I would like to dedicate this thesis to several people. Firstly, my wife Julie, who always told me I could do it, and I am grateful for her loving support throughout. Secondly, Gwyneth, without whom this thesis would have been impossible to finish; Simon and Catherine, my supervisors, who never gave up on me and encouraged me throughout the journey, and finally, my sons, Dan and Isaac, who lost a lot of half terms whilst I researched the thesis during the school holidays.

An evaluation of the significance of Academic Optimism of a sample of Primary schools: A case study approach based in West Wales.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

I am a serving head teacher in the primary sector in Wales. I have been in this post for over ten years. I have worked in a range of schools, localities and with a diverse population of people defined as LSAs, teachers, parents and other head teachers. Schools are complex organisations that strive to create vibrant learning environments. The creation of such environments is determined through cooperative actions amongst the school population to foster conditions that inspire, motivate and promote achievement. These interactions are critical to the effective functioning of a school. In my experience as a head teacher, when these trusting interactions are weakened or broken, the school becomes a difficult organisation to lead. Self-protective actions, counter-workplace behaviours, non-commitment to agreed objectives can manifest themselves quickly and taint the vibrant learning environment that should be at the heart of every school. I believe that a school should be cognisant of these behaviours and relationships as part of the existing suit of measures used to judge the effectiveness of the school. It would be beneficial when considering what head teachers strive to achieve when they decide on the most effective focus for collective effort and collaborative endeavour. This thesis will use an existing measure of the collective view of the school, its beliefs and effort towards success. I would argue that head teachers need to understand the collective relational conditions that exist in a school, and the status of those conditions in the school year since they influence the drive towards student achievement across the school population.

In this thesis, I will explore the second order, latent organisational construct termed academic optimism, (AO) and its antecedents in primary schools. I will

also examine the components of academic optimism through a survey instrument and semi-structured interviews with head teachers across ten sample schools in a specific geographical region of West Wales. I will capture their views, on the antecedents and conditions in their school that specifically influence this construct. Hoy, Tarter and Woolfolk Hoy (2006a, 2006b) identified that school academic optimism has a positive effect on students' achievements and could be used to predict the difference between schools in terms of students' academic achievements. An optimistic school, which is performing well, is professionally effective and understands the cognitive, affective and behavioural aspects of its personnel and will understand how to improve as an organisation.

1.1 The research aim is:

To evaluate the factors that influence the second order latent construct termed AO and its antecedents in sample primary schools in a specific geographical area, in Llanelli. The purpose of the thesis is to apply the sample survey instrument in ten different primary schools to establish if the construct could be validated. The study seeks to identify through quantitative and qualitative research methods not only the existence of AO, but to identify the antecedents of the construct.

The underlying purpose for this research reflects the debate that Leithwood, Patten, and Jantzi, (2010) propose; that educational research into leadership practices are most influential in improving the conditions or variables which impact on student achievement and learning. In the current climate of school accountability these conditions are overlooked or ignored. The pressure that I experience as a head teacher often leads to anxious behaviours which in turn

creates tension. Schools want to create conditions that are optimistic, inspire learning and sustain a culture of collaboration. Head teachers need to nurture high expectations and build those beliefs that the efforts of the school will positively impact on the students. These collective aspects of a school shape group behaviour, group results, and a sense of optimism. In this thesis this 2nd order latent construct is described as AO and this research will explore what this means and how it influences a school from the viewpoint of the head teacher.

The objectives of the study are:

- To examine the three elements of the construct interaction and to establish if there is a developing dominance or bi-directional relationship evident from the results.
- What factors emerge and underlie the construct?
- What are the views on AO and its principle components from the head teachers of the schools in this research?
- To evaluate the antecedents of AO and the interplay of these factors on a school.

Hoy's (2002) trust-achievement hypothesis theorised that trusting others is a fundamental aspect to human learning because it is a co-operative process, and distrust makes co-operation virtually impossible. Academic Optimism (Hoy 2006) is the combination of three components that positively influence student achievement. These are academic standards, efficacy and trust. Hoy et al. (2006) have demonstrated that the three work together in a reciprocal causal relationship to create a positive academic climate.

