

Spring 5-2012

The Relationship Between Pupil Control Ideology and Academic Optimism

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PUPIL CONTROL IDEOLOGY
AND ACADEMIC OPTIMISM

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education
Seton Hall University

2012

SETON HALL UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN SERVICES
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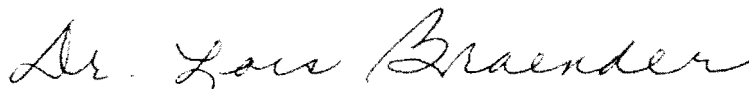
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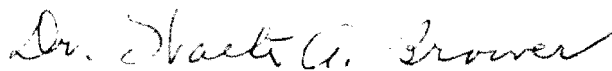
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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the relationship between pupil control ideology and academic optimism. Information was generated through responses to a questionnaire emailed to teachers in two school districts in Central New Jersey. The districts were categorized GH, as determined by the State's district factor grouping.

The research concludes that there is an association between pupil control ideology (PCI) and academic optimism (AO). The data revealed that a lower level of pupil control ideology, or a more humanistic control ideology, tended to correlate with a higher level of academic optimism. A similar inverse relationship with PCI existed with two sub-categories of AO, teacher efficacy and trust.

Teaching on the elementary level tended to be related to a humanistic pupil control ideology and higher self-efficacy, while teaching on the secondary level tended to be related to a more custodial PCI. Higher trust levels and higher emphasis on academic achievement tended to relate to teaching on the secondary level. As academic optimism has been found to affect student achievement, raising the level of awareness and eliciting productive behaviors in students through a better understanding of teacher behaviors may result from the use of the data that this study generated.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thank you to my mentor, Dr. Daniel Gutmore, and to committee members Dr. Elaine Walker, Dr. Lois Braender, and Dr. Walter Brower; my appreciation to Mr. Phil Meara, Dr. Crystal Lovell, and Dr. Edward Forsthoffer III; and a special thank you to the faculty and staff of the Seton Hall University Executive Ed.D. Program and the members of Cohort IX for their inspiration.

DEDICATION

To my loving wife Judy and daughters Lauren, Juliann, and Sarah for their unwavering support over the past two years; to my father and mother, Mickey and Ruth, for a lifetime of love and guidance; to my sister Michele, who would have been very proud; and to my nephew, Paul and my in-laws, Aggie and Ted, for their genuine interest in my endeavors.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The American public is open to school reform, willing to pay more for a good teacher, but selective regarding where school change must occur (Howell, West, & Peterson, 2007). Under the auspices of Education Next and the Program on Educational Policy and Governance (PEPG) at Harvard University, a national survey on such issues was conducted in 2007. The data reported in the survey show that 57% of those surveyed support the renewal of NCLB (No Child Left Behind Act, 2001) with either no change or minimal changes as a means to strengthen the perceived weak accountability of schools regarding public education. It is interesting to note the rise in the percentage of those wanting change regarding teacher replacements in schools not meeting NCLB benchmarks. 67% of the respondents either somewhat or completely support replacing teachers if a public school does not meet state-determined standards five years in a row, as it is the teachers who exercise influence and control over the students. These data imply that teachers are perceived as critical to the improvement process.

The PEPG study cites teacher effectiveness as being important to the respondents, who represented a diverse cross section of the American public. Relationships between who the teacher is, what the teacher believes, and how the teacher views student learning can be crucial for education leaders to understand. Knowing such relationships may aid in identifying what characteristics result in an effective teacher. Studies to examine such topics may be appropriate for educators who strive to hire, mentor, and cultivate strong teachers. Howell, West, and Peterson (2007) emphasize that the overall assessment of

American public schools results in low scores regarding effectiveness. In the survey, 3% of the respondents graded schools an A, 19% scored the schools a B, 55% scored them a C, 20% scored them a D, and 4% scored them an F. The responsibility of improving these grades may rest with the education leaders. Improving this perception through outstanding teaching includes the examination of teachers' beliefs, behaviors, and practices which could lead to a desired optimistic view of student learning.

This PCI-AO study is based on the research of Wayne K. Hoy and that of his colleagues, involving academic optimism. Hoy, Tarter, and Woolfolk Hoy (2006) posit that the properties of collective efficacy, trust, and academic emphasis, in parents and students work together to create a positive learning environment. They call this construct of collective properties academic optimism and theorize that it is linked to school achievement when socioeconomic status of the students is controlled. The research was built upon prior studies, which revealed that the constructs of self-efficacy, trust, and academic emphasis were instrumental in the development of student achievement. The theory that these concepts work together to form academic optimism and that it is related to student achievement was tested by Hoy and his colleagues. They found that a significant relationship between the constructs did exist and that as collective academic optimism increased, student achievement tended to increase (Hoy et al., 2006). The optimistic view of learning made a difference in student achievement outcomes.

Subsequently, Beard, Hoy, and Hoy (2009) theorized, tested, and confirmed that the construct of academic optimism existed on the elementary level in individual teachers, and they also connected the construct to student achievement. Fahy, Wu, and Hoy (2010) completed a similar study and confirmed that the construct of individual

academic optimism existed on the secondary level as well. Earlier academic optimism studies considered this construct collectively on a school basis and not among individual teachers. As academic optimism was confirmed on the individual level, the researchers concluded that relationships to student achievement, as determined through the collective academic optimism studies, applied to individual academic optimism.

As the individual academic optimism of a teacher is a single latent construct reflected in an individual's psychological state (Beard et al., 2009), it spawned the investigation in this PCI-AO study to determine other psychological constructs to which individual academic optimism may be related. The primary research question of this PCI-AO study took root when consideration was given to how a teacher's beliefs and behaviors may promote or inhibit academic optimism on the individual level. An investigation began of these beliefs and behaviors as they related to the academic optimism of the individual teacher, and from this investigation a desire arose to know how pupil control ideology may relate to it. This is the basic premise of this PCI-AO study. The findings of the prior academic optimism studies will be used to interpret the outcomes generated from this PCI-AO study as they relate to meaningful relationships and student achievement.

One of the theoretical concepts on which individual academic optimism is built is that an optimistic view of learning is conducive to higher student achievement. Carver and Scheier (2002) describe optimism as a positive expectation for the future, and state that optimists are people who expect to have positive outcomes even when a situation is difficult. Hoy found optimism to be beneficial to student learning. His study of individual academic optimism brings together personal and environmental factors that

relate to academic optimism and student achievement (Beard, Hoy, and Woolfolk Hoy, 2009). Researchers attempting to find what helps rather than hinders academic optimism would be promoting elements of an enabling school structures that guide learning in a positive manner rather than punitively (Hoy and Miskel, 2005).

Strengthening the research regarding relationships that affect student learning may help educators strengthen schools. Should there be continued erosion of public confidence in public education regarding the successful preparation of students for effective citizenship, employment, innovation, and global competitiveness, the public schools may yield to the growing enrollments in less traditional models of education, such as charter schools. There are over 5,000 charter schools in the United States and the number continues to grow as evidenced by the 419 charter schools that opened in the 2009-2010 school year (The Center for Educational Reform, 2010). Although charter schools are also being scrutinized to ensure effectiveness, they have become an acceptable option for those Americans who are dissatisfied with traditional public education. Nonetheless, teacher behaviors should convey the expectation that all students can and will achieve skill mastery regardless of the setting in which the teacher is teaching (Garrison and Holifield, 2005).

Why this is important is explained through long standing educational theory. Dewey (1916) expressed that student development needs to be nurtured by a dynamic understanding of life. Remote goals should not be favored over giving students the tools to best select responses to problems. Teachers must be willing participants in this process through a thorough investigation of their own beliefs and attitudes. An argument may be made that the disposition of teachers regarding how they control students shows

up in other constructs such as in the teacher's self-efficacy, the trust the teacher has in students and parents, and the teacher's emphasis on academic achievement.

Beliefs and behaviors help form academic optimism. A teacher's psychological state, the teacher's beliefs, and the engagement of the learners all come together to affect achievement, but continued work that goes beyond variables such as socioeconomic factors could be undertaken to determine what other constructs may be related to academic optimism to improve our schools (Hoy et al., 2006). Research should be continued in the area of personal influences on academic optimism, including an examination of individual and collective variables that impact academic optimism. In addition, individual tendencies of teachers should be considered to provide, "useful pictures of practice for teachers and administrators" (Beard et al., 2009, p. 23).

Public school education leaders and education researchers can identify and investigate reasons why the public school system as a whole is not well perceived and can take remedial action. This study focuses on teachers as part of the investigation to improve schools. Based on data gained through such investigations, leadership is crucial to finding the components of teaching where change needs to take place and for what reasons. The principal, to implement the change process, can try to build the foundation for leading and innovating. The education leader can employ professional development strategies. Professional development and mentoring can also be a positive exercise to foster change. It is through mentoring that an education leader may gently apply skills to bring about desired outcomes, as mentors and their protégés tend to respond favorably to the mentoring process (Halloway, 2001). Mentoring demonstrates to stakeholders that the leader is willing to collaborate and be an integral part of a cooperative dynamic. This

instills confidence and trust into the leader-follower relationship for change to be created together.

Gregory and Cornell (2009) examined school climate through a survey of ninth graders. They found that behavioral control and the respect for autonomy may be blended to give students the appropriate amount of structure and support to improve schools. Structure is represented by the degree to which school authorities supervise the students and enforce the rules. School support is evidenced in positive student-teacher relationships, helping students with non-academic problems, and offering solutions. The survey of students also indicated that the adult-adolescent interactions pose challenges to consistency in communication because students may have several teachers each day and the control ideology of each may differ. Some teachers may be reactive and punitive, and some may be prevention-oriented and less punitive. Although the learning styles of each student may lead the student to be more successful in either a structured environment or a supportive environment, it would be important for an administrator to facilitate the changes that he or she feels is the best for the school based on the known outcomes of the relationship between pupil control ideology and academic optimism.

Studies from the early 1970s examine how pupil control affects measured behaviors of students in the classroom (Goldenberg, 1971). Lester Oppenlander (1970) discussed in his study that a teacher can influence the climate within the class to stimulate the students' learning by exercising varying levels of control. The concept of pupil control ideology is conceptualized along a continuum from humanistic to custodial. It was found that there was a relationship between personality and teacher pupil control ideology and that pupil control ideology affected discipline referrals, student alienation,

and student absenteeism (Willower, Eidell, & Hoy, 1973). Furthermore, the research of Lunenburg (1990) stated that certain custodial pupil control ideologies lead to distrust of pupils, and it is within this study that the possibility of a relationship between pupil control ideology and individual academic optimism emerged.

Another early theorist in the area of how certain behaviors can be controlled or modified is B.F. Skinner. His work regarding behavior modification was reviewed due to its relationship to teachers exercising influence over students' behavior in class. The manner in which the teacher decides to control behavior is reflected in the teacher's belief of how he or she wishes to elicit desired behaviors of students. Skinner (1963) stated that teaching is the process of accelerating learning. In this process, one may experience how the reinforcement of the desired behaviors to accomplish the goal of accelerating the learning is implemented. If there is strict application of positive reinforcements which create desired actions or the application of negative responses to eliminate undesired actions, the method of delivery of both these strategies of behavior modification can be considered to help understand the teacher who is responsible for such delivery of actions. The beliefs, the predisposition, and the actions of the teacher are reflected in the teacher's PCI, and this can be measured to aid in understanding the relationship between pupil control ideology and academic optimism.

How Skinner's theories of reinforcing behaviors to generate other behaviors can be best implemented in a classroom setting is investigated in this study of PCI and AO. Understanding if the reinforcement of a behavior may be better delivered by a teacher with a custodial ideology or a humanistic ideology can be investigated by studying the construct of academic optimism and the types of student control that may relate to it. As

leaders need to help teachers implement strategies that enhance learning, the teacher and the leader need to understand theories of human behaviors and how these theories can be applied to learning. With a lack of such insight, there could be mentoring and professional development that steers the teacher toward a teaching pedagogy that is neither effective for those they are teaching, nor based on any theoretical framework. Skinner provides this additional theoretical lens that may help in the understanding of the interactions between students and teachers.

Teachers control conditions under which students learn, usually by simulating the setting in which they will be performed. The creation of the conditions, the control over the conditions, and knowing when to apply reinforcement and when not to apply reinforcement is addressed through this study. When the variable of PCI is added to the demographic variables, a clearer picture of relationships may be seen and the connection to the most effective method of application of the reinforcement as a predictor of academic optimism may emerge.

The conceptual framework and the thesis for this PCI-AO study were solidified after reviewing several theories and then choosing to bridge Hoy's work, which states that an optimistic view of learning must be present for effective learning, with Lunenburg's study, which indicates that overtly controlling behaviors may break down trust and optimism. The beliefs and dispositions of teachers can be further studied to better understand how a leader can cultivate desired qualities in a teacher who is trusting of students and parents, believes that the students can and will learn, and emphasizes high academic achievement. This could help enhance perceptions of our schools, increase stakeholder confidence in teachers and ultimately enhance student learning. Through

personal contact with Wayne K. Hoy in August 2010 to discuss the possible connections of pupil control ideology (PCI) to academic optimism (AO), Dr. Hoy expressed that a study to determine if there tends to be a relationship between pupil control ideology and academic optimism would benefit the body of knowledge in this area.

Statement of the Problem

Teachers and administrators may be educating students without the benefit of investigating the teachers' pupil control ideology in the context of how this piece of academic life impacts the formation of academic optimism. If administrators do not know the relationship between the pupil control ideology and the academic optimism of teachers, they may not be able to conduct the necessary interventions with teachers to help develop pupil control ideologies that benefit the students. A teacher's lack of awareness of this relationship may impede the development of important positive constructs found within academic optimism, while possibly cultivating the control ideologies not suited for the students they teach. Without this knowledge, a gap of what a teacher believes, what the teacher practices, and what the educational leader can do about it may exist.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study is to enhance student learning by understanding how a teacher's attitude about controlling students can be related to the teacher's trust of parents and students, the efficacy of the teacher in fostering student learning, and the teacher's emphasis on student achievement. As individual teacher academic optimism is grounded in social, cognitive, and self-efficacy theories and as it has been found to relate to student achievement (Beard, Hoy, & Woolfolk Hoy, 2009), the determination of its relationship

to another social construct, pupil control ideology, could generate insight into the development of academic optimism.

This study will investigate the relationship between teacher pupil control ideology and teacher academic optimism. Also, understanding how the teacher's experience, grade level taught, highest degree attained, and gender affect this relationship may prove to be important. These variables can guide an administrator's decisions of where a teacher is placed, how strongly leaders should facilitate teachers in the earning of advanced degrees, and in hiring strategies.

Research Questions

1. What is the relationship between pupil control ideology and academic optimism?
2. What is the relationship between pupil control ideology and each of the three constructs that comprise academic optimism: teacher self-efficacy, trust, and academic emphasis?
3. Which demographic variables, when measured in linear combination with the variable of pupil control ideology, are predictors of academic optimism?
4. Which demographic variables, when measured in linear combination with the variable of pupil control ideology, are predictors of the three constructs that comprise academic optimism: teacher self-efficacy, trust, and academic emphasis?
5. What relationships exist among demographic variables and pupil control ideology, academic optimism, self-efficacy, trust, and academic emphasis

when these continuous variables are transformed dichotomously into high and low categories.

Null Hypotheses

1. There is no statistically significant relationship between pupil control ideology and academic optimism.
2. There is no statistically significant difference between teacher pupil control ideology and any of the three constructs that comprise academic optimism, which are teacher self-efficacy, trust, and academic emphasis.
3. There are no statistically significant predictors of academic optimism among the demographic variables when measured in linear combination with the variable of pupil control ideology.
4. There are no statistically significant predictors of the three constructs that comprise academic optimism among the demographic variables when measured in linear combination with the variable of pupil control ideology.
5. There are no statistically significant relationships between demographic variables and pupil control ideology, academic optimism, self-efficacy, trust, and academic emphasis when transformed dichotomously into high and low categories.

Significance

This study provides insights about the relationship between what a teacher believes regarding student control and that teacher's measured academic optimism for student learning, as academic optimism has been found to influence student achievement, as explained in a class presentation by Wayne K. Hoy on April 17, 2010, at Seton Hall

University. The development of trust, self-efficacy, and emphasis on academics may occur regardless of the type of teacher attitude toward the control of the students, but it may be a worthy endeavor to determine if the attitude that drives the control of the students and the resulting structure of the classroom has an effect on academic optimism.

Festinger (1957) proposed and examined the Theory of Cognitive Dissonance, explained as the consistency of what one believes reflected in what one does, even when there is knowledge that the doing is not the right thing to do. Festinger expressed that change of belief can occur, but it must be done without coercion and with a knowledgeable educational leader who can facilitate this change. An informed education leader may be able to work with a teacher's cognitive dissonance in the area of pupil control ideology to promote academic optimism and positive learning outcomes.

This inspired a need for the examination of dispositions, which is supported by the New Jersey Professional Standards for Teachers and School Leaders adopted in December 2003. These standards emanated from work completed by the State Action for Educational Leadership Project (SAELP) Consortium, a New Jersey State advisory group. The standards were based on the national standards established by the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC). They resulted from the work generated by the Council of Chief State School Officers. The standards emphasize the role of quality teaching and school improvement being promoted by school leaders (New Jersey Department of Education, 2004).

Standard One is important to the study of teacher behaviors as it establishes that school leaders must create environments for all students to learn. There is also a sub-section in Standard One devoted specifically to dispositions. This sub-section provides

the framework for a leader to guide staff to examine assumptions and beliefs enroute to student learning and improvement. In this dissertation, this concept will be supported through an investigation of teacher dispositions and how they affect learning. Thornton's work will prove to be prominent in this area. Thornton (2006) describes dispositions as habits and behaviors, such as those that may arise from pupil control ideologies. How they are demonstrated in classes, and how they impact on learning, could benefit education leaders and teachers. What will specifically be tested in this study is the relationship between pupil control ideology and academic optimism. Certain teacher behaviors, attitudes, and practices regarding pupil control may be reflected in a teacher's level of academic optimism.

Broad constructs such as teacher beliefs are difficult to measure. Therefore, narrowing the scope and choosing a construct that impacts students directly, such as a teacher's pupil control ideology, and measuring that one construct narrows the focus on one segment of a teacher's belief. Studying a teacher's pupil control ideology in relation to the three components of academic optimism will allow educational leaders to foster the ideology that promotes high academic optimism, should one type be found to be more conducive to academic optimism than the other. When promoting sound teacher beliefs and practices that translate to student achievement, knowing what type of pupil control ideology relates to high academic optimism would be beneficial to educational leaders in decisions regarding how best to apply rules and establish a culture and climate that leads to student learning.

A year-end analysis of data relating to discipline referrals was the basis of a study conducted by Nichols, Ludwin, and Iadicola (1999). They found that the rates of student

referrals are influenced by teacher personality and teacher tolerance for misbehavior. They also state in their research that some subjects need a more structured approach to presenting the material. A structured approach would be more conducive to a custodial ideology. It may be interesting to determine if this has any bearing on the development of a higher degree of academic optimism or has a more significant relationship to the development of a lower level of academic optimism.

