covered.

School leaders may also look to collective efficacy to raise student achievement by finding ways to improve teacher efficacy in the building. Job-embedded and specific professional development can lead faculty members toward collaboration and best instructional practices. Such development can foster collegiality, collaboration, and shared responsibility while at the same time, provide teachers the necessary resources in knowledge and the capability to teach more efficiently. Allowing teachers this opportunity will enable them to believe in themselves and one another that they can make a difference in helping students achieve, even the most difficult of students at times. Again, collective efficacy was again confirmed as an important predictor of school performance (Goddard, Hoy, & Hoy, 2004; Hoy, Tarter, & Hoy, 2006).

Understanding the relationship of academic emphasis to student motivation gives another practical implication. For example, a school that does not emphasize the importance of school could be perceived as ineffective by students, parents, and teachers alike, as determined by state accountability measures. Perhaps academics are not viewed as a priority in a school by one or more stakeholders. An example would be if a child is ridiculed for doing well on a test by another student and a teacher nearby does little if anything at all to change the child's behavior. The teacher's inaction would send a message that such behavior is accepted. If this is the case, then the school, with the help of the principal and an established leadership team made up of teachers, can set goals and emphasize the importance of academics for state testing and accountability measures. This practice will direct teachers to plan effectively, work harder, devote more time to lesson preparation, and reinforce a pattern of shared beliefs among the faculty, leading to academic press. This behavior will lead to greater achievements, and then a stronger focus will be placed on academic pursuits which will be the most likely result of collective efficacy working within the building as well.

Undoubtedly, academic emphasis is a tool that administrators can use in helping their schools become effective. Where academic emphasis is present, teachers and students alike are aware that student learning is central to everything else in school. The focus for schooling is clear and it revolves around academics. School leaders will limit disruptions, maximize instructional time, and celebrate student achievement. Building a climate where everyone in the building understands the importance of student achievement will only reinforce academic emphasis while increasing student performance. This study reinforces previous studies, which stated that academic emphasis plays an integral part in predicting student performance (Hoy, Tarter, & Hoy, 2006).

Another practical implication from this study is that school administrators can use the OCI to identify potential problems that can be overcome. Administrators can determine their own leadership style perceived by teachers, look at professional teacher interactions, or the perception of teachers who feel the school may be vulnerable to community influence. Identifying these potential problems can help school officials target areas that need to be addressed. If principals are perceived to be close-minded, or maybe teachers lack mutual respect in competence or commitment toward students, then appropriate steps can be taken to improve the negative perception held by teachers. Finally, if schools are susceptible to vocal parents and community members, then action can be taken there as well that may enable the principal to serve as a buffer between the community and school. Thus, by avoiding action in any of the areas, the school climate may suffer.

#### Recommendations for Future Research

This is the first known study to examine the relationship between academic optimism and OCI to school effectiveness. This study should be extended because it has the ability to contribute important theoretical and empirical findings for future researchers and educational practitioners in designing effective schools and improving student performance.

One can extend this study by adding a measure for previous achievement. SES partially substituted for previous achievement in this study, limiting its connection to Hoy, Tarter, and Hoy (2006). SES is related to student achievement, but it would be a better test of the climate effectiveness hypothesis with more variables controlled. It is postulated that previous achievement will have a greater effect on the organizational climate index; than on academic

optimism. It was evident in this study that as OCI increases, so does academic optimism. The extended study would give a finer view of the relationship.

Skepticism may exist in taking this study and applying it to practice. Reluctance of administrators to use findings in their practice is one example. Not all administrators will use findings or research in general in their own practice. Perhaps, they feel as if the study may work in one part of the state but most likely will not work in their school. Or, they may think that too much time is needed to run the day-to-day operations of the school. Either way, rates of implementation of research are most likely low.

It is postulated that as rates of implementation of research increases, the higher the support increases in the administrative team. Perhaps, larger school districts have the resources to hire additional administrative staff to lessen the load on school principals. As school duties are delegated out among staff, then more time would be used for scholarly writing and research to implement within their school.

A comprehensive theory of academic optimism in the schools is still lacking. Although quantitative research in this field is growing, qualitative theories are seemingly lacking. Qualitative studies can explore and help identify key characteristics of schools that routinely demonstrate high levels of academic optimism that quantitative studies cannot. Comparative studies can be made between schools with low and high levels of academic optimism. Researchers can delve deeper in understanding what these schools look, sound, and feel like. In addition, the research timeline will extend over a greater period of time and not simply a snapshot in one period of time.

Finally, research would benefit from knowing more about the relationship between institutional vulnerability and IPOE, collegial leadership, and academic emphasis. Each variable

had a negative relationship with institutional vulnerability. Schools that are vulnerable to various groups, whether they are parents or community members, are less apt to make decisions that are best for the children.

Parents can add to the school or hinder its operation. The benefit of parental involvement may occur as the school willingly invites parents into the school. The intrusiveness of uninvited parents may frighten the school into immobility. It is postulated that as schools invite parents in, parental involvement will increase, which will likely increase the trust in parents as they enter the school on a regular basis.