The study will explore an emerging construct of Academic Optimism (Hoy 2006). The three characteristics of school academic optimism identified by Hoy, (2006) are academic emphasis, collective efficacy and faculty trust. When these are present, according to the authors, they have a positive effect on students' achievements. (Hoy, Tarter, and Woolfolk Hoy 2006a, p.426-427, 2006b, p.148). Specifically, the researcher will explore how the sample schools respond to the survey instrument and the measurement of these characteristics. This instrument will produce a range of measures and an AO score across three groups: head teachers, teachers and learning support staff (LSAs). The research will seek the view of the head teachers as they respond to these three characteristic measures, optimism and trust in their schools. The interviews will have been transcribed to provide insight into the antecedents behind the quantitative information on their schools.

This research specifically presents a comparative study that would examine the difference between the sample schools identified in Llanelli; the factors which hinder or enable the development of academic optimism and other antecedents to academic optimism. The thesis identifies what other antecedents exist and whether one antecedent is more dominant than another. The answers to these questions will contribute to knowledge.

1.2 Academic Optimism: A Novel Construct

The theoretical foundations for this construct have been crafted from two distinct theoretical origins. The literature review will evaluate both, but it is worth noting in this chapter a brief overview of these frameworks since they have both influenced the concept of academic optimism.

Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) frame positive psychology as a means to investigate and describe the emotional states, traits and organisations in which humans interact and flourish. This investigation leads to the understanding of optimal environments and how people work within them. Positive psychology has a natural fit with schools in which the profession, through collaborative actions and relationships, seeks to create optimal environments in schools in which learning flourishes.

Secondly, Bandura (1997) social cognitive theory conceptualises human behaviour as a development, which occurs in a triadic relationship, based on behaviours, personal factors and the environment. The term reciprocal causality is used to describe this relationship. Bandura (1997) explained:

> "In this transactional view of self and society, internal personal factors in the form of cognitive, affective and biological events; behaviour; and environmental events all operate as interacting determinants that influence one another bi-directionally" (p.6).

Bandura (1997) does not suggest that the three factors in the triadic reciprocal causation model make equal contributions to behaviour. The relative influence of behaviour, environment, and person depends on which factor is strongest at any particular moment. These relationships occur in a complicated, multi-dimensional union in which humans control their lives through agentive actions. This applies in schools since teachers are skilled in regulating their behaviour as situations arise and change their behaviours as a result.

Academic optimism, (Hoy et al., 2006) as a construct, was shaped using Bandura's Triadic Reciprocal Structure. This combination focused on academic optimism as an organisational variable and directly imposed the trio of reciprocal

causation in the following way: collective efficacy equates to personal factors and perceptions of teachers, faculty trust in parents and students, the environment and academic emphasis on the behaviours created in the pursuit of achievement within a school.

Academic optimism of schools is a collective construct that includes the cognitive, affective and behaviour facets of collective efficacy, faculty trust and academic emphasis. Since 2007 very little research on academic optimism of schools has emerged, with none to date in Wales: the construct is related to school achievement even when variables such as socio-economic status, prior achievement and demographic properties are controlled (Hoy and Smith (2007); (Hoy, Tarter, and Hoy (2006).

Figure 1: The conceptual interaction of the triad which makes up the latent construct AO**.**