Shore (2003) states that elements of pupil control that promote learning include monitoring students' understanding, showing patience, encouraging students when they are confused, increasing wait time, and reinforcing the material with outward gestures and expressions. These suggestions by Shore are consistent with the humanistic approach to pupil control. In an elementary classroom, there may be a need to be more humanistic than in a secondary school, as developmental immaturity may not allow the elementary students to respond as well as a student on the secondary level, who may respond more readily to a custodial pupil control ideology.

Spaulding (1983) expresses that teachers must learn to match their own expectations and responses to the needs of the students. The quest to determine what type of control ideology may promote improvement of student academic achievement would be beneficial to the body of work in this area, expanding teacher perceptions of students' needs. Classroom teachers regularly present aspects of their intellect, emotions, and beliefs to their students. The students respond to these stimuli from the teachers and the teachers then respond to the students. Throughout this process, ideologies are reflected in the teachers' behavior. It is the ideology regarding pupil control that will be studied to determine if it relates to the development of teacher academic optimism.

Policy can facilitate desired teacher standards and expectations of student behavior. Codes of conduct can be developed that reflect the type of pupil control ideology that promotes high academic optimism. This study will explore pupil control ideologies in elementary settings and secondary settings that can expand the study of academic optimism. Effective strategies may be developed to promote a better understanding of student needs on each level, elementary and secondary.

Self-efficacy, trust, and emphasis on achievement are conducive to Dewey's vision of learning. A teacher with a custodial pupil control ideology may truly believe in Dewey's vision but may continue to emphasize goals and objectives in a strict environment chosen over an environment that emphasizes the learner. Conversely, a lax humanistic pupil control ideology may be devoid of the elements of structure that lead to a student's discovery of learning. This type of teacher too may believe that he or she is doing something against his or her belief but keeps doing it. Leaders can sway this cognitive dissonance and create an awareness to help the teacher exhibit classroom controls that are more effective, as discovered through the research review.

Limitations

Limitations of this study include the measurement of the influence of pupil control ideology on academic optimism in sample schools with similar middle class characteristics. The schools chosen for this study are suburban schools of the GH District Factor Group (New Jersey Department of Education, 2004). Demographic categories of the community that define the grouping include occupational status, education levels, income, poverty rates, and unemployment rates. The responses to survey questions measured in this study are from teachers who have students who, on average, are

proficient on state testing at rates equal to New Jersey state mean scores or slightly higher. The districts included in this study also have student attendance rates slightly higher than the state average.

As New Jersey financial aid to school districts is based on a formula inclusive of property value and personal income, this also limits the scope of the study, as these districts receive most of their financial resources not from the state, but from local tax dollars, possibly generating high community involvement in the governance of the district, as compared to districts in lower district factor groupings. Demographic factors limiting this study also include per-pupil spending, which approximates the state average. Approximately 80% of the students are college bound, and approximately half of the teachers have advanced degrees. The attitudes, beliefs, and practices of teachers could vary if the demographics of the sample districts were different. The implications of further study in a district with a contrasting district factor grouping, such as in an urban context, are discussed in Chapter IV.

Delimitations

To clarify the participants in the study, the study is comprised of teachers providing instruction in Grades kindergarten to Grade 5, who are considered to be on the elementary level, and teachers providing instruction in Grades 6 to 12, who are considered to be on the secondary level. This will be a cross-sectional field study of a one-time measurement of teacher self-reported beliefs and perceptions. It is understood that beliefs and attitudes may change over time; therefore, repeat measurements, perhaps after interventions and/or professional development, would be beneficial to the body of work in this area and worthy of future investigation.

Because teachers will be reporting their beliefs on a survey, empirical data that shows that perceptions are significantly related to reality are helpful to this study. Such information can be found in the Clunies-Ross, Little, and Kienhaur (2008) study, in which the researchers report that perceptions are indicators of reality. Their findings are that teachers' self-reports accurately reflect actual practice. They measured management behaviors and stress levels in teachers and reported significant positive correlation between perceptions and actual observed teacher behaviors. Therefore, although perceived beliefs, actions, and attitudes are being surveyed in this study, the Clunies-Ross study gives additional validity to the data generated from the PCI and AO surveys. The philosophy of each teacher is not being measured except in the focus of attitudes regarding pupil control and the self-perception of academic optimism. For example, measuring attitudes toward gifted students or those with special needs would be interesting, but the scope of the study will not be that broad.

Definitions of Terms

Academic Optimism – Teacher efficacy, trust, and academic emphasis, creating a force that has been found to have a significant effect on student learning. It emerges from research on positive psychology and optimism.

Teacher Self-efficacy – A teacher's belief that what the teacher sets out to do with the students can actually be done and that the students the teacher is teaching can achieve.

Trust – An affective response. It is a feeling or a belief that a person will act in another's best interests while being vulnerable to the other (Hoy et al., 2006).

Academic Emphasis (AO) – A teacher focus. It is the push for particular behaviors resulting in increased rigor and student learning.

Pupil Control Ideology (PCI) – Beliefs and attitudes regarding classroom discipline and control of students ranging from humanistic to custodial.

Custodial Ideology – An autocratic view of pupil control which is rigid, structured, and controlling.

Humanistic Ideology – A democratic view of pupil control which is student-centered and flexible.

District Factor Grouping (DFG) – Categories calculated and updated every ten years for purposes of comparing students' performance on statewide testing. The DFG is based on six variables that are closely related to Socio-Economic Status (SES). Based on the DFG Report of the NJDOE (New Jersey Department of Education, 2004) the variables are the percentage of adults with no high school diploma, percentage of adults with some college education, occupational status, unemployment rate, percentage of individuals in poverty, and median family income.

Teacher – A school district staff member holding valid New Jersey certification who is employed to teach and/or provide a direct educational service to students and who provides instruction to the students at least part of the time.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The review of the literature establishes a conceptual, logical, and theoretical basis for the study. The research is divided into sub-headings relating to the constructs investigated. Theories and outcomes included in this review may help create a rationale leading to an understanding that there may be a relationship between pupil control ideology and academic optimism. Researching the educational impact of teacher beliefs, the research on which academic optimism is based, understanding the individual components of academic optimism, and studying how pupil control ideology is manifested in the classroom are included in the literature review. The literature review concludes with a path model of the study.

Academic Optimism

Academic optimism is the foundation upon which this study rests. Had there not been the research combining the three complex constructs of trust, efficacy, and academic press leading to the idea of academic optimism, this study would not be possible. The goal of applying this information to educating students is to lead the students to skill mastery and success. Academic optimism is a relatively new idea, as much of the work of Wayne K. Hoy and his colleagues have been done in the last two decades, generating interest and facilitating a desire to add to the body of research.

Although Hoy and his colleagues have executed exhaustive work in identifying teacher traits that facilitate student achievement when controlling for socio-economic status, the beliefs of teachers and the ideologies they possess regarding the control of students may also relate to this concept. If AO is of value to education leaders, then

knowing what beliefs help facilitate it may be of further value. From a historical perspective, Dewey's broad views of understanding the nature of the learner, Festinger's contribution of his theories of cognitive dissonance, and Bandura's work on self-efficacy are among the theories that produced the useful conceptual background that helps Hoy's ideas take root. Hoy does not enter into the complexity of understanding human behaviors without prior establishment of past research and a strong conceptual framework for his studies. An intermediate objective of this PCI-AO study is to help move a useful vocabulary forward of terms such as academic optimism and pupil control ideology to add to the discourse at faculty meetings, during evaluations, and in the classrooms that prepare future educators. This will keep the idea a freshly embedded concept among educators.

Where a teacher falls on the spectrum of pupil control, from humanistic to custodial, may provide a lens to understanding the teacher's levels of trust, efficacy, and academic emphasis, which, when combined, defines academic optimism. Academic emphasis is a quest for academic excellence and achievement (Hoy et al., 2006). It was found that academic emphasis is a critical variable when explaining achievement in a school. This held true in elementary, middle, and high school. Another part of Hoy's academic optimism is teacher efficacy, which is the belief that a task or responsibility can be executed effectively. This was also found to have an influence on how students learn in schools both collectively and, in later studies, found to be true individually as well (Beard et al., 2010). The importance of this component of academic optimism relates significantly to the understanding that the press toward academic achievement cannot happen without strong teacher efficacy. Hoy then studied and blended his third concept

into academic optimism, which was trust in parents and students. He describes trust as having facets of benevolence, reliability, competence, honesty, and openness. He also states that if students, teachers, and parents have common learning goals, then trust will emerge, improving teaching and learning. Adding optimism, he united efficacy, trust, and academic emphasis to create the concept of academic optimism; and he then hypothesized that student achievement is a function of academic optimism. When he tested his AO hypothesis, it was found that “the properties of academic emphasis, collective efficacy, and faculty trust in students and parents work together in a unifying fashion to form a general latent construct called academic optimism.” (Hoy et al., 2006, p. 22).

Teacher Efficacy

Social cognitive research has found that self-efficacy influences goal commitment, motivation, the ability to handle adversity, and the quality of analytic thinking (Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara, & Pastorelli, 1996). Bandura’s work regarding self-efficacy allows educators to more fully understand its magnitude and importance. He expresses the link between the behaviors of a person who demonstrates self-efficacy and how these behaviors generate desired academic outcomes. He analyzes this process through the phases of accomplishment, experience, persuasion, and arousal (Bandura, 1977). A teacher, when sustaining the belief that the students can learn, will model the beliefs through these four phases and will break down the student defenses that may build up toward the learning. An awareness of the benefits of a strong self-efficacy could motivate the teacher independently of how skilled the teacher is. As self-efficacy is a belief in one’s capabilities to execute a course of action to produce an end goal, without it

a teacher would perhaps be devoid of the confidence to lead a classroom. The belief that classroom goals can be attained may be a constructive first step in educating students. Bandura suggests that educators should not hinder or impede their own progress by having low levels of self-efficacy. He expresses self-efficacy as a vastly important incentive for the teachers. He writes that people who do not believe that they can produce desired effects by their actions have little incentive to act. (Bandura et al., 1996). This is a critical piece of academic optimism. Educators need to believe that their actions can produce desired effects.

Most educators have planning time and adequate breaks embedded into their daily schedules to help them prepare and strategize to heighten their effectiveness in the classroom. This preparation may help them raise their self-efficacy levels and better execute classroom management strategies. This may be a contributing variable that leads researchers to more fully understand why some teachers are energetic and motivated while others seem to be floundering with a weak self-concept, resulting in misbehaving students. High levels of teacher efficacy in handling student misbehavior help prevent emotional exhaustion (Tsouloupas, Carson, Matthews, Grawitch, & Barber, 2010). A stressed and emotionally exhausted teacher is not a teacher showing patience and understanding.

A thorough understanding of teacher efficacy would help education leaders develop skills and attitudes among staff that may lead to higher levels of academic optimism. Teachers' feelings about how their classes should be managed and actually carrying out that management plan successfully may lead to teacher self-efficacy. This supports the common practice of teachers writing lesson plans that are well constructed

with the goal of student achievement as the focal point. A teacher modeling high self-efficacy in demeanor and action may be able to help build student confidence and an emotionally stable atmosphere, not one of self-doubt and unreliable delivery of instruction. Bringing together the conceptual knowledge of self-efficacy, motivation, confidence, and effective classroom management may cause an education leader to more deeply investigate what type of teacher he or she may want to hire.

Perhaps one may conclude that a more positive self-concept may be present in teachers with a predominantly custodial PCI. In contrast to this reasonable assumption, Denig (1996) found that humanistic teachers have a more positive self-concept and have less teacher burnout. He stated that custodial teachers may be driven by middle class mentality and religious beliefs. The ensuing frustration when dealing with stakeholders who do not share or understand their core values can lead to emotional exhaustion, although these teachers feel that this is the best route for getting results in a sound pupil control environment. A combination of both ideologies may prove to be beneficial to teaching and learning.

Value sets of religious beliefs are variables consistently drawn into the discussion of beliefs and the interactions among people. If there is a lack of congruency between the beliefs of the teacher and the students, there could be a barrier to tolerant dialogue due to the strength of beliefs solidified for thousands of years in organized religion. This should not be discounted when researchers attempt to build and measure relationships that help explain behavior and outcomes. In addition to understanding something as personal as religious beliefs, teachers may try to attain as much knowledge about the students, as may be reasonable in the teacher-student relationship. Teachers should know the students

they are teaching well and how the students can achieve success. If the teacher applies the research of Howard Gardner's (2005) multiple intelligences, the development of teacher efficacy could more comprehensively include the nature of the learner. The teacher, being aware of how each child can realize the talents each possesses and the mastery within each, can use this awareness to develop a belief that the students can learn and will learn. The teacher will know how the students specifically and individually learn best.

Gardner seeks to understand how the child's mind works in seeking mastery of language and the arts to understand how people deal with external symbols. He looks at qualitative stages of development rather than intelligence tests and identifies the strengths within each individual. Most self-efficacy research may not relate self-efficacy concepts with Gardner's research, but it may be considered that the self-efficacy of the teacher may be more comprehensively developed if the teacher understands the students in both a broad and detailed sense. This could generate an ability within the teacher to feel that he or she knows the students so well that the teacher also knows how best each student learns. Higher teacher self-efficacy may be a positive result of this knowledge.

Teachers should apply these constructs to those they teach. Educational administrators, if they understand these concepts, can promote the idea that all students can learn regardless of what the standardized test results are. They should know what type of PCI promotes this. This is a process that can transfer from the leader to the teacher and then to the success of the student. It could be manifested in the teacher's efficacy and strengthen the development of academic optimism. This idea connects with pupil control ideology through identifying relationships among beliefs, actions, and

outcomes. These beliefs can be exhibited in strict pupil control to nurture the logical mathematical thinkers or in humanistic pupil control that would nurture bodily-kinesthetic intelligence, which is the capacity to solve problems using the whole or part of the body.

A fresh perspective on self-efficacy can develop with knowledge of interpersonal intelligence. Gardner helps the body of research on this topic by classifying how students think and learn, how educators can best relate to students, and how the exploration of one's emotional makeup may generate self-efficacy. Teachers must be aware of interpersonal intelligences and how personalities interrelate and interact. Teachers must also understand themselves and know their own strengths, weaknesses, desires, and fears. Gardner states, "Access to one's emotional life is important for intrapersonal intelligence" (Gardner, 2005, p. 8). These concepts, coupled with a study done by Rosenfeld and Rosenfeld regarding teacher effectiveness (2008), strengthen the theoretical assertion that awareness of pupil control ideology and the relationship it has with academic optimism is important to investigate. Getting teachers to actually investigate their inner emotional makeup may not be easy, but the emphasis on this exploration at faculty meetings, workshops, and in professional learning communities would be a good start.

Trust

In their Cognitive Theory of Trust, Claire Hill and Erin O'Hara (2005) connect internal predispositions and external cues to explain the positive and negative effects of trust. They state that within individuals, a trusting attitude can be developed through social and religious norms, as trust is both a cognitive and a subconscious function and a

building block of healthy organizations. They explain that trust allows humans to be vulnerable to others despite risks inherent in the process. This may be explained more clearly in the student-teacher relationship. Students and teachers may try to predict behaviors and responses of one another based on their biases of past experiences, the norms of their upbringing, and the teachings of their religion. These predictions are prone to error, and there may be too much reliance on the inner development of how one views trust and less openness to the environmental cues that may change the internal predispositions. Should teachers not be open to such cues, there may not be the adaptability to change how they exercise control in a class and teach the students. Improvement may be stifled.

Those who are too trusting may be disappointed that they did not accurately understand a situation. A new teacher, for example, may trust that the students may act appropriately when she turns her back to them, only to find that students seize the opportunity to misbehave. Teachers who trust too little may lack meaningful relationships with the students because of the belief that the students cannot be trusted with a more personal relationship with the teacher. This may impede learning and may lead a researcher to believe that a completely humanistic control ideology may be naïve and unrealistic.

Hill and O'Hara conclude that assessing trust relationships through several contexts will lead to a reasonable level of trust, allowing emotional benefits to emerge. Taking the time to obtain information about the students and their interests and processing the information carefully may optimize trusting relationships to break down barriers to learning. The teachers being aware of their experiences regarding popular

culture and having an awareness of how popular culture is experienced by each student may keep the learning diverse and current. Developing a healthy learning environment should celebrate the array of interests important to all students in the class. This results in rich class discussions and the development of trust between the teacher and the students (Hong Xu, 2002). A teacher may be predisposed to use certain strategies while teaching and may miss the opportunity to find out what is purposeful and meaningful to the students.

Collective cooperation is important to this dynamic. The body of knowledge regarding trust leads to the positive aspects of trustworthy people interacting, but the elements of such relationships need to be understood in the classroom. If a handshake can hold the same weight as a complex document in business, it may be beneficial for educators to find the equivalent of this business handshake between students, teachers, parents, and administrators. It could develop in the form of positive relationship building and knowing the students well. Teachers who report that relationship-building is important for getting students to cooperate in classrooms are more likely to have students who perceive them as trusted educators. This will allow the students to interpret ambiguous teacher cues in a more positive and constructive manner (Gregory & Ripski, 2008). A teacher should not create barriers to learning with a completely custodial control ideology, nor pre-judge the students as the teacher interprets and responds to student behaviors.

Understanding the phenomenon of trust may lead educators to yearn for more data in the future concerning how trust may help student achievement and in what type of teacher beliefs trust may best emerge. Trust is needed when humans interact and depend

on one another to reach a goal. Trust that the infrastructure of a one-hundred-year-old school won't fail and cause harm to its occupants, trust that the roads and traffic lights allow teachers and students to arrive at their school destinations safely, trust that a competent teacher has been hired who can skillfully teach the students, and trust that interactions nurtured in the class will develop a healthy, mutually trustworthy partnership between teachers and students are all examples of the omnipresent need for trust.

As a component of academic optimism, developing a trusting relationship remains a positive predictor in improving academic achievement in schools. The elements of pupil control ideology that reflect trust may be explored. Schools and classrooms should be transformed into environments of trust as a significant tool for improving academic achievement (Goddard, Tschannen-Moran, & Hoy, 2001). A trusting environment can lead to an atmosphere of respect, tolerance, and cooperation. Teachers should consciously define their role of loyalty and trust and understand the human ties that develop in a classroom. There can be long-term consequences of an unfruitful and unsuccessful academic experience. Thornton (2006) found that teachers who help students, talk to them more often, and let them collaborate also develop a trusting relationship in the classroom. As technology becomes more pervasive in schools, the ability to collaborate will become increasingly more important as a portal to learning.

The students in the study reported that some teachers were more effective in getting students to think and investigate the material further, and they felt motivated by the trusting relationship. Although Thornton does not refer to the continuum of teacher attitudes toward students as pupil control ideologies, she does express complementary

terms of responsive teacher orientation and technical orientation. The responsive orientation closely resembles humanistic ideology and the technical closely resembles the custodial ideology. She states that there needs to be the quest for further research in the area of teacher dispositions to find those that are most effective for the learners in developing trust. This study aims to address this need.