### Conclusion

This research developed a better understanding of the relationship between two climate measures of academic optimism and OCI. Not only did the results confirm Hypothesis 1 that these two are positively and significantly correlated but also that academic optimism was a stronger and more significant predictor of student achievement, which was Hypothesis 2. Somewhat surprisingly, it was also a stronger predictor in overall effectiveness, which was not postulated in Hypothesis 3. The evidence provided by this study offers insight to school leaders that designs for school effectiveness such as academic optimism do exist if proper care and concern are taken in not only understanding the designs but also in the implementation of these blueprints for achievement.

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APPENDIX A  
ACADEMIC OPTIMISM SCALE

## SAOS

**Directions:** Please indicate your degree of with each of the statements about your school from **strongly disagree** to **strongly agree**. Your answers are confidential.

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

**Directions:** Please indicate the degree to which the following statements characterize your school from **Rarely Occurs** to **Very Often Occurs**. Your answers are confidential.

	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often
23. The school sets high standards for performance.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
24. Students respect others who get good grades.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
25. Students seek extra work so they can get good grades.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
26. Academic achievement is recognized and acknowledged by the school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
27. Students try hard to improve on previous work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
28. The learning environment is orderly and serious.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
29. The students in this school can achieve the goals that have been set for them.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
30. Teachers in this school believe that their students have the ability to achieve academically.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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APPENDIX B  
ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATE INDEX

## OCI

**Directions:** The following are statements about your school, Please indicate the extent to which each statement characterizes your school from **rarely occurs** to **very frequently occurs**.

	Rarely Occurs	Sometimes Occurs	Often Occurs	Very Frequently Occurs
1. The principal explores all sides of topics and admits that other opinions exist.	1	2	3	4
2. A few vocal parents can change school policy.	1	2	3	4
3. The principal treats all faculty members as his or her equal.	1	2	3	4
4. The learning environment is orderly and serious.	1	2	3	4
5. The principal is friendly and approachable.	1	2	3	4
6. Select citizens groups are influential with the board.	1	2	3	4
7. The school sets high standards for academic performance.	1	2	3	4
8. Teachers help and support each other.	1	2	3	4
9. The principal responds to pressure from parents.	1	2	3	4
10. The principal lets faculty know what is expected of them.	1	2	3	4
11. Students respect others who get good grades.	1	2	3	4
12. Teachers feel pressure from the community.	1	2	3	4
13. The principal maintains definite standards of performance.	1	2	3	4
14. Teachers in this school believe that their students have the ability to achieve academically.	1	2	3	4
15. Students seek extra work so they can get good grades.	1	2	3	4
16. Parents exert pressure to maintain high standards.	1	2	3	4
17. Students try hard to improve on previous work.	1	2	3	4
18. Teachers accomplish their jobs with enthusiasm.	1	2	3	4
19. Academic achievement is recognized and acknowledged by the school.	1	2	3	4
20. The principal puts suggestions made by the faculty into operation.	1	2	3	4
21. Teachers respect the professional competence of their colleagues.	1	2	3	4
22. Parents press for school improvement.	1	2	3	4
23. The interactions between faculty members are cooperative.	1	2	3	4
24. Students in this school can achieve the goals that have been set for them.	1	2	3	4
25. Teachers in this school exercise professional judgment.	1	2	3	4
26. The school is vulnerable to outside pressures.	1	2	3	4
27. The principal is willing to make changes.	1	2	3	4
28. Teachers "go the extra mile" with their students.	1	2	3	4
29. Teachers provide strong social support for colleagues.	1	2	3	4
30. Teachers are committed to their students.	1	2	3	4

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## APPENDIX C

### INDEX OF PERCIEVED ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS (IPOE)

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### *Index of Perceived Organizational Effectiveness (IPOE)*

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1. Of the various things produced by the people you know in your school, how much are they producing?  
a. Low Production      b. Fairly low                      c. Moderate      d. High                      e. Very high production
  
2. How good is the quality of the products or services produced by people you know in your school?  
a. Poor quality    b. Low quality    c. Fair quality    d. Good quality    e. Excellent quality
  
3. Do the people in your school get maximum output from the available resources (money, people, equipment, etc.)? That is, how efficient do they do their work?  
a. Not efficiently    b. Not too efficiently    c. Fairly efficiently    d. Very efficiently                      e. Extremely efficiently
  
4. How good a job is done by the people in your school anticipating problems and preventing them from occurring or minimizing their effects?  
a. A poor job    b. An adequate job                      c. A fair job                      d. A very good job                      e. An excellent job
  
5. How informed are the people in your school about innovations that could affect the way they do their work?  
a. Uninformed                      b. Somewhat informed                      c. Moderately informed                      d. Informed                      e. Very informed
  
6. When changes are made in the methods, routines, or equipment, how quickly do the people in your school accept and adjust to the changes?  
a. Very slowly                      b. Rather slowly                      c. Fairly rapidly                      d. Rapidly                      e. Immediately
  
7. How many of the people in your school readily accept and adjust to the changes?  
a. Many less than half    b. Less than half    c. The majority    d. Many more than half    e. Nearly everyone
  
8. How good a job do the people in your school do in coping with emergencies and disruptions?  
a. A poor job                      b. An adequate job                      c. A fair job                      d. A good job                      e. An excellent job