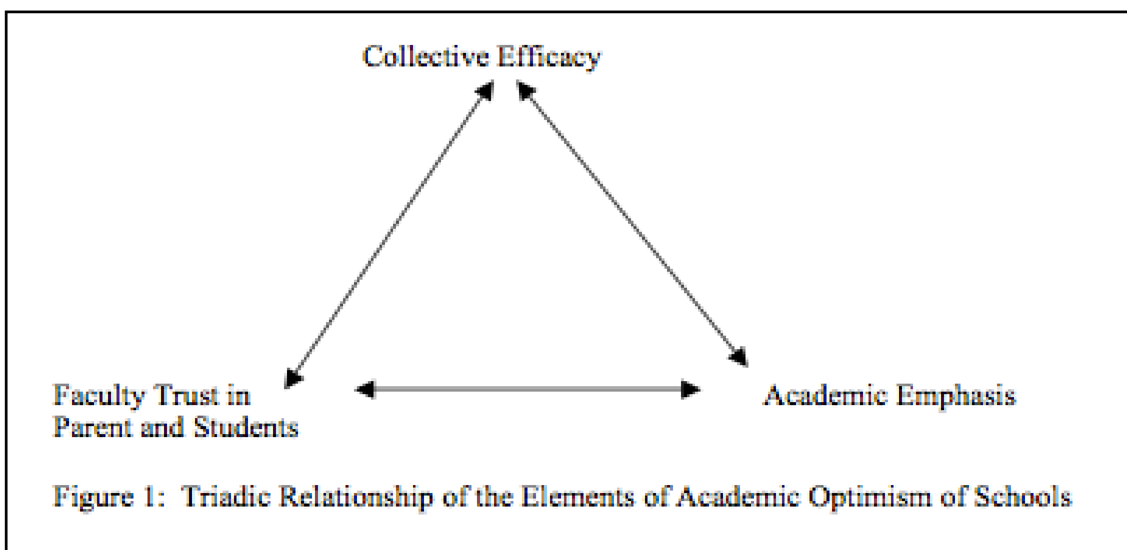


Figure 1: Triadic Relationship of the Elements of Academic Optimism of Schools

AO is of interest to the researcher because AO emphasises the potential of schools to overcome the socio-economic factors that are known to impair student achievement. Collective efficacy is the perception of teachers in a school that their efforts, as a whole, will have a positive effect on students.

Tschannen-Moran (2001) identify that when a professional climate promotes trusting relationships, participants, i.e. teachers, are more likely to invest time and effort towards organisational goals. Trust is a key element of an effective relationship. Faculty Trust in students and parents is based on feelings that the students and parents are benevolent, reliable, competent and honest, and open (Hoy and Tschannen-Moran (2003). Academic emphasis is a focus on teachers with particular behaviours in the school. The triadic nature of the construct means it is functionally dependent on each facet and interacts to produce a positive learning environment. The researcher's primary goal will be to develop a broadly social constructionist narrative, exploring through case study design the triadic construct in situ in primary schools, and seeking to identify issues around the antecedents to AO as they develop.

In terms of its contribution to knowledge, it will exploit the researcher's current role as a head teacher and will apply the construct of academic optimism across an emerging educational landscape in Wales which seeks systemic change through collaboration in schools and between schools. AO as a utility measure of the schools' climate and relationships internally will also be explored. An aspect of this research will seek the views of the head teachers of the case study schools on the components of AO. This will be a significant contribution to knowledge and not researched to date.

The research will take place against a backdrop in education that currently is under scrutiny from the Government and is considered to be underperforming. There is also transformational change in the curriculum delivered in schools. The researcher's topic area for research is relevant and this thesis presents that

for this change to occur honestly and with lasting impact, consideration to the different forms of trust within schools is needed from the outset prior to collaborative actions taking place. Schools need to pay regard to trust and its influence at the intra-organisational level due to social nature of schools and how trust impacts on the relational aspect of the work of schools in their day to day functioning.

Head teachers need to understand the delicate nature of trust and how it impacts in the school environment. Currall and Epstein (2003) clearly identify that trust can make an organisation great or it can destroy it. Govier (1998) notes trust is easier to break than build. Trust is dependent on becoming vulnerable and taking a risk. Before we, as schools, engage in collaborative change we need to have a clear analytical picture of the school's capacity to initiate that change. We must understand the relationships in the school that deal with the scepticism around change and deepen trust. As Sitkin and Stickel (1996 p.45) note, "change decreases trust because it disrupts the taken for granted aspects of institutional functioning or is inconsistent with existing norms."

Trust is acknowledged as a context-dependent phenomenon and it is socially constructed; is inter-dependent with a rational choice made from the outset. This leads to further fragmentation in the extensive literature of what trust is and how can it be researched effectively. From the outset there are three dominant arenas of research. Firstly, there is trust within organisations, trust between organisations and trust between organisations and their customers. This thesis will apply academic optimism as a second order latent construct, examine its

component parts and trust with in these schools from the viewpoint of the head teachers of these schools. This thesis will use mixed methods approaches to determine its aims and objectives.

Investigations into trust are numerous and trust is identified as crucial; its antecedents, components and consequences are complex (Steppanen., 2007, p.256). Specifically in the education field, trust as a conceptual and empirically validated construct has been researched by: Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (1998, 2000); Tschannen-Moran (1997, 2004); Tarter, Sabo, and Hoy (1995); Hoffman, Sabo, Bliss, and Hoy (1994); Adams (2008, p.30) notes, "Trust operates within the cognitive and psychological domain as a motive for behaviour, at the interpersonal level to shape social exchanges and within organisations to influence collective performance."