Emphasis on Student Achievement

As mentioned in Chapter I of this study, knowledge about effective teachers is useful in education. The national survey conducted by the Program on Educational Policy and Governance (PEPG) at Harvard University in 2007 and the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 both emphasize the importance of highly qualified teachers presenting a rigorous curriculum based on established core standards. Going back two decades to the 1980's, the United States Department of Education generated the report *A Nation at Risk*, which jolted the complacency of American educators by stating that the country was being eroded into mediocrity (United States Department of Education, 1983).

The U.S. Department of Education expressed the belief that public education was not keeping up with foreign competition, not addressing social problems, not graduating minority students at an acceptable rate, and that too many people in education were promoting minimum standards and low expectations. Teachers who were effective agents in the promotion of rigor, high standards, and higher ordered thinking skills that enabled students to solve complex problems and reach the highest levels of intellectual mastery were held in high regard and were sought out as critical to the reform that was imminent. Today, the high benchmarks of NCLB may be more efficiently reached with a

teacher who keeps academic emphasis as a cornerstone of his or her classroom experience. This academic press, being the third piece of academic optimism, has been found, as per the aforementioned studies and reports, to be elusive to some teachers; but for those who make it their priority, it positively affects the education of students.

Twenty-five years after the *Nation at Risk* report, the U.S. Department of Education published a follow-up report called *A Nation Accountable* (2008). This report called into question teacher preparation programs and demonstrated the need that they must be strengthened to develop teacher subject knowledge as *A Nation at Risk* recommended. The *Nation Accountable* study acknowledged that inroads had been made in recruiting high achieving professionals. This was made possible through alternative paths to getting teacher certification after *A Nation at Risk* was published, but the report suggests that there remains a dearth of truly effective educators. Still needed are teachers who emphasize achievement to the levels necessary to address the perils of education outlined in *A Nation at Risk*. Such reports address the need for less creativity and more work on core standards that are being tested. If this were the only goal of education, a fully custodial ideology might be best, but schools do not only emphasize testing.

The practical needs of educator quality, outstanding instruction, and outstanding teacher preparation may be complemented by this PCI-AO study generating ideas regarding the dispositions that are present in effective teachers. A research question of this study pertains to the level of pupil control ideology that best relates to the development of each component of academic optimism, specifically in teacher academic emphasis. Education leaders should understand how emphasis on student achievement is manifested in school settings.

Emphasis on student achievement reflects advocacy for children and their learning. It may be accomplished through thorough planning and order, but not at the expense of taking the focus away from the individual needs of the learner (Dewey, J. & Dewey, E., 1965). Emphasis on student achievement is a component of academic optimism that a custodial pupil control ideology may promote by constructing a framework and establishing an end result of learning goals, but it may fail to put the focus on the student. A custodial ideology is more teacher-centered, with an emphasis on the right answers. A humanistic ideology is parallel to a learner-centered paradigm in which the instructor's role is more of a facilitator. A teacher has a strong bearing on how students will learn and in what type of classroom environment. The teacher's beliefs may be more conducive to one ideology over another. Rath (2001) indicates that when trying to raise achievement levels while also considering changing teacher beliefs, it may be beneficial to consider, as educational leaders, that changing beliefs is too strong a concept when dealing with teacher attitudes. He suggests attempting to change certain dispositions instead. He feels that finding what is right in a teacher and emphasizing the dispositions would be beneficial to student learning.

Dispositions are tendencies, values, habits of mind, and behaviors. They are exhibited frequently and intentionally. The idea of developing dispositions in teachers may assist student learning, but it is a neglected part of teacher education (Thornton, 2006). Leaders could promote dispositions that would have a focus on learning and achievement, and the deeply felt attitudes possessed by teachers would be modified into more desirable dispositions. Thornton expresses the idea that trying to arrive at a set of beliefs that all teachers should have is almost unimaginable and facilitating certain

behaviors and emphasizing positive traits that help the learners is a better approach. The teacher may be taught or guided to be disposed to consulting literature, researching, discussing problems or seeking student centered solutions and alternatives. Further examination of how these strategies impact learning could benefit educational leaders. Thornton feels that dispositions can be taught and cultivated. She clearly feels that the way leaders go about changing teacher beliefs is the key to successful dispositional change.

Education leaders, according to Thornton, should not try to make broad indiscriminate changes that will most likely be futile. They should know the dispositions that may facilitate a construct such as the desire to promote academic press. They should look at the development of such dispositions as rungs on a ladder and slowly work with the teacher to develop traits, beliefs, and actions that the leader has identified as desirable in the education of students.

Pupil Control Ideology

Historically, studies abound with theories of pupil control ideology. An important researcher in this field is Donald Willower. He wrote several articles and studied the subject extensively, looking at various aspects of pupil control, such as investigating teachers' power and consistency through their belief structure (Rose & Willower, 1981). In the earlier sections of the Literature Review, it was presented that the educational beliefs developed in educators were said to be generated by several external aspects of their lives, including their religion. Religion is a significant part of the spiritual frame through which researchers may try to fully understand how an organization functions. Without this knowledge, an attempt at change may fail, due partially to ignorance of

strongly held values manifested in how a teacher manages a class and disciplines students, both reflective of the teacher's pupil control ideology. Power was also a variable discussed by Rose and Willower that must be considered when discussing PCI. This brings into focus the political frame and how it impacts on the teachers' ideology of control.

An upbringing with strong emphasis on authoritarian figures such as a dominant father figure, an influential religious acquaintance, or a highly respected teacher or principal, all of whom may have exercised power successfully in the eyes of the teacher, may try to model his or her behavior on those whom they admired and trusted throughout their lives as exemplars of how one should act in the classroom. These forces may be even stronger than pedagogical theories or practices that may be viewed in opposition to the long held beliefs of the teacher. This is an example of why beliefs and dispositions are so hard to change. Even though the teacher understands that the pedagogical practices stand upon quantitative data that prove effectiveness, he or she still may not be willing to change the deeply ingrained power beliefs developed within the teacher over his or her lifetime. In these circumstances, a talented, patient, and knowledgeable leader can make small gains toward desired changes and outcomes.

Pupil control is not a short-term or one-time occurrence. It is exercised on a daily basis directly affecting students, and when enacted in an inappropriate or ineffective way, may affect the learning of the students. This expanded consideration of the importance of pupil control is presented by Hester, Gable, and Manning (2003) as a necessary piece of classroom learning. The PCI sets the tone and establishes the atmosphere of the class. The humanistic pupil control ideology has proven rewards in the classroom and this focus

on caring makes a difference in the lives and performance of students (Vail, 2005). In Vail's research, it was expressed that PCI directly affects performance, and that in actions that demonstrate to students that there is a genuine concern for them, the students will adapt and respond favorably. This idea may be true, but kindness and caring alone may not be enough to properly manage a class.

There are situations in which more structure, firmness, and less flexibility are more effective. Richardson and Pane (1988) found that secondary school teachers are more custodial than elementary teachers. Instruction and management practices are more structured on the secondary level and the rigidity and desired order promotes the more custodial ideology of student control. Because secondary schools were found to be more custodial in their PCI, perhaps being more humanistic would result in fewer failing schools.

This self-inventory should generate a review of several reasons why teachers respond as they do and may create a desire within the teachers to go against long held beliefs. The inventory can be precipitated through general discourse with the education leader in the building, or it can be more formalized through surveys and questionnaires that cause the teacher to probe the inner traits that make them who they are. Once the foibles of the teachers are explored, a readiness to change into either a more structured or firm teacher (custodial) or a more accepting or flexible teacher (humanistic) may emerge. In what circumstance these changes should best be applied is considered in this study.

Students growing up without boundaries and without a sense of order in their lives may respond favorably to a custodial or stricter control ideology, as they may interpret the teacher's actions as true caring. Conversely, situations and the dynamics in

students' lives may change and spiral in a negative manner that may necessitate a more humanistic PCI. Abuse, emotionally unstable family dynamics, financial difficulties, medical problems, and a student's demanding schedule may cause a change in his or her classroom output. With a humanistic approach, flexible timelines and modifications of procedures may be applied reasonably and cautiously to facilitate a healthy and productive climate.

A custodial approach lacks the flexibility but provides the parameters that allow for a structured and non-distracting atmosphere for the students. Being viewed as someone who follows the rules is a positive component to being a respected educator, but if a rule is applied beyond the spirit for which it was formulated, it will work against relationship-building in the classroom. Hoy et al. (1979) state that a custodial ideology of pupil control can breed negative effects, and a more humanistic approach can be beneficial to establishing a healthy environment. Frank (2007) discusses in his study the importance of classroom limits, confronting students in private, and by using non-judgmental language. The precision of spelling out consequences with consistent follow-through can be an effective class control strategy (Marzano, R., & Marzano, S., 2003). It is possible that a teacher with a strong custodial pupil control ideology may also exhibit a high level of academic optimism.

This study also investigates the concept of social reproduction. Jeffrey Perry (2008) states that standardized assessments are inherently political, shaped by whoever is developing the assessment. It reflects that person's or that group's priorities regarding what should be learned and what skill mastery must be demonstrated. If educators subscribe to a more progressive approach to learning, there could be opportunity for

students to explore and demonstrate knowledge of a variety of skills in a variety of ways. This idea can apply to the teacher's PCI. If a number of outcomes are desired, then a spectrum of teaching strategies could be purposely implemented. Pupil control ideologies facilitate strategies of teaching that fall upon the spectrum from custodial to humanistic. What strategies a custodial teacher uses should be understood by the leaders developing curriculum and the leaders managing the schools in order to best match the learners with the most appropriate teacher and that teacher's accompanying PCI.

Should a student be found to flourish in a very supportive setting facilitated by a humanistic teacher, the administrative leader could use this knowledge when making the teacher assignments at the beginning of each year and could share this knowledge with the student's teachers so that they too know how the student learns. A humanistic teacher may develop students who understand that the environment is safe for honest expression, conducive to empathetic discourse, and free of authoritarian control. Such teachers may try to work toward a goal of mutual respect for and empathy with the students. Miller (2007) found that teaching empathy may be elusive, but a teacher can model empathy to create the visual example for the students. These traits of teachers with humanistic control ideology are positive classroom attributes and may prove to have a strong relationship to high teacher academic optimism in the results of this study.

Elementary and Secondary PCI

Stating that management practices on the secondary level are more rigid may be too simple a statement. Clarification should include the understanding that secondary schools usually are larger institutions, with movement of perhaps hundreds of students several times per day between classrooms and teachers. The students must adapt to new

situations regularly; and the teachers must establish control, begin a lesson, assign work, monitor the work, and dismiss the students in a reasonably orderly and safe manner for the students to systematically travel to their next class. An elementary teacher may not have to deal with the practical and logistical variables of the everyday school occurrences that, on the secondary level, must be addressed to minimize chaos. Principals may be the catalyst to establishing age-appropriate levels of control that should be best applied in their schools while armed with knowledge of how PCI is developed, sustained, and changed if necessary. They may be the helping agents to make sense of how PCI can be used as an educational tool.

A principal could help teachers understand how their beliefs regarding controlling students are reflected in their teaching. Helping teachers understand themselves first leads to better performance in the classroom (Richardson, & Shupe, 2003). This understanding may transfer to positive teacher behaviors. Such behavior can include being cognizant of developmental abilities and the age of students, respecting student interests and student personal space, communicating with parents, and understanding technology. Teachers must analyze their own expectations of the students to better serve their needs and capabilities (Spaulding, 1983). Spaulding's findings confirm that predisposed notions may be consciously altered for effective teaching and learning to flourish.

Denig (1996) conceptualized pupil control ideology as a continuum with humanistic on one side and custodial on the other. Humanistic teachers view the school as a community. Custodial teachers view the world as a rigid hierarchy. Denig states that student alienation is greater in schools where the teachers have a more custodial

orientation, and in such schools there are more discipline referrals. The exploration of these pupil control ideologies in elementary settings through high school settings is germane to expanding the study of academic optimism. It can be reframed by effective strategies to promote an understanding of diverse student needs.

Denig also reported in his study that the mean score on the Form PCI for elementary teachers was 49.80 and the mean score for secondary teachers was 54.53. For males, the mean score was 55.51 on the PCI Form and 51.18 for females. Denig used the same PCI survey instrument being used in this PCI-AO study. In Fred Lunnenberg's study (1990) his PCI mean score was 53.92 for the teachers measured. These teachers comprised 51% of the total sample of 227. Although Denig was using his data to compare PCI and discipline in public and religious schools, and Lunenburg was using the data to compare PCI and the severity of discipline assigned to students, the information is beneficial to this study, as some of the variables in their studies were related to PCI, including gender and level taught. The findings of the study indicated that males and high school teachers had significant relationships to high PCI or custodial control. The experience of the teachers had a significant inverse relationship indicating that teachers were more custodial in their beginning years of teaching and became more humanistic later in their career.

Influences of Experience and Highest Degree Attained

Leaders can consider variables that may be strengthened, changed, or partnered with one another to give the best chances of promoting the emergence of academic optimism. The infinite numbers of traits and conditions may be less important to consider than concentrating on three or four that may drive contract language, policy

development, placement in a particular class or grade level, salary development, and matching a teacher with students congruent to the teacher's strengths and attributes. Jennifer King Rice (2010) writes that teacher experience is the key factor in personnel policies. She also investigated ideas pertaining to the impact of teacher experience on learning. Why experience is so important when generating education policy may also depend on the teacher's level of education. Rice found that experience matters most in the earlier years of education and in the subject of math. She also expresses that teachers with more than twenty years of experience are more effective than those with five years of experience.

Huberman's (1989) research on the stages teachers go through during their career states that in the beginning stages of teaching, there is vacillation between positive growth and crises. This vacillation is demonstrated throughout a teacher's career and changes how a teacher teaches. In the first couple of years of teaching there are survival and discovery periods, and then a time of stability, which comes during years four to six. In mid-career, there may be activism, experimentation, reassessment, and self-doubt. In late career, there can be feelings of serenity and maturity, but also conservatism and sometimes bitterness. Considering every nuance of teacher experience would dilute the purpose of the study. To determine whether a teacher with several years experience differs in PCI or AO as compared to a teacher with just a few years experience, two categories or tiers will be established. Based on this research, they will be called the growth tier and the maturity tier. The placing of teachers in each of the tiers will be explained Chapter IV of this study.

The level of a teacher's degree attainment and its impact on learning may outweigh early career experiences. The impact of experience at the high school level is less definitive as compared to the elementary level. Making meaningful connections to pupil control ideology may not be as complex an issue as it may seem. The research points out that the high-poverty school districts have less experienced teachers due to the high mobility of the teachers. Less experienced teachers coupled with high poverty and high-need students may develop over-disciplining and overt-control techniques, as found by Caroline Eick (2009), and may be linked to these external variables. Also, high-poverty schools have the least qualified teachers according to Rice (2010), and the differences between the performance of experienced teachers and that of the lower performing inexperienced teachers may be a contributing factor to the teacher quality gap and the achievement gap of those students who lag behind in their skill mastery.

In a study that supports the findings that teachers with stronger credentials tend to teach in schools with higher performing students, Clotfelter (2007) suggests that the largest effects of teacher experience show up in the earlier years of teaching. The findings were very similar to Jennifer King Rice's study (2010). They also found that teacher credentials, including teacher test scores, teaching experience, licensure, graduate degree, National Board certification, and quality of undergraduate institution also made a difference in math achievement, but when higher degree attainment was considered by itself, it showed little effect on student learning outcomes.

Education leaders could begin to consider these conditions when hiring, exercising influence on policy development, and when deciding on what is the best combination of traits to serve the needs of students. Looking at front-loading salaries and

redistributing the guides may help with recruitment to address the need for teachers of high quality. Policymakers could consider working harder to encourage higher performance of the most experienced teachers while also trying to keep high performing teachers from leaving high-need districts. Rice (2010) also establishes that a high degree of burnout exists when pedagogical advances are not emphasized and there is a lack of support. Rice also found that the more custodial a teacher is in his or her PCI, the more emotional exhaustion occurs.

It may be concluded that high quality teachers with strong credentials have the ability to fend off the additional stresses that accompany a teacher trying to accomplish a task for which the teacher lacks experience and has a weak knowledge base. This teacher burnout issue may suggest that the over-control of high need students may need to be explored further. If over-control and a strong emphasis on discipline must exist to exercise more structured environments in high-poverty schools, Lunenburg (1990) suggests that the PCI levels will rise and impersonal, one way communication and a punitive atmosphere may occur.

The rigid student-teacher hierarchy may emerge and the sanctions of students could lead to a distrustful atmosphere and a lowering of academic optimism. Gokhan Bas (2011) writes that teacher burnout is defined by loss of idealism and enthusiasm for work. There may also be a depersonalization toward others. Such traits work against a humanistic control ideology. It may be hypothesized that teachers in this situation do not exhibit humanistic PCI, but tend to have a more custodial ideology to compensate for the lack of strong teaching strategies. Furthermore, the competence of the teacher wanes as a result of the stress experienced by the teacher (Wei et al., 2010). In such situations,

students may be unwilling to work toward learning and teachers may feel ineffective and unsuccessful. They may feel that they no longer can make a difference in the learning of the students. This may result in a drop in the teacher's self-efficacy, which is one of the three major components of academic optimism.

Gender

A teacher's gender may affect the perceived amount of control the teacher exercises in the school setting. The extent of this effect, and if it has any bearing on the research questions in this study, will be tested. In an article written in the *American Journal of Education*, Lee, Loeb, and Marks (1995) express the idea that in education, men tend to be more involved in discussions relating to school level decisions and that there are differences in the principal-initiated interactions with males, which are higher among males than among females. This validation empowers men more and creates a feeling of discouragement at times for the female teachers. Female teachers may retreat from exercising strong control in the schools regarding policy establishment and decision making. This may transfer to the amount of control the teacher feels he or she should be exercising over the students in the classroom.

This article also expresses that an administrator can strongly influence the perception of control one has and that the perception, once again, may be different between males and females. Loosely coupled or less formalized structural frames of schools tend to empower informal communal groups to emerge, which can lead to teachers feeling even more empowered but may also limit the teachers' knowledge of what is occurring outside of their own classroom or peer group (Weick, 1976). Such informal grouping in a loosely coupled school can occur along gender lines. The authors

suggest that females in certain environments tend to be more caring than males (Lee et al., 1995). This may influence both the group dynamic and the power exercised within the class, possibly affecting a teacher's PCI.

Educators may need to become more cognizant of the influence gender plays in the workplace and in schools. The male-as-boss mentality may need to change to allow a more comfortable decision making atmosphere for female workers. Strictness in the classroom may be the result of females being concerned that they need to do the right thing and that if their rooms are not orderly and structurally managed, the leadership hierarchy may view them as less effective. More female presence in leadership could aid in changing this.