1.3 Defining Trust

For this research, the author adopts the definition of trust in schools as proposed by Hoy and Tschannen-Moran (1999) is that:

> "Trust is one party's willingness to be vulnerable to another based on the confidence that the latter party is (a) benevolent (b) reliable (c) competent (d) honest (e) open."

Each of these elements is given brief explanation against the literature.

Vulnerability

Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt, and Camerer (1998) argue that a condition of trust is interdependence, where the interests of one party cannot be achieved without relying on another party. The degree of interdependence may change the form that trust takes and may generate vulnerability. Some definitions of trust - Coleman (1990); Mishra (1996) - assume that the trustor is aware of the latent possibility of

betrayal and harm from the other (Granovetter, (1985). This uncertainty is based on whether the other party will act suitably. Trust would appear, then, to be a willingness to be vulnerable whilst accepting a level of interdependence. Ddetermining whether the other party will act suitably will be based on the levels of confidence you have in that person. Confidence is critical in developing the independent relational aspect of trust. In a school there exists an interdependence which originates from being vulnerable. In this state of vulnerability there is a need to cross a threshold when the head teacher, teacher or LSA knows there is the possibility of betrayal. This is a risk-taking choice and requires trust.

Confidence

The decision to place oneself at risk to another person in a school may be based on several factors, including for example, need, conformity, impulsivity, innocence, virtue, faith or confidence. Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt and Camerer (1998) interpretation suggest that trust lies in the degree of confidence one holds in the face of risk, rather than in the action that increases one's risk. There is a time element to confidence. Interactions between two parties are experienced over time in a school environment.

Benevolence

Benevolence is the key facet of trust, the belief that one's wellbeing, or something that one cares about, will be protected and not harmed by the trusted party (Bradach and Eccles (1989); (Cummings and Bromily (1996), (Gambetta 1988). Head teachers need to demonstrate care for their staff which builds trust. Consideration for the needs and interests of the staff and offering protective actions against exploitative behaviour builds confidence.

In this context trust is the statement that the other person will not exploit or take advantage of a person's vulnerability. In an ongoing relationship the future actions may not be clear or specified but only that there will be a mutual attitude of good will. Teachers and LSAs want to be treated fairly. This altruism towards the other's vulnerability is important in this research.

Reliability

Hosmer (1995) argues that the most basic level of trust is bound with predictability, and knowing what to expect from others. Reliability combines a sense of predictability with benevolence. In a situation of interdependence, when something is required from another person or group, the individual can be relied upon to supply it. Butler and Cantrell (1984) indicate that reliability is a sense that one's needs will be met. A head teacher's behaviour is crucial in a school, getting the staff together to achieve outcomes that cannot be achieved individually. This requires interaction and coordinating effort, and reliability that these actions are followed through consistently. Reliability and the head teacher's behaviour reflect the research by Kovjanic, Schuh, and Jonas (2013), that collective group efficacy and work engagement are influenced significantly by leadership behaviour and being reliable.

Competence

Mishra (1996) suggests that when a level of skill is involved in fulfilling an expectation, an assured confidence is implied that the job can be done. At an organisational level this competence may reside in a group or team, with a confidence that the project can be completed, and goals met. Trust and competence are judgements that you can be trusted to do the job to an acceptable

standard. Hanford et al. (2013) compared three high-trust versus three low-trust schools. In this study, the competence of the head teacher was the most sighted element of trust, which influenced the teacher's decision to trust or distrust the head teacher. A competent head teacher sets high standards, solves problems and is an example for others to follow. Robinson et al. (2008) study identified significant links between school leadership and student outcomes. Leadership competence in promoting teacher learning was strongly predicative of positive student outcomes.

Honesty

Integrity, authenticity, a person's character, influence trust. Rotter (1997, p. 651) argues that "trust is the expectancy that the word, promise, verbal or written statement of another individual or group can be relied upon." The inference is that statements made are truthful and will inform future actions. If you are truthful then you have a degree of trust placed in you by others. An acceptance of responsibility of one's actions and avoidance of misrepresenting the truth in order to shift blame to another party characterises authenticity.