In considering how perception influences gender control behaviors, perceptions may vary along gender lines. Gender influences will be measured in this study when testing the relationships between PCI and AO. Self-reported perceptions and reality are closely related and data based on perception was proven valid (Clunies-Ross et al., 2008). Lee et al. (1995) add that perceptions along gender lines result in how males and females exercise their influence of control in the school setting and this may be relevant to this PCI-AO study. The literature suggests that differences between genders emerge. The strength of the variations and the implications to this study will be analyzed when the data are collected to determine the extent to which gender influences pupil control ideology and academic optimism. In anticipation of what may result in this study, studies regarding gender and teaching were reviewed. Clotfelter et al. (2007) found that gender mattered in the teaching of math, with males generating less positive results than females.

This indicates that there may be some other differences that may be inferred between males and females resulting from the data in this study.

Changing Teacher Beliefs

If a teacher's ideology of student control is measured and proves to relate to academic optimism with significant results, then an outcome of this study would be to facilitate strategies to change teacher attitudes. A major tenet of this PCI-AO study is to generate evidence that teacher beliefs affect teacher academic optimism. This evidence may help education leaders provide professional growth and guidance to facilitate AO. Therefore, it may be helpful to highlight the following study that demonstrates the effectiveness of a professional development plan that can change teacher beliefs.

A comprehensive study was conducted by Rosenfeld and Rosenfeld (2008) on teacher beliefs being accepted as integral components of effective teaching. Their study espouses the idea that teachers must be self-aware and be open to questioning their beliefs. They found that measuring someone's beliefs is challenging. There are variables such as life experience, value systems, and practices that are hard to measure. These variables may be abstract, but they are part of the human experience that generates beliefs within teachers and exists in each individual. It can be understood that the level to which these variables may affect a particular belief, the ability to change it, and the level to which the variable can be controlled in this study is limited. It will be the school related variables that will be considered when interpreting the results of this PCI-AO study, although the acknowledgment of many belief-altering variables is being made.

When administrators attempt to change teacher beliefs, according to the Rosenfelds' study, the process takes much time and school leaders must understand that

the teachers have their own learning styles and capacity to function as learners. The school leader needs to be sensitive to this. The Rosenfeld study measured the learning of the teachers when they engaged in professional development that facilitated belief changes. Through professional development, teachers learned about themselves and were better able to apply learning-style theory in their teaching once they had ownership of their beliefs.

The Rosenfelds established a baseline of teachers' initial beliefs and developed more educationally sound beliefs in the teachers participating in the study. The data and information in their study aided in transforming the teachers. Having a structured approach proved successful in their methodology. It is important to note that when the Rosenfelds measured attitudes, there was a significant change in beliefs that were sensitive to different types of learners. The percentage of teachers developing these beliefs rose from 17.9% in a pre-test to 49.1% in a post-test given after specifically prescribed professional development that sensitized the teachers to different learning styles.

Rideout and Windle (2007) take this broad concept and provide a context through which it may specifically be applied to this PCI-AO study. What it may provide is a guide for leaders to know when an intervention to change a belief is most effective. For example, a principal may think that the change process would be best executed through diligent and consistent involvement with the teachers. To expand the exploration of changing teacher beliefs and ideologies, Rideout and Windle found that teachers tend to become more humanistic once released from the rigors of consistent supervision and evaluation that typically occurs during pre-employment teaching practicum.

During the beginning years of teaching, there is a feeling that teachers are no longer threatened by negative evaluations, as they may have been during their pre-employment teacher training experiences. This freedom leads teachers to experiment and develop new ways to teach. The new opportunities to give students choices are more in line with humanistic PCI (Rideout & Windle, 2007). Beginning teachers are more authentic when teaching if supervisors are not intrusively evaluating the teacher. This gives credence to the idea that the teacher's PCI may be influenced by the leader in the building who is supervising the teacher. The leader, knowing that PCI facilitates the growth of academic optimism, would be able to influence the development of the desired PCI with purposeful and structured interventions or perhaps by simply granting the teacher the flexibility to innovate and experiment in the class. According to Rideout and Windle, the process of overseeing teachers during their pre-service or pre-employment experiences in the classroom developed a more custodial PCI.

As the teachers were supervised less frequently in their beginning years of teaching, they became more humanistic in their PCI. The teachers began responding to their internal beliefs to a greater extent rather than responding to the external factors of what they felt their evaluators may have wanted to observe, which was perceived to be a custodial PCI. If change can occur within teachers that is a result of self-discovery and experience without the intervention of the leader, the desired change may emerge. It may be a conscious strategy of the leader to model from afar, refrain from meddling in the normal development of the teachers, and monitor the teachers' progress to ascertain if desired beliefs are emerging through observed teacher interactions with students.

If an education leader understands academic optimism and the teacher beliefs and behaviors that relate to it, the leader may combine the knowledge with the sense of when to intervene. A patient and vigilant leader may allow desired outcomes to occur naturally. Should they not emerge, the leader would then have the tools and knowledge to actively engage the teacher in the change process. This may help promote the practical outcome of this study, which is for leaders to change attitudes and beliefs that may raise academic optimism of teachers and ultimately benefit student learning.

Professional Development Implications

This change process may involve professional development as a means to help leaders attain the vision of outstanding teaching and learning. This process can be guided by empirical data extracted from the 2010 Technical Report of Professional Development in the United States (Wei, Darling-Hammond, & Anderson, 2010). The Professional Development Report states that beginning teachers are strongly influenced through a spillover that affects student gains due to the beginning teacher's more experienced colleagues generating higher achievement scores among their students.

As a leader facilitates and exposes teachers to meaningful professional development, it would be beneficial for the education leader to understand that good teaching and good professional development tends to have positive outcomes. Not only will this happen directly, but indirect professional development of colleagues will have a spillover to other teachers, especially influencing the novice teacher. Knowing this, a leader could blend knowledge gained from this study to develop profiles of the type of teacher that is best for a given situation and tailor the mentoring and professional development toward the desired outcome. The relationships to be discovered may be

applied to this reasoning. Beliefs, control, student achievement, and the experience of a teacher may be variables worthy of investigation to develop higher academic optimism.

The Professional Development Report also presents that teachers in 2008 were half as likely to report collaborative efforts in their schools than in 2000 (Wei et al., 2010). Professional learning communities and emphasis on articulation seems to be generating a strong push toward meaningful communication between teachers, yet with budget reductions and school boards emphasizing efficiency, time afforded to talking and planning seems to be working against this push. School administrators should be able to create student and staff schedules that promote professional collaboration; the report states that this could enhance collegial learning. Teachers, to be open to collaboration, should have an open and receptive disposition, which may be more conducive for a teacher who is less controlling and exhibits traits of having a low PCI, which is congruent with being more humanistic.

A hallmark of this technical report is that it suggests that too much time is spent on the training of teachers for disciplining and controlling students. It mentions that emphasis must be placed on core subject area preparation to develop innovation and exciting ways to educate students. If this happens, the control becomes less of a problem, as the students are less apt to need a controlling teacher because the learning occupies the students' time. A significant connection can be made to learning in concentrations of poor and minority students in urban public schools. These students, as pointed out in the report, tend to have teachers who are not as skilled and less likely to engage in appropriate mentoring and professional development.

Eick (2009) finds also that minority students in urban centers are usually over-disciplined. A conclusion may be made that teachers, if supported by effective mentoring and training, could better develop classroom skills and enhanced competence. This could lead to teachers not needing to exercise such over-disciplining of the students and may help develop a healthier learning environment in the lower functioning schools. Eick (2009) suggests that as diversity increases, the discipline of the students increases. If low functioning urban centers of rich diversity are to be turned around, there may need to be opportunities created for groups to interact in all academic tracks taught by well-engaged, competent, and experienced teachers.

A complementary report co-sponsored by the non-profit organization, Learning Forward, explains state policies and strategies regarding the development of teachers to improve instruction. In this report, it is explicitly stated that professional development is the single most important strategy for most teachers for refining teacher traits, among which are dispositions (Jaquith, Mindich, Wei, & Darling-Hammond, 2010). As mentioned earlier in this study, linking dispositions to beliefs and then beliefs to behaviors in the classroom are components of the development of pupil control ideology. A knowledge base of how to best teach, how to react to management needs, and how to improve learning can be solidified through career-long professional development opportunities. With proper development, teachers and districts can be a part of the examinations of what can help develop the strategies and structures to not only foster the appropriate management skills in the classroom, but also to engage in the process of learning how best to deliver information to students according to state mandates and being mindful of the standards guiding the teaching.

Literature Review Conclusion

The synthesis of this literature review shall first be considered through the theoretical influences on this study. Certain research stands out regarding the social-cognitive connections affecting one's academic optimism. A full understanding of why AO is important becomes clearer with a broader understanding of why self-efficacy is a major component of being a skilled teacher. Within this context, the work of Bandura et al. (1996) may lead an educator to consider not only those things that promote an optimistic view of learning but also that which impedes the learning. Problem identification emerges as a needed skill of a leader if the leader's objective is to promote good teaching. The problems present in an ineffective teacher may be numerous, but Bandura provides the research for emphasizing the importance of motivating students and establishing a healthy learning environment as a critical first step in which the teacher believes that he or she can make the learning happen.

This belief system may be different in various settings. The mission and vision of parochial or private school systems may be reflected in one's teaching, which may be different from that in a public school. Denig's (1996) work expresses that one's mindset is established through constructs such as religious beliefs and social norms. One could debate the strength of influence of Denig's teacher-mindset concept against the concept of students as recipients of the learning. An opinion could emerge more prominently slanted in the direction of the students and how they are absorbing the learning. Gardner (2005) in his Theory of Multiple Intelligences advances the idea that the student, regardless of what the teacher believes, will take in the learning in a specific and unique

manner. Knowing a child's mind and blending this knowledge with a teacher's belief system and self-efficacy may bring the teacher closer to effective teaching.

Delving deeper into cognitive constructs and trying to relate them to how they are socially structured and observed is further explained through Hill and O'Hara's (2005) Cognitive Theory of Trust. This is understandable, as trust should be present when the deeper recesses of a belief system are investigated. The vulnerability inherent in trust stands upon the unguarded exposure of one's emotions and, at times, weaknesses. Although Thornton (2006) is cited in the literature regarding dispositions, including how each person is predisposed to certain behaviors, her theories on responsive orientation and technical orientation of teaching slant toward effectiveness being generated by trust, loyalty, and by being responsive through a deeper understanding of oneself as an educator and the students as recipients of the learning. Thornton also suggests that our tendencies as educators reflect habits of the mind and that when investigated and matched with the students needs, could advance the academic rigor necessary for learning to take place.

Lunenburg (1990), Hester et al. (2003), Vail (2005), and Richardson & Pane (1988) express in the literature that how a teacher chooses to control students reflects components of each of the aforementioned theoretical concepts. These researchers link the choices of the teacher to be trusting, flexible, and non-judgmental to their manner of control. The literature suggests that a humanistic control ideology is preferred in education and that a custodial control ideology may be tolerated in some circumstances better than in others.

In the stages of teaching that were identified by Huberman (1989), a stricter approach to teacher control may be present as a survival skill of a new teacher. An education leader should be able to recognize that although many factors formulate one's PCI, at times the demonstrated control of students is more situational rather than a reflection of the teacher's deeper feelings or experiences. Clotfelter (2007), Rice (2010), and Eich (2009), all have established similar conclusions in the literature.

In the Theory of Cognitive Dissonance (Festinger, 1957) it is stated that leaders can affect change and can influence behaviors. Even with the teachers realizing that what they are doing in the classroom is not the best for learning, the teachers sometime continue the behavior nonetheless. This is their cognitive dissonance. Festinger expresses that a leader can change the behavior, but it must be done in comfortable increments, skillfully, and without coercion. Behavior modification could work well when blending Skinner's (1963) widely known practices with Festinger's cognitive dissonance theory. An education leader may craft strategies of intervention that make sense and also model for the teachers what a humanistic philosophy of change looks like.

Data generated by several studies have provided the evidence that the theories upon which this study is built have empirical backing. Beginning with the survey of public opinion, which indicates that 67% of respondents to the PEPG study (Howell et al. 2007) supported teacher removal in failing schools, one may realize that teacher beliefs and actions are paramount to student success. Gregory and Cornell (2009) tested structure, support, enforcement of rules, and non-academic problems in school. They found that respect for individual autonomy was critical in the minds of the ninth grade students surveyed. This relates well to the theoretically established importance of trust

and a flexible learning environment. Willower et al. (1973) concurred, as their study highlighted the connection of a custodial mindset to student alienation. Nichols et al. (1999) conducted a study that had similar results, with the added understanding that teacher personality directly affects student referrals.

In the literature that pertained to academic emphasis, the *Nation at Risk* report (United States Department of Education, 1983) expressed to the American public that schools were experiencing a period of complacency. The data contained in this study conducted by the federal government began to generate concerns that still linger and in some ways have become even more evident as shown through the mandates of the No Child Left Behind Legislation (2001). Education leaders may be well served to revisit these comprehensive documents to blend the findings with the improvement process and to come to a more complete understanding of the theoretical ideas presented in this study. Should leaders know that Hoy et al. (1979) and Frank (2007) did studies regarding how teachers inadvertently breed negative outcomes in a classroom, perhaps the landmark government studies and regulations could be addressed more thoroughly by this knowledge.

The Rosenfelds (2008) conducted a comprehensive study that found that teachers need to be aware of what makes them effective, what works against effectiveness, and that they need to question their beliefs regarding student learning. An analysis of why this is important may include the concept that teachers may believe that they are in private practice and that there is no need to adjust to empirical data, reports, or studies. Even when their students are adequately achieving, the goal could be to elicit at least some positive change in the teacher based on the literature's suggestion to bring the level

of achievement to an even higher standard. The Rosenfelds generated strong data to suggest that teacher improvement indeed can occur with targeted professional development that is student-focused.

In the 2010 Technical Report of Professional Development in the United States (Wei et al, 2010), there continues to be data that indicate that teacher behavior not only influences student learning but influences other teachers as well. In this context, one may be more apt to understand the results of Huberman (1989), who identified the more custodial PCI of new teachers. Perhaps not only were these new teachers concerned with establishing firm control in the eyes of their students and the administration, but when viewed with the results of the Rosenfeld's study, perhaps this more custodial technical approach to control was exhibited to impress their teaching peers. This could be sufficient reason to consider school climate issues as a future study to more completely understand the influences on teacher behavior and ultimately, student learning.

In the review of the literature, it became evident that the convergence of both theory and data solidified self-awareness as one of the most critical concepts in the study. This suggests that Bandura's theories of self-efficacy and how they are reflected throughout the literature are most significant. Academic optimism being tied with pupil control ideology seems to necessitate a deeper investigation of who we are as educators and what we may be willing to reveal, change, and continually develop to reflect actions that promote student learning. The educator must believe that these goals are attainable. Perhaps the outcomes of this study may influence an educator to be drawn away from the structural mechanisms of punitive actions, the establishment of role barriers, and cumbersome regulations to make way for a deeper analysis of the perceptions of self.

This study investigates how educators perceive themselves and their environment, which may affect academic optimism. The literature reveals this, as do the results of this PCI-AO study. Therefore, one of the most important pieces of information to validate that these perceptions do indeed represent reality was found in the research of Clunies et al. (2008). Had the outcomes of their study concluded that there was no relationship between perception and observable actions, the strength of the outcomes anticipated in this PCI-AO study would be compromised. To the advantage of the research to be undertaken, Clunies et al. found that perception and self-reporting are significantly correlated to actual practice.

This synthesis can be applied to what a leader will want to accomplish with the results and the data that this study may generate. The leader needs to compile the information into a compartmentalized classification system of what the pupil performance goals are, what the vision is for the climate of the building is, and what the interaction with the community should look like. The transformative properties of knowing the relationships between PCI and AO must be embedded into these visions and goals. Knowledge will allow the leader to base judgments on researched theories and tested assumptions to create a system that best reflects the teacher controls that will nurture a school with strong beliefs that teachers can and will facilitate student learning, that they will trust their students and parents, and that they will promote advanced rigor and critical thinking skills, which are hallmarks of a teacher with high academic optimism. What the educator does with this new knowledge may help classrooms to become healthier learning environments

Leaders using studies and empirical data to help drive instruction may help the leader raise test scores, complete assessment reports with more accurate evidence-based information, and may help the leader employ the assistance of teachers in this journey who share the vision. The disconnect between a teacher's and the educational leader's ideologies of control and learning may prove to be distracting and may create a barrier to opening the doors of collaboration. Understanding if change is needed, how to go about the change, and when to initiate the change may be based partially on the research contained in this study.

The Race to the Top Funding (2009) has as one of its priorities teacher and principal effectiveness and reversing the trends of non-proficiency in low-achieving schools. Perhaps the relationships that emerge through considering PCI, experience, grade level taught, the gender of the teacher, and the highest degree or highest amount of credits earned would help leaders in this mission. An investigation of the consideration of these combinations of variables may make a difference in student learning.

PCI and AO Path Model

The primary hypothesis of this study is that there may be a relationship between the variables of teacher pupil control ideology and academic optimism. Furthermore, the PCI may have relationships between each of the imbedded components of academic optimism, which are teacher efficacy, trust, and academic press. The study was conducted on these assumptions and on the concept that there may be relationships specific to the grade level on which the teacher teaches, the experience of the teacher, the highest degree attained, and the gender of the teacher.

Figure 1 provides a graphic representation of this study's conceptual path model.

To clarify the data analysis and to better understand the relationships tested in the study, the path model shows patterns and possible correlations that may be investigated among the set of variables. John C. Loehlin (2004) describes path models or path diagrams as convenient representations of the relationships among a number of variables. Although the array of arrows and symbols can become complex in a path diagram, Loehlin goes on to express that these types of models help explain assumed, and once the data are analyzed, resulting empirical relationships in a visual manner.

The Figure 1 model shows a double-sided arrow between PCI and AO, expressing a relationship that will be measured between these two variables. It also symbolizes that a relationship will be measured between PCI and self-efficacy, trust, and academic emphasis. These measurements will pertain to Research Questions 1 and 2. As PCI is added to the demographic variables, models to predict levels of AO, self-efficacy, trust, and academic emphasis will be sought to address Research Questions 3 and 4. The slanted one-way arrows symbolize this.

The variable of pupil control ideology may tend to balance effects of a demographic variable on the independent variable when measured with the demographic variable. PCI is a main variable to which relationships with AO may be established, but it will be considered also among the predictor demographic variables.

Research Question 5 is represented in the path model by the double-sided arrow between the demographic variables and PCI and the double-sided longer arrow at the top of the model between the demographic variables and AO and its sub components. A categorical relationship will be sought transforming the continuous variables into two

distinct categories of nominal variables. The manner in which this will be done and the rationale is explained in Chapter III under the subheading of Statistical Measurements.

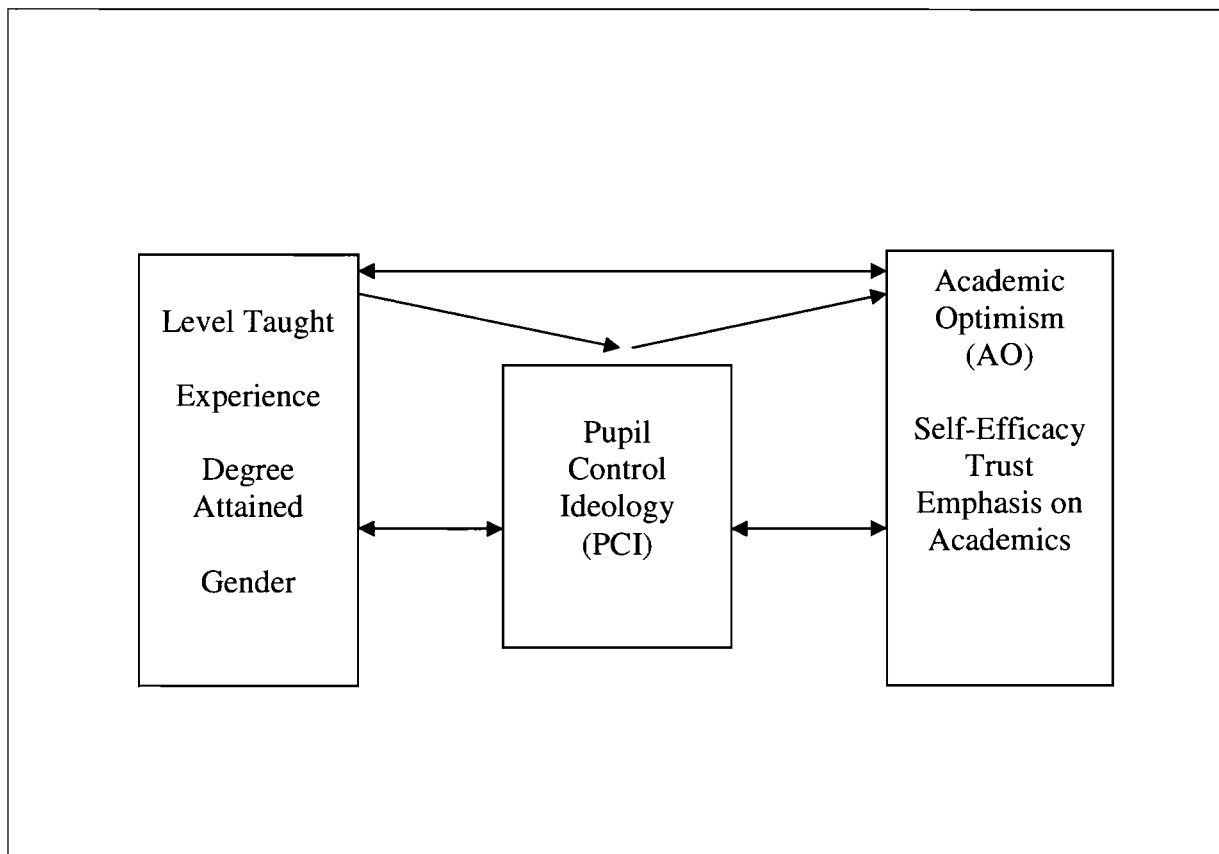


Figure 1. *Path Model of PCI-AO Study*

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Design

The study is a cross-sectional, explanatory design study that uses correlation research and hierarchical regression to measure relationships between the two constructs of pupil control ideology and academic optimism with each separate component of academic optimism, which are self-efficacy, trust, and emphasis on academics. Data were collected by surveying teachers, and the specific demographic variables of level on which the teacher taught, the experience of the teacher, the highest degree attained by the teacher, and the teacher's gender were considered to determine their impact on the relationship between PCI and AO. The literature review supported that these variables be explored in the relationships studied.

Method

This is a non-experimental, quantitative study. A Likert-type survey instrument consisting of eleven questions was used to assess the academic optimism of the sample teachers in the elementary schools consisting of kindergarten through Grade 5 schools. A Likert-type survey instrument consisting of 9 questions was used to assess the academic optimism of the sample teachers in the secondary schools consisting of Grades 6 through 12. To measure teacher pupil control ideology, a Likert-type survey consisting of 20 questions was given to assess the pupil control ideology of the teachers in the sample. These surveys were administered to the teachers through an email sent at the beginning of the school year and the data were analyzed.

The school districts were contacted by the researcher, as per the research protocols, requesting that the superintendent approve the administration of the survey. This was accomplished through a Letter of Solicitation (Appendix A) and meetings with the superintendents for further explanation. Approval was received from the superintendents and subsequent meetings took place with the administration of the districts to finalize the plan for survey administration. Appropriate plans were made for the Letter of Informed Consent to be emailed to each teacher (Appendix B). This was included with the survey email. The Informed Consent Letters provided survey details and all components as required by the Seton Hall Internal Review Board. The teachers were invited to contact the researcher directly if clarification was needed.

Population

The population consisted of kindergarten through Grade 12 teachers in New Jersey public schools of similar GH District Factor Groups (DFG) comprising a total of 78 school districts. This GH District Factor Group shares characteristics of the 87 districts one level below, which is FG, and the 105 districts one level above, which is I. These three District Factor Groups combined, comprise the largest cluster of districts in New Jersey, 270 out of 573. The State of New Jersey lists the DFG levels in descending alphabetical order from those with the lower socioeconomic status being A districts to the most affluent being I districts (New Jersey Department of Education, 2004). The population of teachers within schools of similar socio-economic level and similar geographic area were studied. The population of teachers represents subject areas typically found in New Jersey public schools. The experience levels range from inexperienced novice teachers, for the purposes of this study referred to as the “growth

experience tier” to veterans with many years of experience, referred to as the “mature experience tier.” A mixture of regular education and special education teachers make up the population from which the sample is drawn. A more targeted population of teachers from the Central New Jersey GH school districts of Mercer, Middlesex, and Monmouth Counties, which lie contiguously from West to East, have a total teacher population of 2,715.

Sample

Sampling was based on the Central New Jersey location, the size of the district to allow for a spectrum of demographic variables necessary to answer the research questions, the GH District Factor Group, the size of the faculty, and the expressed written approval of the superintendent to conduct the study in the district. There was also a need to be accessible to the two districts. The total sample number of teachers in the two districts, as confirmed by the New Jersey Department of Education (2011), was 693. New Jersey certificated teachers who have responsibility to deliver the curriculum in any content area were given surveys. Teachers, schools, and districts will remain anonymous.

Data Collection

The information in the Letters of Solicitation provided insight into the purpose of the study and included all the requisite protocols as outlined by the Seton Hall Internal Review Board. Written approvals were secured through several meetings and written communication with the superintendents. Meetings with other administrators followed. The surveys were administered to the sample by the researcher using the Web based SurveyMonkey.com (SurveyMonkey, 2011). A subscription to the site had to be secured prior to its use. The instruments, copyrighted to Dr. Wayne K. Hoy, were typed into the

SurveyMonkey.com site and the exact wording, sequence, and formatting were maintained.

At the agreed upon time, in consultation with the superintendents, the invitation to participate, the Letter of Consent, and the link to the survey were emailed to each teacher (Appendix C). Raw data were obtained from the survey responses and entered into an Excel spreadsheet. The AO scores were standardized for comparison purposes. The standardizations of the formulas, as shown in the following Instrumentation section, were entered in the Excel spreadsheet and assigned the proper calculations for accurate scoring. The data were then organized on several spreadsheets and transferred to the Statistical Analysis for the Social Sciences (SPSS) computer software to prepare for the analysis to answer the research questions and prove or disprove the null hypotheses.

Instrumentation

Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient for Likert-type scales was used to establish the reliability coefficients of each section of the surveys used in the study. The instrument used with both elementary and secondary teachers was the Pupil Control Ideology Form, or PCI (Appendix D). The reliability was presented by Willower et al. (1967) and it was extracted from the information accompanying the instrument. No locally developed test for reliability was given for this study. The form is a 20-item Likert-type scale that measures a teacher's pupil control ideology. The items have reliability coefficients of .80 to .91. The higher the score on the scale, the more custodial the teacher's ideology and the lower the score on the scale, the more humanistic the teacher's ideology of pupil control. Items were scored 5, 4, 3, 2, or 1, corresponding to the extent of agreement, with *strongly agree* = 5, *agree* = 4, *undecided* = 3, *disagree* = 2,

or *strongly disagree* = 1. Items 5 and 13 on the PCI survey were reverse scored, meaning, *strongly agree* = 1, *agree* = 2, *undecided* = 3, *disagree* = 4, or *strongly disagree* = 5. The higher the cumulative score on the scale, the more custodial the teacher.

The instrument used to measure academic optimism of elementary school teachers was the Measure of Individual Academic Optimism for Elementary Teachers: Teacher Academic Optimism Scale, or TAOS-E (Appendix E). As with the PCI Form, no locally developed reliability test was necessary, as the reliability information was provided by Beard et al. (2009). The instrument is a Likert-type questionnaire consisting of 11 questions. Questions were asked regarding the teacher's sense of self-efficacy with a reliability coefficient of .73. The rating scale for each question in this section pertained to what a teacher could do to influence student learning ranging from *nothing* = 1 to *a great deal* = 9, with 1 representing the score for which teachers have low self-efficacy and 9 indicating high self-efficacy. The next questions surveyed the trust the teacher had in students and parents with a reliability coefficient of .79. The rating scale for each question in this section asked questions regarding statements of perceived honesty ranging from perceiving honesty *never* = 1 to *always* = 5, with 1 indicating a low trust level and 5 indicating a high trust level. The last section measured academic emphasis with a reliability coefficient of .71. The academic emphasis items in the survey measured how often the teacher challenged the students academically and were scored *never* = 1 to *always* = 5, with 1 indicating a low level of academic emphasis and 5 indicating a high emphasis on academics.

The instrument used to measure academic optimism of the secondary teachers was the Measure of Individual Academic Optimism for Secondary Teachers: Teacher Academic Optimism Scale, or TAOS – S (Appendix F). It is a Likert-type questionnaire consisting of 9 questions. Three questions were asked regarding the teacher's sense of self-efficacy with a reliability coefficient of .85. The next 3 questions surveyed the trust in students and parents with a reliability coefficient of .87. The last 3 questions measured academic emphasis with a reliability coefficient of .83. The scoring of the instruments and standardization of the scores is as follows:

Scoring TAOS - Elementary

Scoring method

Self-Efficacy: Sum the scores of items 1, 2, and 3, then divide by 3.

Trust: Sum the scores of items 4, 5, 6, and 7, then divide by 4.

Academic Emphasis: Sum scores for items 8, 9, 10, and 11, then divide by 4.

Standardization of scores

Standard Score for Self-Efficacy (SSSE) = $[100X(SE-7.68)/.856] + 500$

Standard Score for Trust (SST) = $[100X(T-3.86)/.642] + 500$

Standard Score for Acad. Emphasis (SSAE) = $[100X(AE-4.42)/.470] + 500$

Academic Optimism = $[(SSSE)+(SST)+(SSAE)]$ divided by 3

Scoring TAOS – Secondary

Scoring method

Self-Efficacy (SE): Sum the scores of items 1, 2, and 3, then divide by 3.

Trust (T): Sum the scores of items 4, 5, and 6, then divide by 3.

Academic Emphasis (AE): Sum scores for items 7, 8, and 9, then divide by 3.

Standardization of scores

Standard Score for Self-Efficacy (SSSE) = $[100X(SE-7.53)/1.211] + 500$

Standard Score for Trust (SST) = $[100X(T-3.41)/.856] + 500$

Standard Score for Acad. Emphasis (SSAE) = $[100X(AE-4.43)/.756] + 500$

Academic Optimism = $[(SSSE)+(SST)+(SSAE)]$ divided by 3

Interpretation of TAOS Scores

After the scores are standardized on the academic optimism surveys they may be interpreted and compared as follows:

If the score is 200, it is lower than 99% the teachers.

If the score is 300, it is lower than 97% of the teachers.

If the score is 400, it is lower than 84% of the teachers.

If the score is 500, it is average.

If the score is 600, it is higher than 84% of the teachers.

If the score is 700, it is higher than 97% of the teachers.

If the score is 800, it is higher than 99% of the teachers.

The scoring for the academic optimism instruments and the standardization formulas were from Beard et al. (2009). Every score obtained in this study had to be standardized through the use of these formulas in Excel spreadsheets. The Pupil Control Ideology Form, the Measure of Individual Academic Optimism for Elementary Teachers: Teacher Academic Optimism Scale, and the Measure of Individual Academic Optimism

for Secondary Teachers: Teacher Academic Optimism Scale were retrieved from Wayne K. Hoy's website and used with his expressed written permission (Appendix G).

The questions on each of the academic optimism instruments were appropriate to the grade level at which the teacher was teaching. For example, one question on the Teacher Academic Optimism Elementary Survey was phrased, "How much can you do to get students to believe they can do well in school?" On the Teacher Academic Optimism Secondary Survey, that question was phrased, "How much can you do to motivate students who show low interest in school work?" In the secondary phrasing of the question, the variable of low interest was added. Another difference between the instruments is the addition of two questions on the elementary instrument that deal with "shoddy work" in one question and asking students to "explain how they get their answers on another" question. The scoring was standardized between the two instruments to allow for accurate comparisons.

A statistical analysis of the data to answer the research questions was made regarding the strength of the relationships obtained from the data, the direction of the relationships, the interpretation of the level of significance, and the interpretation of the variance explained by the relationships measured in the study. The correlation coefficient symbolized by the letter r was a perfect negative relationship if $r = -1$ and a perfect positive relationship if the $r = 1$. In the regression measurements the significance, direction, and the strength of the beta coefficients, which explain how strongly the independent variable is associated with the dependent variable, gave important information about the relationships regarding the predictor or demographic variables on the outcome variables. The relationships resulted in conclusions being drawn about the

variables, but no attempt was made to seek causation. The null hypotheses being presented in the study were rejected or failed to be rejected based on the review of the data and relationships.

Statistical Measurements

Measuring the relationships between pupil control ideology and academic optimism, with an investigation of the influence of demographic variables on PCI and AO, necessitated appropriate statistical procedures to analyze and interpret the results of the study. The information was entered into the SPSS statistical software allowing for the statistical measurements of hierarchical regression and Spearman's rho to be completed. The relationships were tested at the preset alpha (.05).

Demographic variables were coded (0, 1) for measurement purposes. One of the demographic variables, experience, indicated the years of teaching experience. This continuous demographic variable was converted from a continuous variable to a nominal variable. As with the splitting of the experience variable for the Spearman's rho measurement to answer Research Question 5, the same median split process was used to divide teacher experience into two categories to allow it to be measured with the other demographic predictor variables in Research Questions 3 and 4. Those teachers below the median were categorized as the "growth experience tier," which was coded zero (0) and those teachers above the median experience level, which was fifteen years of experience, were categorized as the "maturity experience tier," which was coded one (1).

The constructs of pupil control ideology, academic optimism, self-efficacy, trust, and academic emphasis were measured as continuous variables to answer the first four research questions. To answer Research Question 5, they were transformed in SPSS into

nominal variables to determine how the demographic categories related to the construct categories that resulted, by creating two distinct high and low groups for each of the measured continuous variables of PCI, AO, self-efficacy, trust, and academic emphasis. The two groups were then coded (0, 1).

Threats to Validity

Threats to the internal validity of this study should be considered. The surveys are measuring the broad constructs of PCI and AO respectively, but the respondents are subjectively assessing their own feelings, behaviors, and practices. If the teacher respondent had a negative experience with a parent near the time the respondent completed the AO questionnaire, an answer relating to trust of parents for example, may be negatively skewed. Conversely, if a student recently demonstrated outstanding leadership and independent thinking in a teacher's class, that teacher may show a positive spike in scoring on questions relating to a more humanistic PCI.

The construct validity of the surveys, according to Gay, Mills, and Airasian (2009) is the most important form of validity because the survey must truly measure the intended construct. Control, trust, expectations, and self-efficacy, among others, converge within two survey instruments that are at the heart of this study, and all may be affected by a temporary emotional situation that may have occurred near the administration of the survey. In this event, the validity could be compromised. This may be controlled by ensuring that the survey is not administered in close time proximity to a significant school-wide event negatively or positively affecting the sample. Nonetheless, personal issues of the teachers responding to the survey cannot be controlled.

The surveys were electronically piloted among colleagues for feedback regarding ambiguities of the directions provided and for errors that could compromise the validity of the study. A threat may also exist to the external validity due to the size of this study representing only a portion of the population of school districts for which inferences will attempt to be made. The cultures, customs, and norms in one location or among a certain demographic of respondents may not be applicable to the respondents from another environment, and this should be considered when applying the results of the analysis. Onwuegbuzie (2003) expresses that most empirical research in the field of education can be open to considerable error, and this was considered in the plan that was developed for the analysis of the outcomes in this study. Procedures were carefully followed throughout the methods and analysis of this study to avoid such errors.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF DATA

The purpose of conducting this study was to better understand how a teacher's ideology regarding controlling students may be related to that teacher's level of academic optimism. Research questions have been restated in this section along with the data leading to rejecting or failing to reject the null hypothesis for each. The scores of the surveys were used in various statistical measurements to understand the results among demographic variables. Data emerged to answer if there was or was not a relationship between PCI and AO, and within what demographic conditions levels of academic optimism may be predicted. The analysis also attempted to categorize the relationships to be viewed not only through a statistical lens, but also through a categorical lens that may be more practically applied.

Data tables were generated to provide an organized data format for relationships that were found in this study. Education leaders may use this information to build a more positive school climate, to help their school communities understand where specific improvement may be best suited to enhance learning, and to better understand the complexities of constructs that help or hinder healthy learning environments.

There was a need to understand how the demographic variables were related to one another so that the resulting data could be interpreted appropriately. A test of collinearity was conducted to determine if there were correlations between the demographic variables. It did provide empirical evidence of a weak relationship between gender and level taught. There also tends to be more females than males on the elementary level. There were only 61 males in this study compared to 242 females, as

shown in Table 1. There needed to be an awareness of this when the data were interpreted to decide if an effect was due to the level taught or due to the gender of the teacher, but the variables were kept in the study, as they reacted independently to the statistical tests used.

Response Rate

The plans for the survey administration were discussed and finalized with the superintendents during the spring and summer of 2011. Formal agendas were prepared for meetings and presented to the principals to ensure a procedural comfort level among them. The surveys were then emailed to the teachers during the staff in-service days held in preparation for the new school year. With the superintendent's permission, active follow-up requests via email were made during the first weeks of the school year. Data collection took place throughout September 2011. Out of 693 surveys emailed, 321 were returned. This yielded a response rate of 46%.

Of the 321 returned surveys, the number of surveys that had all the PCI and AO questions answered was 303. Of the 303 teachers who completed the surveys, if they had left any demographic information blank, it led to a different n in some categories; nonetheless, all completed surveys yielded rich data necessary for the measurements used. The frequencies of the demographic background variables are shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Demographic Variables Frequencies

Demographic Variable	N	Missing	Frequency	Percent
Level Taught	303	0		
Elementary			158	52.1
Secondary			145	47.9
Teaching Experience	297	6		
Growth Tier			141	46.5
Maturity Tier			156	51.5
Degree Attained	303	0		
Bachelor's			153	50.5
Master's			150	49.5
Gender	303	0		
Male			61	20.1
Female			242	79.9

Comparison of Means

Survey scores of those teachers who returned the survey were used for the research and a comparison of the means was made to prior studies. The comparison showed that the mean scores from the teachers in the survey, which was a score of 51.33, approximated those of prior studies in both pupil control ideology and academic optimism.