Openness

Openness is the extent to which school relevant information is available and accurate. Head teachers need to be open with this information flow to staff. Feedback and careful explanations are viewed as trusting and not associated with manipulation. If information is not openly shared it can suggest suspicious actions by that head teacher. Importantly, openness acknowledges that teachers and LSAs have expert knowledge which can used to make collective decisions. Influencing the school environment and autonomy in school decision-making by teachers influences the trust held in the head teacher.

It is a process by which people make themselves vulnerable to others by sharing information, a giving of one's self. Openness implies a reciprocal trust, a confidence that neither the information nor the individual will be exploited. Recipients can feel the same confidence in return. People who are cautious in what information they share fuel suspicion; people wonder what is being hidden and why. Kramer, Brewer, and Hanna (1996) indicate that people who are unwilling to extend trust through openness end up living in isolated prisons of their own making.

These elements of trust all amalgamate, but the process and weighting to each element depends on the type of interdependence and the degree of vulnerability in the relationship. Research by Hoy and Tschannen-Moran (1999) noted that in teachers and principals, all aspects of trust carry significant importance.

1.4 Theoretical Context for the Research

> "Good schools are intrinsically social enterprises that depend heavily on the co-operative endeavours among various participants who comprise the school community." (Bryk and Schneider 2003).

Schools' achievement, it could be argued, depends on talented and motivated people interacting with each other at a behavioural, cognitive and affective level. This triadic relationship is implicit in the efforts of a head teacher to establish a community of learners with collective educational aims. The relevance of fostering trust is key to school reform. Bryk and Schneider (2002, p.5) have identified

> "that a broad base of trust across school community lubricates much of a school's day to day functioning and is a critical resource as leaders embark on ambitious improvement plans."

The school literature supports the notion that trust and leadership can impact on the productivity of people (Tarter et al., 1995; Goddard et al., 2001; Bryk and Schneider, 2002). Bryk and Schneider (2002) propose that in schools the theory of relational trust is dominant in which the key players' social interactions are based in daily social exchanges. Relational trust is a mutually held expectation and understanding of others' expectations and roles.

Bryk and Schneider (2002) expand this further by arguing that relational trust is an organisational property of the school and state, "its constituent elements are socially defined in the reciprocal exchanges among participants in a school community, and its presence (absence) has important consequences for the functioning of the school …" The question emerges - how do you build relational trust?

The literature develops the idea that trust is a key building block of organisational culture. Louis (1996) argues that school leaders often ignore trust because it's easy to assume it's there by default. When teachers do what they are supposed to do any slow degradation of trust is, "underrated … the significance of trust is our strong tendency not to notice it until it breaks down." (Govier, 1998). Curral and Epstein (2003, p.203) state, "if properly developed, trust can propel (organisations) to greatness. Improperly used, it can plan the seeds of collapse." It is easier to break trust than to create trust because of the two critical conditions: interdependence and risk (Rousseau et al., 1998).

Head teachers' priorities reflect external demands in achieving goals but they must also focus on nurturing and sustaining internal relationships to achieve

results. As Caldwell et al. (2005) conceptualises, a “zone of trust” must be clear within which followers (teachers) are willing to buy into organisational goals and rules. Pava (2003) identifies the leader as a steward who has the best interests of each individual framed against the organisational context.

The literature review will explore the research around trust and its consequences for a school. Govier (1998), Tschannen Moran (2004) Reina and Reina (2006) have researched extensively a range of affective variables that relate to distrust. Betrayal, bitterness, violation, breach, lying, deception, dishonesty are some of the key themes emerging from their work. Trust is wholly undermined by coercion or overuse of power, and a lack of trust in schools restricts creativity, innovation and improved performance. It could be argued from this research that you could expect a school in which distrust was established that the level of academic optimism would be low. In order to build trust you need to be willing to trust. The willingness to trust, especially as a head teacher, is based on the knowledge that cooperative behaviours in school are needed to achieve high performance. Trust is critical when school staff enter relationships of mutual interdependence. In this relationship, school-based outcomes of performance cannot be achieved without the co-operation and contribution of all staff. The head teacher is the steward of this relationship. Head teachers must foster and cultivate a climate of trust enhancing the school’s successes. This investment of trust in the staff by the head teacher and the perception of trustworthiness by the staff of the head teacher establishes high trust relationships. The building of trust and its use is the obligation of the head teacher in creating those ties of trust in their school towards student achievement.