As introduced in Chapter II, Denig (1996) indicated that the mean score in his study using the PCI Form for elementary teachers was 49.80 and 54.53 for secondary teachers. For males, the mean score was 55.51 on the PCI Form and 51.18 for females. Fred Lunenberg (1999) performed a study in which his PCI mean score was 53.92. Although Denig was using his data to compare PCI and discipline in public and religious schools, and Lunenberg was using the data to compare PCI and the severity of discipline assigned to students, the information is beneficial to ascertain that there were no unforeseen variances in the teacher scores, as the mean PCI score in this PCI-AO study was 51.88, well within the range of prior studies.

Regarding the academic optimism scores, Hoy states that the academic optimism standardized scores on his instruments should have an approximate average score of 500 (Beard et al., 2009). In this study of PCI and AO, the mean academic optimism score was 508.57 and this too approximated the results of a prior benchmark, in this case, Hoy's academic optimism instrument. Table 2 indicates the comparison of the means for each of the constructs measured in this study as continuous variables.

Table 2

Comparison of Means for Pupil Control Ideology, Academic Optimism, Teacher Self-Efficacy, Trust, and Academic Emphasis

Continuous Construct Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	N
Pupil Control Ideology	51.88	8.51	303
Academic Optimism	508.57	63.82	303
Teacher Self-Efficacy	505.76	105.75	303
Trust	529.25	66.85	303
Academic Emphasis	490.72	92.34	303

Research Question 1

What is the relationship between pupil control ideology and academic optimism?

Null Hypothesis 1. There is no statistically significant relationship between pupil control ideology and academic optimism.

Spearman's rho correlation was used to measure the relationship between the variables of pupil control ideology and academic optimism without consideration of background influences. According to Bruce Tuckman (1972), the Spearman's rho measurement attempts to assess the relationship between ranks of measurements without making any assumptions about the nature of the relationship; hence, it is a non-parametric

measure, which has been chosen to be appropriate for the measurements in this research question. This statistical measurement resulted in the null hypothesis for Research Question 1 being rejected, as there was a significant relationship that emerged. The analysis revealed a significant inverse relationship between pupil control ideology and academic optimism, with a Spearman's rho correlation coefficient of $-.350$, $p < 0.01$. This moderate relationship indicates that as the level of pupil control ideology rises, the level of academic optimism tends to go down and as the level of pupil control ideology goes down, the level of academic optimism tends to go up. The coefficient of determination, $R = 0.1225$, indicates that 12.25% of the variance in academic optimism can be explained by the variance in pupil control ideology.

This is an important result of this study. It is evidence that there tends to be a relationship between a teacher being more humanistic in the control of students and a higher level of academic optimism. In the analysis of the data, this relationship will be explored to generate a connection between the research on humanistic behaviors in the classroom by a teacher and how these behaviors may generate higher levels of the constructs that comprise academic optimism. Self-efficacy, trust, and academic emphasis will be explored with further measures and analysis collectively and as individual components. Table 3 includes these data results. Table 3 also shows the results of the second research question, which addresses the components of academic optimism. In Table 3, the correlation coefficients may be compared to infer meaning in the relationships.

Research Question 2

What is the relationship between pupil control ideology and each of the three constructs that comprise academic optimism, which are teacher self-efficacy, trust and academic emphasis?

Null Hypothesis 2. There is no statistically significant difference between teacher pupil control ideology and any of the three constructs that comprise academic optimism, which are teacher self-efficacy, trust, and academic emphasis.

Spearman's rho correlation was again used, as it was deemed to be the most appropriate due to each of the sub-constructs extracted from the academic optimism measurement to determine the relationship between the variables of pupil control ideology and each of the three components of academic optimism. The surveys generated scores through which relationships between these constructs could be determined. This statistical measurement resulted in the null hypothesis for Research Question 2 being rejected. The analysis revealed a significant inverse relationship between pupil control ideology and teacher self-efficacy, with a Spearman's rho correlation coefficient of -0.350 , $p < 0.01$. This moderate relationship indicates that as the level of pupil control ideology rises, the level of teacher self-efficacy tends to go down and as the level of pupil control ideology goes down, the level of academic optimism tends to go up. The coefficient of determination, $R = 0.1225$, indicates that 12.25% of the variance in teacher self-efficacy may be explained by the variance in pupil control ideology.

There is also a similar relationship that exists with trust. It too has an inverse relationship to PCI, meaning that as the level of trust in students and parents trends up or

down, the level of pupil control ideology tends to move in the opposite direction. The Spearman's rho correlation coefficient is $-.313$, $p < .01$, which is a moderately lower relationship. The coefficient of determination, $R = 0.9796$, indicates that 9.8% of the variance in trust of students and parents may be explained by the variance in pupil control ideology.

The final construct measured with Spearman's rho correlation to determine a relationship with PCI was academic emphasis. The analysis revealed no significant relationship with pupil control ideology. Table 3 indicates the relationships that resulted in the analysis of the first two research questions.

Table 3

Teacher Pupil Control Ideology Correlations with Academic Optimism, Self-Efficacy, Trust, and Academic Emphasis

	AO	Self-Eff.	Trust	Academic Emph.
PCI	$-.350^{**}$	$-.350^{**}$	$-.313^{**}$	$-.086$

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Research Question 3

Which demographic variables, when measured in linear combination with the variable of pupil control ideology, may be predictors of academic optimism?

Null Hypothesis 3. There are no statistically significant predictors of academic optimism among demographic variables, when measured in linear combination with the variable of pupil control ideology.

AO as Outcome Variable

A hierarchical regression statistical analysis was used to measure the demographic variables of level taught, teaching experience, highest degree attained, gender, and the variable PCI as predictors of academic optimism. This statistical measurement resulted in the null hypothesis for Research Question 3 being rejected, as there were statistically significant predictors that were indicated in the analysis. The regression model that is the best linear combination of predictors to explain the proportion of variance on academic optimism, which is AO Model II, shows R square = .196, which means that 19.6% of the variance in AO is explained by the demographic variables of level taught, teaching experience, highest degree attained, gender, and the variable PCI. An analysis of the ANOVA table revealed that the model is significant at the .000 level, $f = 14.213$, $df = 5$, 291. The R square change as compared to the AO Model I, with only demographic variables, is .164, $df = 2$, 291 and is significant at the .000 level.

As indicated in Table 4, a comparison is shown between the hierarchical regression model without PCI (AO Model I) and the model with PCI added (AO Model II). In AO Model II, level taught is significant at the .010 level when $B = .140$, $t = 2.579$, and gender is significant at the .022 level when $B = .125$, $t = 2.295$. PCI is

significant at the .000 level when $B = -.410$, $t = -7.715$, which shows that a teacher with a lower PCI tends to be a predictor of a higher AO, a moderately strong predictor.

Teaching experience and highest degree attained as predictors of AO are not significant.

The addition of the PCI variable slightly generates level taught as a very weak predictor, and weakens the slight impact of gender as a predictor of academic optimism. The strongest significant predictor is PCI, which has over three times the strength as a predictor of AO, as compared to the other two relatively weak predictors of AO, which are level taught and gender. Level taught becomes a significant predictor of AO when measured in Model II. It becomes a contributor only to the variance in AO when combined with gender and PCI. Table 4 indicates the data analyzed and reveals that AO Model II, with PCI added, established level taught as a weak predictor of AO. The addition of PCI weakened gender as a predictor, but strengthened the overall model to be the best linear combination of measured predictors of variance in academic optimism.

Table 4

Combination of Predictors - AO Model II Indicates the Best Linear Combination of Predictors to Explain Proportion of Variance in Outcome Variable Academic Optimism

Predictors	<u>AO Model I</u>			<u>AO Model II</u>		
	<u>Demographic Variables</u>			<u>Demographic Variables with PCI</u>		
	Sig	B	t	Sig	B	t
Level Taught	.075	.106	1.787	.010	.140*	2.279
Experience	.989	-.001	-.014	.749	.017	.321
Degree	.443	-.044	-.769	.504	-.035	-.669
Gender	.006	.167**	2.796	.022	.125*	2.295
PCI				.000	-.410**	7.715
	R Square = .032, Proportion of Variance in AO Explained by Variables in Model I is 3.2%			R Square = .196, Proportion of Variance in AO Explained by Variables in Model II is 19.6%		

*p<.05, **p<.01

Research Question 4

Which demographic variables, when measured in linear combination with the variable of pupil control ideology, may be predictors of the three constructs that comprise academic optimism, which are teacher self-efficacy, trust, and academic emphasis?

Null hypothesis 4. There are no statistically significant predictors of the three constructs that comprise academic optimism among demographic variables when measured in linear combination with the variable of pupil control ideology.

Self-Efficacy as Outcome Variable

As regressions were performed for each of the components of AO, the outcome variable teacher self-efficacy was considered first. A hierarchical regression statistical analysis was used to measure the demographic variables of level taught, teaching experience, highest degree attained, gender, and the variable PCI as predictors of self-efficacy. As each of the five models was considered, with one variable being added to the prior model, the strength and significance of each model was analyzed. This statistical measurement resulted in the null hypothesis for Research Question 4 being rejected. There are significant predictors of academic optimism among the demographic variables in this study.

The regression model that is the best linear combination of predictors to explain the proportion of variance on self-efficacy is indicated as SE Model II. It shows R square = .209, which means that 20.9% of the variance in self-efficacy is explained by the demographic variables of level taught, teaching experience, highest degree attained, gender, and the variable PCI. An analysis of the ANOVA table revealed that the model is significant at the .000 level, $f = 15.423$, $df = 5, 291$. The R square change from the next strongest model, which is labeled SE Model I, to this model is .116, $df = 2, 291$ and is significant at the .000 level.

In SE Model II, level taught is significant at the .003 level when $B = -.158$, $t =$

-2.944. This inverse relationship indicates that being an elementary level teacher tends to predict a higher level of self-efficacy as compared to secondary teachers, although this predictor is weak. Gender is significant at the .003 level when $B = .163$, $t = 3.013$, which shows that being female tends to predict a higher level of self-efficacy, but this too has weak strength as a predictor; and PCI is significant at the .000 level when $B = -.410$, $t = -7.715$, which shows that a teacher with lower PCI tends to be a predictor of a higher self-efficacy, a moderately strong predictor. Teaching experience and highest degree attained are not significant.

The addition of the PCI slightly lowered the impact of level taught as a predictor and further weakened the impact of gender as a predictor of self-efficacy. The strongest significant predictor, PCI, has over twice the strength as a predictor of self-efficacy as compared to the other two relatively weak predictors of self-efficacy, which are level taught and gender. These relationships are indicated in Table 5, in which the data are noted. The addition of PCI in SE Model II strengthened the overall model to be the best linear combination of measured predictors of variance in academic optimism.

Table 5

Combination of Predictors – SE Model II Indicates the Best Linear Combination of Predictors to Explain Proportion of Variance in Outcome Variable Teacher Self-efficacy

Predictors	<u>SE Model I</u>			<u>SE Model II</u>		
	<u>Demographic Variables</u>			<u>Demographic Variables with PCI</u>		
	Sig	B	t	Sig	B	t
Level Taught	.001	-.187**	-3.262	.003	-.158**	-2.944
Experience	.958	-.003	-.053	.820	.012	.228
Degree	.419	-.045	-.809	.474	-.038	-.718
Gender	.001	.198**	3.433	.003	.163**	3.013
PCI				.000	-.345**	-6.546
	R Square = .093, Proportion of Variance in SE Explained by Model I is 9.3%			R Square = .209, Proportion of Variance in SE Explained by Model II is 20.9%		

*p<.05, **p< .01

Trust as Outcome Variable

The second component of AO that was tested was the outcome variable of trust. A hierarchical regression statistical analysis was used to measure the demographic variables of level taught, teaching experience, highest degree attained, gender, and the variable PCI as predictors of trust. As each of five models was considered, with one

variable being added in each subsequent model to those in prior models, the strength and significance of each model was again analyzed.

The regression model that was the best linear combination of predictors to explain the proportion of variance in trust is labeled Trust Model II. It shows R square = .163, indicating that 16.3% of the variance in trust is explained by the demographic variables of level taught, teaching experience, highest degree attained, gender, and the variable PCI. An analysis of the ANOVA table revealed that the model is significant at the .000 level, $f = 11.335$, $df = 5, 291$. The R square change from the next strongest model, labeled Trust Model I, to this model is .126, $df_2 = 291$, and is significant at the .000 level.

In Trust Model II, level taught is significant at the .000 level when $B = .205$, $t = 3.706$, which indicates that being a secondary level teacher tends to be a predictor of a higher level of trust, although this predictor is moderately weak. Teaching experience, highest degree attained, and gender were not significant. The addition of the PCI variable increased the impact of level taught as a predictor by approximately 15%. The strongest significant predictor is PCI. PCI is significant at the .000 level, $Beta = -.358$, $t = -6.607$. PCI has over 40% more strength as a predictor of trust than the only other significant predictor demographic variable, which was level taught. This shows PCI as a moderate predictor of trust. It is an inverse relationship; therefore, a teacher with lower control ideology tends to have a predicted higher level of trust. Being a teacher on the secondary level tends to be a somewhat weak but significant predictor of a higher level of trust in parents and students as compared to teachers on the elementary level. Table 6 indicates the data analyzed and the relationships that resulted. The addition of PCI in Trust Model

II strengthened the overall model to be the best linear combination of measured predictors of variance in academic optimism.

Table 6

Combination of Predictors - Trust Model II Indicates the Best Linear Combination of Predictors to Explain Proportion of Variance in Outcome Variable Trust

Predictors	<u>Trust Model I</u>			<u>Trust Model II</u>		
	<u>Demographic Variables</u>			<u>Demographic Variables with PCI</u>		
	Sig	B	t	Sig	B	t
Level Taught	.003	.176**	2.970	.000	.205**	3.706
Experience	.520	.037	.644	.330	.053	.977
Degree	.120	-.090	-1.559	.129	-.082	1.521
Gender	.683	.024	.409	.834	-.012	.210
PCI				.000	-.358**	6.607
R Square = .037, Proportion of			R Square = .163, Proportion of			
Variance in Trust Explained by			Variance in Trust Explained by			
Variables in Model I is 3.7%			Variables in Model II is 16.3%			

*p<.05, **p< .01

Academic Emphasis as Outcome Variable

The third component of AO that was tested was the outcome variable of academic emphasis. A hierarchical regression statistical analysis was used to measure the demographic variables of level taught, teaching experience, highest degree attained,

gender, and the variable PCI as predictors of academic emphasis. The comparison of the five resulting models was analyzed. The regression model that is the best linear combination of predictors to explain the proportion of variance in trust is indicated as AcEm Model II. It shows R square = .128, indicating that 12.8% of the variance in academic emphasis is explained by the demographic variables of level taught, teaching experience, highest degree attained, gender, and the variable PCI. An analysis of the ANOVA table revealed that the model is significant at the .000 level, $f = 8.507$, $df = 5$, 291. The R square change from the next strongest model, which is indicated as AcEm Model I, to AcEm Model II is .128, $df = 2$, 291 and is significant at the .000 level.

In the AcEm Model II, level taught is significant at the .000 level when $B = .321$, $t = 5.668$, which indicates that teaching on the secondary level tends to be a moderate predictor of a higher level of academic emphasis. Teaching experience, highest degree attained, and gender are not significant. The addition of the PCI variable in AcEm Model II increased the impact of level taught as a predictor by approximately 5%. Level taught was the strongest variable in this model and was made stronger by the addition of the PCI. PCI is significant at the .000 level, $Beta = -.196$, $t = -3.546$.

This model is unique as it is the only regression analysis in which PCI had less strength as a predictor of the outcome variable (40% less) than a demographic variable, which in this case was level taught. PCI continues to have an inverse relationship with academic emphasis; therefore, a teacher with lower control ideology tends to have a predicted higher level of academic emphasis, but the PCI's more powerful effect is in combination with the stronger predictor of academic emphasis, which is level taught. Being a teacher on the secondary level tends to be more a predictor of academic emphasis

than being a teacher on the elementary level. The data regarding the relationships in this model are expressed in Table 7. The addition of PCI in AcEm Model II strengthened the overall model to be the best linear combination of measured predictors of variance in academic optimism.

Table 7

Combination of Predictors – AcEm Model II Indicates the Best Linear Combination of Predictors to Explain Proportion of Variance in Outcome Variable Academic Emphasis

Predictors	<u>Ac Em Model I</u>			<u>Ac Em Model II</u>		
	<u>Demographic Variables</u>			<u>Demographic Variables with PCI</u>		
	Sig	B	t	Sig	B	t
Level Taught	.000	.304**	5.294	.000	.321**	5.668
Experience	.654	-.025	-.449	.762	-.017	-.303
Degree	.661	.025	.439	.599	.029	.527
Gender	.078	.102	1.767	.149	.028	1.446
PCI				.000	-.196**	-3.546
R Square = .090, Proportion of			R Square = .128, Proportion of			
Variance in AcEm Explained by			Variance in AcEm Explained by			
Variables in Model I is 9.0%			Variables in Model II is 12.8%			

*p<.05, **p< .01

Research Question 5

What relationships exist among demographic variables and pupil control ideology, academic optimism, self-efficacy, trust, and academic emphasis when these variables are transformed dichotomously into high and low categories?

Null hypothesis 5. There are no statistically significant relationships between demographic variables and pupil control ideology, academic optimism, self-efficacy, trust, and academic emphasis when transformed dichotomously into high and low categories.

Spearman's rho was used to measure the relationship among the demographic variables of level taught, teaching experience, highest degree attained, and gender with the variables of PCI, AO, self-efficacy, trust, and academic emphasis when all the variables were compared using dichotomously divided high and low categories. To do this, Tuckman (1972) suggests using the median score to determine the high and low break. He further suggests that the break can be in three categories or tertiles, although in this study only two categories were identified, hence the method is referred to as dichotomization.

An unintended consequence of dichotomizing variables is a loss of power in the measurement (MacCallum, Zhang, Preacher, & Rucker, 2002). This was done in this study to view the relationships from a human tendency to categorize people and things within our environment, rather than quantifying these same people or things along a continuum or according to a scaled score. Table 8 indicates the median split of the continuous construct variables.

Table 8

Median Splits Used to Transform Continuous Construct Variables into Nominal Variables

Continuous Variable	Median Split	Resulting Nominal Variable Categories
Pupil Control Ideology	52.00	Custodial and Humanistic
Academic Optimism	512.42	High AO and Low AO
Teacher Self-Efficacy	498.44	High SE and Low SE
Trust	529.98	High Trust and Low Trust
Academic Emphasis	517.02	High Ac Em. and Low Ac. Em.