O'Neill (2002) argues that increased accountability damages trust by distorting the establishment of the relationships needed to build trust through social interaction. Tschannen-Moran (2004) indicates that once distrust in schools is established it can become self-perpetuating. Distrust is described as resistant and self-sustaining, feeding itself, and creating more distrust. If you are distrusted your actions are viewed as suspicious and distrust is then confirmed. The tools that you would use, as a head teacher, to build relational trust and restore trust through consensus and dialogue can also be viewed suspiciously. Annison and Wilford (1998) and Tschannen-Moran (2004) both speculate that distrust leads to a breakdown in communication, shared decision making and commitment. Distrust within a school is not just unpleasant to work in; it erodes the effectiveness and efficiency of the organisation as a whole. For example, in a paper *The Fragility of Trust in the World of School Principles* (K Walker et al., 2011), the data collection using online surveys, and hard copies to principles in Canada (3,000 in total) had a response rate of 3.5%. This is indicative of the culture and organisational arena in which this research is taking place.

The research is based on the triad of collective properties that are components of academic optimism, academic emphasis, collective efficacy and faculty trust, when working together in union, create a positive learning environment.

1.5 Geographical Context/Organisational Context

What are the factors that influence the second order latent construct termed AO, and its antecedents in eight sample primary schools in a specific geographical area, Llanelli? Each school is part of regional consortia responsible for school

improvement, collaborative working and professional development of teachers termed Excellence through Regional Working (ERW). ERW embraces 635 schools and serves a total of 32% of the schools in Wales and 28% of the pupil population; 48% of the schools are Welsh medium or bilingual, and 52% of the schools are English medium with Welsh as a second language. A strength of the Consortium is this balance between urban and rural schools, smaller and larger schools, schools in affluent and socially deprived areas and Welsh and English language schools. The six authorities have worked in partnership since 2000 and have recently committed to developing and implementing a regional school improvement strategy which places improvement and performance at its core. The focus of this strategy will be raising standards of attainment and achievement for all pupils.

This thesis seeks to answer a specific question that is framed against broad theoretical frameworks across a diverse region in a rich organisational environment. It will seek to inform critical thinking and day to day practice amongst head teachers by examining the fundamental issue of school improvement. Sarason (1972) argues that educators would see little improvement in schools unless there are changes in culture. Schein (1992) recognises that culture is a combination of values, beliefs, and assumptions that organisational members share about behaviour. It would seem logical that school leaders focus their energies on interventions and theory that identify how to improve their culture and then children's learning. There is a real opportunity in this thesis to apply a construct termed academic optimism in a distinctly different context from the U.S.A. (Most of the research has been undertaken in the U.S.A.). The thesis will explore the relevant literature and discourse on trust.

The research methodology that has been suggested will seek to answer the question and provide a pragmatic solution on how to operationalise the collaborative working in or between schools focused on pedagogical improvement.

> "If there is anything that the research community agrees on it is this: The right kind of continuous, structured teacher collaboration improves the quality of teaching and pays big, often immediate dividends in student learning and professional moral in virtually any setting. (But) … this image – of the true professional learning community - has yet to be the norm in most schools." (Scmoker 2005 p.7).

As a head teacher in this landscape and with my knowledge of the context in praxis, I seek to understand and identify those aspects of AO that support the identification and building of trust, empirically tests it in schools seeking to cooperate and innovate; improve academic optimism and as Fullan (2010) has stated, "within school collaboration, when it is focused produces powerful results on an ongoing basis."

The thesis will be structured as follows. Chapter 2 will present the literature on the associated theoretical context for the construct AO and inter-organisational trust, optimism and the antecedents of self-efficacy and collective efficacy to AO. Chapter 3 will present the methodology used. Chapter 4 will include the results of the survey and interviews with head teachers. Chapter 5 will present the contribution to knowledge.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

The research aim is to contribute to the knowledge about those latent school properties that influence school improvement. The application of known validated research instruments will contribute to our understanding of how trust, academic optimism, influence student achievement.