Spearman's rho was chosen as the statistical test due to its preferred use with categorical ranks, such as high and low, rather than the actual data values. This statistical measurement resulted in the null hypothesis for Research Question 5 to be rejected, as there were statistically significant relationships that resulted from these measurements. The results of significant relationships between demographic variables and the outcome variables that were transformed into two categories are described in the following paragraphs. As with the splitting of the experience variable for the hierarchical regressions to answer Research Questions 3 and 4, the same median split process was used to divide teaching experience into two categories to allow it to be measured with the

other nominal demographic variables in this Spearman's rho measurement in Research Question 5. Those teachers below the median were categorized as the "growth tier" and those teachers above the median experience level, which was fifteen years of experience, were categorized as "the maturity tier."

The level taught and PCI relationship was significant at the .004 level, correlation coefficient .165. This is a weak relationship. This showed that teaching on the elementary level tended to correlate with a humanistic pupil control ideology, and teaching on the secondary level tended to correlate with a custodial pupil control ideology. Level taught was also related to self-efficacy. This relationship was significant at the .000 level, correlation coefficient -.207. This inverse relationship showed that elementary teaching tended to correlate with higher self-efficacy, and secondary teaching tended to correlate with lower self-efficacy. The third transformed construct that was divided into two categories was trust. The relationship between level taught and trust was significant at the .000 level, correlation coefficient .272. This relationship is borderline moderate. The interpretation of this relationship is that teaching on the secondary level tended to correlate with higher trust levels in parents and students. Level taught also had a significant relationship to academic emphasis, which was significant at the .000 level, correlation coefficient .292. This indicates that secondary teaching tended to correlate with a higher level of academic emphasis as compared to elementary teachers. Relationships between demographic variable level taught and dichotomized continuous outcome variables transformed into higher and lower categories are shown in Table 9.

The other demographic variable that had a significant relationship with an outcome variable that was split into a high and low category was gender. The gender and academic optimism relationship was significant at the .003 level, correlation coefficient .171. This weak relationship showed that being a female tended to correlate with higher academic optimism as compared to males. The gender and self-efficacy relationship was significant at the .003 level, and it too had a correlation coefficient of .171. This indicated that being a female tended to correlate with higher self-efficacy as compared to males. These relationships are shown in Table 10. No other demographic variables had a significant relationship with a construct variable that was transformed into two distinct high and low categories using a median split.

Table 9

*Significant Relationships between Demographic Variable Level Taught and
Dichotomized Continuous Variables Transformed into Higher and Lower Categories*

Level Taught	High/Low Outcome Variable Categorized	r	Sig
	<u>Pupil Control Ideology</u>	.165**	.004
Elementary	↔ Humanistic		
Secondary	↔ Custodial		
	<u>Self-Efficacy</u>	-.207**	.000
Elementary	↔ Higher Self-Efficacy		
Secondary	↔ Lower Self-Efficacy		
	<u>Trust</u>	.272**	.000
Elementary	↔ Lower Trust		
Secondary	↔ Higher Trust		
	<u>Academic Emphasis</u>	.292**	.000
Elementary	↔ Lower Academic Emphasis		
Secondary	↔ Higher Academic Emphasis		

*p<.05, **p<.01

Table 10

Significant Relationships between Demographic Variable Gender and Dichotomized Continuous Variables Transformed into Higher and Lower Categories

Gender	High/Low Outcome Variable Categorized	r	Sig
	<u>Academic Optimism</u>		
Males	↔ Lower AO	.171**	.003
Females	↔ Higher AO		
	<u>Self-Efficacy</u>		
Males	↔ Lower Self-Efficacy	.171**	.003
Females	↔ Higher Self-Efficacy		

*p<.05, **p<.01

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Overview and Summary of Findings

Informed interventions with teachers may be made using data from this PCI-AO study. Raising the level of awareness, understanding desirable ways to accelerate learning, and eliciting productive behaviors in students could be better understood using the data that the study generated. Skinner (1963) expressed that reinforcing targeted behaviors to bring forth other desired behaviors is an important component of his behavior modification theory.

The results of this study, which indicate that a humanistic approach to control and learning correlates with higher academic optimism, may help an education leader understand the interaction between teachers and students. It may also reinforce the behaviors most appropriate to raise teacher academic optimism, while also raising the chances of increased academic progress of the students. A lack of awareness of these concepts and under what conditions they arise may promote teacher behaviors that are counter-productive to effective teaching. These data may help narrow the gap between what the teacher believes and the teacher's classroom management practices, through working on those human elements of teaching that fosters trust, optimism, and genuine connections to student learners.

The purpose of this study was fulfilled due to the knowledge expansion regarding what builds academic optimism. This could assist a principal in class assignments, problem identification, and being informed about organizational decisions involving teachers and students. Coupling these data with the data from previous studies, such as

Denig's study (1996) in which he found that humanistic teachers have a more positive self-concept and less teacher burnout, could give a principal or superintendent useful knowledge for hiring and retention decisions. Core values and how these values are manifested in a classroom, through strategies used for pupil control, do influence the achievements of students.

Research Question 1

This PCI-AO study showed that a significant relationship exists between pupil control ideology and academic optimism. The literature suggests that a more humanistic approach to managing a class has a correlation with an optimistic view of learning, and the results of this study complement this. Pupil control ideology can be identified as a component of one's beliefs and behavior system that impacts academic optimism. A principal or other education leader may be able to use this information for enhanced student learning. Professional development, especially in teachers' early formative years, may prove to be worthwhile to help teachers bolster their humanistic qualities. This may be done within a structure of knowing that not one specific model of behaviors or beliefs was found to promote AO, but certain tendencies in handling classroom situations may be better suited to successful teaching when considering the human side of situations. Humanistic thinking and actions may not be present in every circumstance, but using this information while promoting collaboration, understanding, and a collegial atmosphere for learning, may be well-suited for education leaders to embrace.

As the process of collaboration within schools grows through the use of professional learning communities and emphasis on articulation, a receptive and open disposition may be able to generate more meaningful discourse. Considering Eick's

assertion (2009) that diverse populations of students may be over-disciplined, this construct of humanistic teacher behavior correlating with AO may help teachers and administrators reevaluate how students are being treated and they may begin to consider more positive behavior supports with diverse populations of students. These positive behavior supports could help with teacher accountability, should test scores increase with this change. An education leader's vision of learning and the message to teachers of expectations could include the data from this study. A leader should look for data to support the idea that a more flexible view of learning is not a sign of weakness, but may be a sign that the students are respected and viewed through a lens of sensitivity and concern for their education.

Control of students could be placed within the context that consideration of the human element should consistently be present in decision making. This study also demonstrates evidence that other elements of a teacher's life, in addition to PCI, generate AO. One's manner of upbringing, the climate in the school, and religious beliefs, as suggested in Chapter II, are components that formulate a teacher's outlook on life, teaching, and learning.

Further synthesis of how pupil control ideology relates to academic optimism may be viewed through a portal of respect, trust, patience, interest, and concern; and a classroom environment can be established in which a humanistic approach to classroom control can thrive. The idea of exchanging these constructs in a back and forth manner should enable students to understand and appreciate the optimistic view of learning. Hester et al. (2003) expresses that a teacher's PCI is not a one-time occurrence, but a set of practices that reflect beliefs which, in turn, establish a culture within a classroom. This

culture can then generate the trusting relationships that allow the teacher to soften the control while allowing the students to respond to the learning optimistically. This cycle may build self-efficacy with the teacher, and it may ultimately result in the higher academic achievement that academic optimism has been found to promote.

Research Question 2

Extracting the three components of academic optimism and testing each to determine its relationship with pupil control ideology also showed significant relationships. PCI and self-efficacy had the same correlation coefficient as did PCI and AO. It may be inferred that self-efficacy is the most influential of the sub-constructs that comprise AO, and the research gives validity to this inference. Bandura's self-efficacy studies strongly suggest that the introspection and self-inventories that take place in a teacher who may exhibit high self-efficacy generate many of the constructs that are important to why academic optimism tends to generate higher levels of student achievement. The literature suggests that a humanistic PCI promotes this.

In this research question, it was also found there was a correlation between lower trust levels and custodial PCI. Once again, the literature suggests that a strict inflexible teacher tends to be less trusting than a humanistic teacher. One may conclude that a more custodial way of controlling students may have a negative impact on a teacher's self-efficacy and trust of students and parents. The PCI's impact on how they view their internal beliefs may be reflected by their level of self-efficacy and trust. The construct among these that showed no relationship was emphasis on academics. There tended to be no correlation between a teacher's PCI and the emphasis that teacher puts on academic achievement.

Research Question 3

Being a teacher on the secondary level influenced the variance in AO only when combined with the variables of gender and PCI. The constructs of trust and emphasis on academics may be more easily promoted with older students, and life skills, social skills, and character education may be more strongly emphasized on the elementary level in favor of an emphasis on challenging rigor that is experienced on the secondary level. Nonetheless, being female tended to be a predictor of higher academic optimism, which must be considered in the analysis of the AO predictor model. The variable remaining most influential in predicting the level of AO was the variable of PCI. When combining all the variables, teaching experience and highest degree earned had no significant impact on AO.

Lee, Loeb, and Marks (1995) expressed that men tend to be more involved in school level decisions, which can be interpreted as having more control. This could translate also into a higher, more custodial manner of controlling students, more so than with females. The research supports that the type of system in which the teacher teaches also has a bearing on how control emerges (Lee et al., 1995). A more loosely coupled system may promote social groups along gender lines, mostly among males, and may be a factor in the control ideology exercised and its influence on AO (Weick, 1976). The literature suggests that females may feel a need to be stricter in a male-dominated hierarchy, but female strictness did not emerge in this study.

Research Question 4

The investigation of how demographic variables predicted the three constructs of AO, which are self-efficacy, trust, and academic emphasis, also indicated significant relationships. In contrast to overall AO, in the measurement of which variables predicted self-efficacy, being an elementary teacher tended to be a predictor of higher levels of self-efficacy and being female also tended to be a predictor of higher levels of self-efficacy. As in the prediction of AO, the strongest predictor of self-efficacy was the teacher's level of PCI, and the inverse relationship existed with self-efficacy as it did with AO. The second construct investigated in this research question was trust. Teaching on the secondary level tended to be a predictor of higher levels of trust. This paralleled the finding of AO. Secondary teachers may feel that establishing deeper cognitive roots with students could allow for a more trusting relationship. The humanistic PCI scores were again even stronger predictors of trust.

Regarding academic emphasis, teachers on the secondary level may tend to emphasize academics more strongly than elementary teachers, and although PCI was a significant predictor of academic emphasis, it was teaching on the secondary level that was the strongest predictor of academic emphasis in the model considered. The data showed that AO is not an amplification of each sub-construct, but when broken out, these three concepts act differently in the measurements. Hoy et al. (2006) emphasized that student achievement was a function of these unique qualities, but only as they came together as academic optimism and not as standalone constructs.

Research Question 5

This research question was measured with Spearman's rho correlation of the categorical relationships between the demographic variables and the constructs of AO and its sub-constructs. Data showed a weak relationship between elementary teaching and a more humanistic pupil control ideology and secondary teaching and a more custodial PCI. It indicated that teaching on the elementary level tended to correlate with higher self-efficacy, more so than teaching on the secondary level. It showed that teaching on the elementary level tended to correlate with a lower trust level of students and parents compared to correlating with higher trust levels of teaching on the secondary level. Teaching on the secondary level tended to correlate with a higher academic emphasis. Data from the research question also indicated that males tended to correlate with lower academic optimism than females, and females tended to correlate with higher levels of self-efficacy, but again this relationship was weak. Gardner (2005) and the Rosenfelds (2008) studied the influence of emotions on self-efficacy, and the ability to investigate an inner emotional awareness could be an explanation for the tendency for higher self-efficacy scores among female teachers, which is an unanticipated result of this study.

Most of the relationships that emerged from these categorical measurements emerged also in prior measurements of demographic variables as predictors of AO and its sub-constructs. There was one exception. Level taught was a weak predictor of AO, but it did not significantly correlate with AO in this categorical measurement. It gained strength as a predictor of AO only when measured with PCI in the regression analysis for

answering Research Question 3. This may be an indicator of the power of measuring variables in combination with other variables, specifically PCI.

Also, although there was a weak significant relationship between teaching on the elementary level and having a humanistic PCI as indicated in the categorical measurement using Spearman's rho in Research Question 5, and although this study found that a humanistic PCI correlated with higher AO in Research Question 1, it must not be inferred that level taught also correlated with academic optimism for, in this study, it did not.

Related Research and Recommendations

Hoy's theories regarding trust are expanded and explained in an article he co-authored with John Tarter entitled "Organizational Justice in Schools: No Justice Without Trust" (Hoy & Tarter, 2004). In the article, the assertion is made to match leadership qualities to the situation in which the leadership traits are best suited. It is also mentioned that leaders who establish fair, yet flexible, policies will command trust more readily than leaders who are not poised and calm during difficult situations. The applications of AO are reflected in these assertions. There is a relationship to the authors' suggestions for leadership that can be connected to teacher behaviors in the classroom. Projecting the article's suggestions to pertain not only to education leaders but also to teacher effectiveness may be beneficial. Matching talent and situations that make sense in assigning teachers can be combined with the data from this PCI-AO study. It may help education leaders to manage their schools.

The manner in which justice is handled in education is strongly related to trust according to the authors. The idea of justice added to the theoretical foundations of

promoting a trusting environment may be a reasonable construct to study as a complement to this study of control and optimism. Further investigation may uncover the necessity to identify what type of trust exists in an organization. A heavily controlled system or an overbound system may stifle trust. Conversely, an underbound system can be so loosely connected that it could encourage conflict and work against trust (Alderfer, 1979). Education leaders may be well served to delve into the myriad parts of their organization to identify how they work in harmony to maintain a balance and not tilt too severely in either direction. This harmonious and congruent strategy could generate trust, leading to an atmosphere of openness and progress.

When Hoy and Tarter tested their theory, they found that the principal is the main influence in establishing an atmosphere of trust and justice. Principals can model a humanistic control ideology, be trusting, have self-efficacy, and emphasize high standards to blend academic optimism into this trust/justice model. This can be used as the prototype for teachers to follow in their classes to treat students appropriately while enhancing learning. This trust and justice concept can also be measured among teachers and their students. The level of justice a student feels is being exercised in a classroom by a teacher could be an interesting next step for measurement and analysis. This PCI-AO study reflects teacher beliefs. Knowledge of student beliefs about the educational environment could be important for leaders to better understand a broader level of stakeholder conditions, especially with the students, who are the primary stakeholders.

Another educational issue related to this study is that of teacher accountability. It brings the opening framework of this study back into focus as a main issue in education. How and why teachers are held accountable for management of students, which affects

student learning, is interconnected. The relationship between awareness of justice, levels of perceived trust by students and parents regarding the teacher, and the extent to which teacher accountability may be measured through student test scores and perceived levels of fairness could generate further insight into building a healthy classroom environment and additional research data in this area.

It may also be helpful to continue these studies using a different methodology. Although most of the studies reviewed used broad research covering various constructs with large samples, the body of knowledge could be complemented by the investigation of individual manifestations of the constructs. This could be done by conducting studies that are qualitative and that offer a view into the complexities of how and why certain educators think and act as they do.

Teacher accountability is in the forefront of educational discourse and law making, as evidenced by the merit pay issues, value added evaluations, No Child Left Behind mandates and funding, and a strong emphasis on testing. School districts are being forced to account for the progress of every student, even those who may not be educated within their home school. As this is done, teacher accountability becomes a cornerstone of the process. According to New Jersey's Education Transformation Task Force (New Jersey Department of Education, 2011) Executive Order 58 charged the Task Force to review existing accountability systems and to conduct a comprehensive review of education statutes and regulations. Many of these statutes and regulations are state funded and, through an investigation of how our accountability systems may work more efficiently, the funds could be used more effectively to promote student learning.

The Task Force indicated that to help teachers in this accountability process and enhance student learning, more resources could be put into early childhood education and parent involvement, but teachers must be open to these changes and see that their role in these issues is one of generating human capital through humanistic teaching and an optimistic attitude.

George Bass, at the 2010 Consortium for Research on Educational Accountability and Teacher Evaluation held at the College of William and Mary, expressed that teacher accountability is better judged through multiple pathways including teacher effort, implementation of appropriate methods, obtaining regular feedback by education leaders, understanding what is important for students to learn, pre- and post-testing to measure growth, and considering climate, attitude, and evaluations that look at teacher and student behaviors (Bass, 2010). It is through broad, complex, and omnipresent positive influences that educational improvement, funding, and teacher accountability should be based. It was found through this study that teachers with a more humanistic approach to student control and learning tended to have a higher level of academic optimism which, in turn, affects student achievement. It is a reminder of the variety of variables that affect learning. To quantify learning and teacher accountability through any specified rating scale may be a narrowly focused strategy for student learning. Should lawmakers and education leaders create laws, regulations, and funding formulas that use a broader approach to teacher accountability, there may be stronger buy-in by teachers and unions; and it may enhance student achievement and learning.

Efforts teachers make toward enhancing student learning should reflect their belief in the students. Sustained efforts should help the students generate the desired

outcomes (Bandura, 1977). Tutoring, drop-out prevention programs, and extended-day programs for at-risk students are some examples of how an education leader could work with teachers to outwardly demonstrate to students and the community that the educators believe that all students can learn. This may take some extra effort and collaboration, but coupled with the celebration of success, the structural, humanistic, and symbolic frames of the system may converge to produce a positive learning environment.

Policy development should also be reflective of explicit strategies that guide staff members regarding how best to apply rules that reflect the spirit of what the rule is meant to accomplish. Codes of conduct should not precipitate teacher action only for punitive reasons and should be age appropriate. Teacher standards should be spelled out in policy to guide student behaviors in constructive ways to reflect guided improvement.

Principals may also want to review their master schedules to reflect an awareness of support teachers need to avoid the emotional exhaustion that can result more readily in environments that lack sensitivity. This may also promote self-efficacy among the teachers. Public education leaders may also wish to delve into the background of the teacher preparation program from which the teaching candidates come to determine if the teachers are from a preparation program that shares the support structures needed for student progress.

Conclusion

A connection of this study to the literature was apparent in much of the data. Public opinion about teacher accountability remained strong throughout the two years of this study. The public opinion data charge teachers to perform at higher levels to improve education (Howell et al., 2011). The research of Bass (2010) suggests that

multiple pathways to address the accountability are needed. These multiple pathways are reflected in the researchers' choice to investigate the construct variables, along with demographic variables, as led by the literature; and it bore fruitful results. One of the most anticipated outcomes of the study was the correlation between PCI and AO, which revealed that as the level of strictness moved downward, the level of AO moved upward. The research of Hoy et al. (2006) expresses this indirectly, although it was not specifically tested in their studies.

There was a reliance on the outcomes revealed in Hoy's research to generate the connection between PCI, AO, and student achievement. Although prior research states that higher academic optimism tends to be related to higher levels of student achievement while controlling for socio-economic factors, student achievement was not tested as an outcome of this PCI-AO study. To strengthen the meaning of the relationships revealed, and their implications to higher student achievement, further study could bring the student achievement outcome more closely into focus. As an example, a regression analysis could be developed to determine how background and construct variables used in this PCI-AO study may predict student achievement, as measured by student scores on state assessments or locally developed assessments. Student achievement could be used in future PCI-AO studies as the outcome variable to measure the predictive qualities of pupil control ideology and academic optimism on student achievement. Adding this component may generate data that provide a broader understanding of the qualities of academic optimism. This PCI-AO study focuses on the variables that relate to academic optimism and depends on prior research to bridge the relationship to student achievement.

Such research may be found in the work of Gregory and Cornell (2009), Willower et al. (1973), and Lunenburg (1990). These researchers studied pupil control and established that the humanistic manner of the treatment of students facilitated desirable outcomes in student learning. A reasonable projection of this study was to relate this knowledge specifically to academic optimism. The expectation that the main research question would result as it did was anticipated; and although the relationship was not overwhelmingly strong, it was moderate and significant.

The results of the first research question opened the gateway to the analysis of other relationships, such as control and self-efficacy, which had a weaker but still moderate relationship. In the literature, the suggestions made by Bandura et al. (1996) that self-efficacy may arise through purposeful self-awareness gives credence to this outcome; and it too would be an outcome that one may have anticipated along with the rationale regarding why there was a moderate relationship between PCI and trust. In contrast, the literature did not point to a relationship between the higher academic emphasis a teacher stresses in a classroom and being a teacher on the secondary level; nonetheless, there was a weak relationship between these two variables.

Garrison and Holifield (2005) stated in the literature that students can achieve mastery regardless of the setting. The results of the influences the demographic variables had on AO were minimal; therefore, it may be concluded that this study agrees with their outcomes. Level taught and gender each had weak influences as predictors of AO in the hierarchical regression measurement. This demographic influence was consistent in the measurement of self-efficacy. Bandura's self-efficacy theories continued to be present in

the results of the study, as self-efficacy and AO had very similar strength in the hierarchical regression measurements.

When trust was separated and tested with PCI and the demographic variables, some surprising and unanticipated data became evident. Trust showed a stronger relationship among secondary teachers. Perhaps Hill and O'Hara's (2005) Cognitive Theory of Trust is more of a complex theory, more often manifested in upper grades. They discuss keying in on external cues and purposeful development of a trusting connection between the teacher and student. The collective cooperation of students in a class also supports the concept that trust may be easier to develop on the secondary level. That a humanistic PCI was a predictor of trust remained congruent with the literature and it too was anticipated. A genuinely interested teacher who establishes a cooperative learning environment builds both a humanistic and trusting culture.

An area that demonstrated a need for further research is reflected in the results of the regression model that sought to identify the predictors of academic emphasis. This was the only model in which the demographic variable, in this case level taught, had more strength than the variable of PCI. The literature did not suggest this outcome; and although one could speculate that other developmental skills are being emphasized on the elementary level, perhaps impeding the time spent on stronger academic challenges, empirical data would be a valuable tool to explain this relationship. As has been suggested in the literature synthesis, qualitative studies to determine why this relationship resulted would be useful. This would be congruent with the suggestion of Beard et al. (2009) to explore the individual and collective variables more in depth in the future study

of AO. As academic emphasis is a component of AO, it would be helpful in the understanding of that construct as well.

A surprising outcome of the study was that neither the experience of the teacher, nor the degree level of the teacher resulted in a significant relationship with any of the continuous construct variables tested in the study. Huberman (1989) and Rideout and Windle (2010) indicated in their studies that teachers may vacillate in their pupil control ideology at different stages of their career, but there was no pattern that arose in the data of this study that supported their findings. Regarding degree attainment yielding significant relationships within this study, Clotfelter et al. (2007) found that teacher credentials, including of teacher test scores, teaching experience, licensure, graduate degree, National Board certification, and quality of undergraduate institution, tended to affect student achievement in specific areas, which could have been related to academic optimism. When higher degree attainment was considered by itself, it showed little effect on student learning outcomes in the Clotfelter study and had no significant effect in this PCI-AO study.

The consideration of what an education leader could do to enhance academic optimism and ultimately enhance student learning may be more meaningful using data from this study. The data yielded results that may help teachers and administrators to develop teacher dispositions which may assist student learning (Thornton, 2006). What a teacher is disposed to do and how it is manifested may be gleaned from the data. How this impacts learning could benefit education leaders when guiding and teaching. The exploration of pupil control ideologies in elementary settings through high school settings could enhance the study of academic optimism. Education leaders assisting with

successful instruction, through the understanding of specific constructs detailed in this study, may impact student learning

As Hoy found that academic optimism affects student outcomes, the teacher who exhibits such optimism may be considered the ideal teacher, but not all educators and researchers agree. Aronon and Reichel (2007) expressed that images of the ideal teacher vary greatly, originating from our concept of ancient philosophers. From Plato's description of a teacher as an artist in the use of knowledge to Aristotle's description of a teacher as a role model, what makes a good teacher is subjective.

This PCI-AO study is based upon the opinion and self-assessment of the teacher respondents to a survey. Ascertaining how the results would be different had another group of stakeholders been surveyed would add to the outcomes of this study.

For example, Aronon and Reichel (2007) found that students feel that teachers having knowledge of subject matter is important, as is the interaction between the instructor and the students. They concluded that students allude to issues of respect, security, and sincerity when describing the ideal teacher. These traits are congruent with the components of humanist control ideology. Had the students been surveyed, it may be theorized that the students' scores of their teachers who have high humanistic pupil control ideology would be the same for teachers who have high academic optimism. Such future research may be an interesting and useful as a complement to the results of this study.

To investigate demographic influences beyond the scope of this PCI-AO study's results, as obtained through teacher surveys in the suburban GH school districts, it may be helpful to test the information presented in an urban context to generate additional

insight. As Eick (2009) expresses in her research that high poverty districts in urban centers tend to have less experienced teachers and higher teacher mobility rates, this could possibly affect the pupil control ideologies of teachers. Eick's findings, coupled with those of Rice (2010), who indicates that teacher quality in high poverty schools is linked to lower student achievement, could be contributing variables resulting in higher levels of PCI and lower levels of AO, but this conclusion would need to be tested in that context.

Lunenberg (1990) contributes to this idea by stating that teacher PCI may rise in high-poverty urban districts, contributing to one-way communication and distrust within a more punitive atmosphere. How the data may emerge in such a climate would be worthy of investigation. The school and district socio-economic conditions, if changed from those that exist in the districts tested in this PCI-AO study, should be recognized as possibly influencing the data outcomes if measured in future studies of the PCI-AO relationships.

Closing Statement

This study began with a statement that teacher effectiveness is important to the American public. A national study from 2007 was used as the foundation for the argument that teacher accountability and effectiveness need to be strengthened in public schools (Howell, West, & Peterson, 2007). As this was the springboard to determine what traits, beliefs, and actions of teachers could be better understood to bring the body of knowledge closer to this understanding, the literature directed the research toward investigating pupil control ideology and academic optimism.

As the study came to a close, the same research consortium of public opinion from Harvard University's Program on Education Policy and Governance (PEPG) updated their national public opinion survey (Howell et al., 2011). The information indicates that the public is supportive of school vouchers and feels that public education needs to improve. The survey covers opinions from No Child Left Behind to the support of charter schools and teacher merit pay, and it concludes with the message that accountability of the personnel in the schools, inclusive of teachers, is one of the most critical issues facing public education today.

The research and the data revealed in this PCI-AO study may assist education leaders and teachers in the accountability process. It may improve their understanding of how the constructs of pupil control ideology and academic optimism interact in the classroom, which may, in turn, help education leaders elicit teacher behaviors that enhance student learning. Knowledge of the relationships between pupil control ideology and academic optimism may be instrumental in the development of humanistic teaching and may provide evidence on which to build the appropriate conditions to effectively teach diverse learners within an evolving educational system.

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Appendix A

Letter of Solicitation to Superintendent

(Personalized for each district to which the letter was sent)

March 13, 2011

Dear Superintendent,

Thank you for your prior communication concerning approval to survey the teachers in your public school district. I am working on my Doctorate of Education degree at Seton Hall University. My dissertation involves researching the relationship between the pupil control ideology of teachers and academic optimism. Academic optimism is comprised of trust, teacher efficacy, and the belief that students can succeed.

I am respectfully requesting your approval for me to email a survey to the teachers in your school district. The survey will measure each teacher's pupil control ideology and the teacher's level of academic optimism. The survey will be used to help answer the question, "Is there a relationship between the teachers' pupil control ideology and the teacher's level of academic optimism?"

The survey would be administered through www.surveymonkey.com and takes approximately eight minutes to complete. The procedures I am proposing are as follows:

1. Initial Email Contact with the Superintendent
 - Request approval to survey the teachers
 - Wait for superintendent's response
 - The superintendent's approval will be included as part of the application to Seton Hall's Internal Review Board (IRB) soliciting the Board's approval to begin collecting dissertation data
2. Follow up with the Superintendent
 - Solicit any questions
 - Ask if the superintendent would prefer if I worked through another central office staff member
3. Await Seton Hall IRB Approval
 - Approval process could take 1-2 months
4. Data Collection
 - Upon IRB approval, begin survey process
 - Ask superintendent to alert principals to expect an introductory/explanatory email from me
 - Send the introductory email to the principal and ask that the teachers be informed that the survey will be forthcoming
 - After the introductory email is sent to the principal, the instructions and survey link will be emailed to the principal with the request that the email be forwarded to the teachers so they may complete the survey
 - Teachers complete the survey and submit it online

5. Additional Information

- Voluntary Nature of the Survey – Participation in this study is completely voluntary.
- Survey - The survey being used is comprised of instruments copyrighted to, and used with permission from, Wayne K. Hoy, who pioneered the research on academic optimism. Some items from this Likert-type survey will have response options of *strongly disagree*, *disagree*, *undecided*, *agree*, and *strongly agree*. Sample items in this category are:
 - a. Pupils can be trusted to work together without supervision.
 - b. Pupils are usually not capable of solving their problems through logical reasoning.

The next set of items will have response options of *nothing*, *very little*, *some influence*, *quite a bit*, and *a great deal*. Samples are:

- a. How much can you do to get students to believe they can do well in school?
- b. How much can you do to motivate students who show low interest in school work?

A third set of items will have responses with options of *never*, *rarely*, *sometimes*, *often*, and *always*. Sample items are:

- a. I have confidence in my students.
- b. I give my students challenging work.

All survey items are available for perusal.

- Anonymity - The district, schools, and the teachers will remain anonymous in the study.
- Confidentiality – Data will be stored confidentially on a USB memory device, and locked in a secure cabinet.
- Records – Confidentiality of records will be maintained. Records will only be accessed by me.
- Risk – There is no reasonable indicator that risk is involved in this survey
- Benefits to Subjects – There are no monetary rewards or prizes for participants, although there is an overall benefit of knowledge regarding the data analysis of the study, which will be provided to the district upon completion of the dissertation.

My contact information is indicated above. I would be honored to have your approval to administer this study in your public school district. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Michael Gilbert

Appendix B

Letter of Informed Consent to Teachers



August 2011

Dear Teacher,

This is an introductory Letter of Informed Consent and explanation of a survey that will be the cornerstone of my dissertation. I am working on my Doctorate of Education degree at Seton Hall University. My dissertation involves researching the relationship between the pupil control ideology of teachers and academic optimism. Academic optimism is comprised of trust, teacher efficacy, and the belief that students can succeed.

I am respectfully requesting your voluntary participation in this survey. The link to the survey is included in this email provided through www.surveymonkey.com. The survey takes approximately five to ten minutes to complete. I explained to your superintendent that I would provide this copy of this Informed Consent letter with the emailed survey.

The district, schools, and the teachers will remain anonymous in the study.

Informed Consent

- Participation in this study is completely voluntary.
- The survey being used is comprised of instruments copyrighted to, and used with permission from, Wayne K. Hoy, who pioneered the research on academic optimism. Items from this Likert-type survey will have response options such as strongly disagree, disagree, undecided, agree, and strongly agree. Sample items are:
 - c. Pupils can be trusted to work together without supervision.
 - d. Pupils are usually not capable of solving their problems through logical reasoning.
- Data will be stored confidentially on a USB memory device, and locked in a secure cabinet.
- Confidentiality of records will be maintained. Records will only be accessed by me.
- There is no reasonable indicator that risk is involved in this survey.
- There are no monetary rewards or prizes for participants, although there is an overall benefit of knowledge regarding the data analysis of the study, which will be provided to the district upon completion of the dissertation.

Consent to participate will be indicated by submitting the completed survey to me electronically, through SurveyMonkey.com .

My contact information is above. If you need further clarification or if you have any questions at all, please let me know. Thank you for considering my request.

Sincerely,

Michael Gilbert

Appendix C
Email to Teachers

(Personalized for each school district; sent on multiple days throughout September 2011)

September 2011

Dear Teacher,

As per prior arrangement with your school system, I am respectfully requesting your voluntary participation in the survey linked below, which will be the cornerstone of my dissertation. To view an Informed Consent Letter with further explanation, please open the attachment. Your participation is highly valued. When you click the link below, the survey will appear and you may begin. It will take you approximately 7-10 minutes to complete.

Survey Link:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/MichaelGilbertSECSetonHallDissertation>

Thank you.

Michael Gilbert
Director of Educational Services
Hamilton Township School District

Informed Consent Letter.doc
49K View Download

Appendix D
Form PCI

Form PCI

Directions: Following are twenty statements about schools, teachers, and pupils. Please indicate your personal opinion about each statement from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Your answers are confidential.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. It is desirable to require pupils to sit in assigned seats during assemblies.	①	②	③	④	⑤
2. Pupils are usually not capable of solving their problems through logical reasoning.	①	②	③	④	⑤
3. Directing sarcastic remarks toward a defiant pupil is a good disciplinary technique.	①	②	③	④	⑤
4. Beginning teachers are not likely to maintain strict enough control over their pupils.	①	②	③	④	⑤
5. Teachers should consider revision of their teaching methods if these are criticized by their pupils.	①	②	③	④	⑤
6. The best principals give unquestioning support to teachers in disciplining pupils.	①	②	③	④	⑤
7. Pupils should not be permitted to contradict the statements of a teacher in class.	①	②	③	④	⑤
8. It is justifiable to have pupils learn many facts about a subject even if they have no immediate application.	①	②	③	④	⑤
9. Too much pupil time is spent on guidance and activities and too little on academic preparation.	①	②	③	④	⑤
10. Being friendly with pupils often leads them to become too familiar.	①	②	③	④	⑤
11. It is more important for pupils to learn to obey rules than that they make their own decisions.	①	②	③	④	⑤
12. Student governments are a good "safety valve" but should not have much influence on school policy.	①	②	③	④	⑤
13. Pupils can be trusted to work together without supervision.	①	②	③	④	⑤
14. If a pupil uses obscene or profane language in school, it must be considered a moral offense.	①	②	③	④	⑤
15. If pupils are allowed to use the lavatory without getting permission, this privilege will be abused.	①	②	③	④	⑤
16. A few pupils are just young hoodlums and should be treated accordingly.	①	②	③	④	⑤
17. It is often necessary to remind pupils that their status in school differs from that of teachers.	①	②	③	④	⑤
18. A pupil who destroys school material or property should be severely punished.	①	②	③	④	⑤
19. Pupils cannot perceive the difference between democracy and anarchy in the classroom.	①	②	③	④	⑤
20. Pupils often misbehave in order to make the teacher look bad.	①	②	③	④	⑤

Appendix E

TAOS-E

TAOS-E

<p><u>Directions:</u> This questionnaire is designed to help us gain a better understanding of the kinds of things that create difficulties for teachers in their school activities. Please indicate your opinion about each of the statements below. Your answers are confidential.</p>		Nothing		Very Little		Some Influence		Quite a Bit		A Great Deal
		①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨
1.	How much can you do to get students to believe they can do well in school work?	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨
2.	To what extent can you craft good questions for your students?	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨
3.	How much can you do to get children to follow classroom rules?	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨

<p><u>Directions:</u> Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each of the statements below from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5).</p>		Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
		①	②	③	④	⑤
4.	I trust the parents of my students.	①	②	③	④	⑤
5.	I can count on parent support.	①	②	③	④	⑤
6.	I trust my students.	①	②	③	④	⑤
7.	I have confidence in my students.	①	②	③	④	⑤
8.	I ask students to explain how they get their answers.	①	②	③	④	⑤
9.	I don't accept shoddy work from my students.	①	②	③	④	⑤
10.	I give my students challenging work.	①	②	③	④	⑤
11.	I press my students to achieve academically.	①	②	③	④	⑤

Appendix F
TAOS – S

TAOS-S

	Nothing		Very Little		Some Influence		Quite a Bit		A Great Deal
<p><u>Directions:</u> This questionnaire is designed to help us gain a better understanding of the kinds of things that create difficulties for teachers in their school activities. Please indicate your opinion about each of the statements below. Your answers are confidential.</p>									
1. How much can you do to motivate students who show low interest in school work?	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨
2. How much can you do to get students to believe they can do well in school work?	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨
3. How much can you do to get children to follow classroom rules?	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
<p><u>Directions:</u> Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each of the statements below from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5).</p>					
4. Most of my students are honest.	①	②	③	④	⑤
5. My students' parents are reliable.	①	②	③	④	⑤
6. I trust my students.	①	②	③	④	⑤
7. I press my students to achieve academically.	①	②	③	④	⑤
8. I give my students challenging work.	①	②	③	④	⑤
9. I set high, but attainable goals for my students.	①	②	③	④	⑤

Appendix G
Request to Use Copyrighted Instruments

March 10, 2011

Dr. Hoy,

Good Morning Dr. Hoy. As a member of Cohort XIV at Seton Hall University (Executive Ed.D.), I have some important questions concerning my dissertation and I am hoping you can give me some direction. Is it permissible to administer your surveys found on your website www.waynehoy.com as the cornerstone of my dissertation? I would like to use your Academic Optimism instruments and the PCI Form, but I would like your permission to do this.

You indicated to me in a prior email that you support a research plan to do a dissertation on the relationship between PCI and teacher AO, but I have not formally requested your approval to use the instruments. If I do get approval to use your instruments, may they be administered through www.surveymonkey.com? I would have to upload them or retype them onto the site.

I am in the process of confirming two districts for my sample through communication with the superintendents. I have one district already confirmed. Dr. Gutmore, my mentor, has approved my plan so far. I can provide you with the draft of my first three chapters if needed. Your feedback would be very helpful. Thank you very much. This is a very exciting endeavor for me.

Michael Gilbert

Seton Hall University, Cohort XIV, Executive Ed.D.

Appendix H
Approval to Use Copyrighted Instruments

March 10, 2011

Hi Michael,

You have my permission to use any of the instruments I have on my webpage for your research. If you use SurveyMonkey or a similar online program to collect data, all that I ask is that you indicate on the questionnaire that the surveys are copyrighted to me and used with permission.

Good luck.

Wayne

Wayne K. Hoy
Fawcett Professor of
Education Administration