In this model of reciprocal causality, termed AO, internal personal factors (cognitive, affective and biological events) behavioural patterns, and environmental events all operate as interacting determinants that influence one another bi-directionally. It is in this model of triadic interaction that is the origin of the latent second order construct termed *academic optimism.* Peterson (2000) and Snyder et al. (2002) define optimism as a goal or expectancy based on knowledge and thinking. Hoy et al. (2006) conception of academic optimism reflects triadic reciprocal causation. The construct includes cognitive and affective (emotional) dimensions and adds a behavioural component. Academic optimism is the synthesis of three emergent group school characteristics which are known to improve student learning. Academic optimism is a construct that can be measured at a collective level using the School Academic Optimism Scale. The model is constructed along three separate, related paths that promote student learning. Schools need to promote collective efficacy, create collective trust and strengthen academic emphasis

The theoretical framing of this thesis will acknowledge social cognitive theory in which human agency is a prime theme. There will be a focus on collective

efficacy that refers to groups in an organisation. Goddard and Goddard (2001, p.809) state collective efficacy in schools is:

> “The collective perceptions of teachers in a school that the faculty as a whole can organise and execute the courses of action required to have a positive effect on students.”

Goddard, Hoy, and Hoy (2000, p.480) research supports the construct of collective efficacy as being “systematically associated with student achievement.” Higher collective efficacy is associated with teachers who believe that their colleagues *behave* in a manner that will promote student success. When collective efficacy is high, the self-efficacy of the individual is also high. Mujis and Reynolds (2002) support this and noted that over a one year period, teachers’ behaviour was the most significant predictor of success for a student and it also had a positive effect on teachers’ beliefs and self-efficacy. Ross and Bruce (2007) noted that teachers with high efficacy exert a greater effort when dealing with those students in danger of failing, rather than passively accepting this potential to fail as outside their remit.

At a collective level a school must work towards common goals on which they are measured and scrutinised. Collective efficacy beliefs suggest that conceptually a collective responsibility exists. Walstrom and Louis (2008, p.446) define this as:

> “teachers’ beliefs that they not only have the capacity to influence student learning but a shared obligation to do so.”

This research acknowledges that collective efficacy, as a group construct, is fundamental to understanding the norms of a school and its performance. Lee and Smith (1996) consistently identified that schools with high collective responsibility for learning not only had students who learned more but the school

was characterised by being more equitable socially. The group, faculty, or teachers in situ will act in ways that promote certain actions and deter others. Goddard, LeGerfo, and Hoy, (2006 p.401) state that collective efficacy:

> "establishes common expectations for action and goal attainment … and group responses to problems."

The investigative nature of this thesis will also explore if the construct of academic optimism is an indicator of group potency within a school. This is significant in that collective efficacy is identified by an individual's (teacher's) belief of group success while group potency is the group's belief in itself. There is a distinct difference. Group potency is a group's, defined in this research as head teachers, teachers and LSAs, collective belief in itself as a group. Collective efficacy is an individual belief about the group.

Zaccaro, Blair, Peterson and Zanis (1995) state that collective efficacy can be viewed as:

> "a sense of collective competence shared among individuals when allocating, coordinating, and integrating their resources in a successful concerted response to a specific situational demand."

Shea and Guzzo (1987) acknowledge a similar construct, group potency, as:

> "the collective belief of a group that it can be effective."

The difference between group potency and collective efficacy is that group potency is the shared beliefs by group members about general effectiveness across multiple tasks encountered by the group. This is typical of a school in which multiple actions occur at the same time across a range of people. Collective efficacy is specified to one task or one competence. In schools, head teachers are statutorily expected to draft and author yearly improvement plans. These plans strategically identify the priorities for the school year. The group and its shared beliefs are pivotal in this plan being effectively delivered.

In the school context this distinction could be viewed as a group of teachers' belief about their ability to effectively perform assigned tasks. These are task specific group beliefs, whereas group potency is non-task specific and represents the teachers' general belief in success. When a group believes it can be successful it can attempt tasks outside the working norms and remain confident in its ability to succeed. In a school if the group of teachers has its beliefs which are solely task specific then the group can lose confidence if the task given is outside normal responsibilities. Van den Bossche et al. (2006) demonstrated that successful collaboration is not merely putting people together who have similar or complementary knowledge; rather, two key factors, cognition and social ties. Both factors are dependent on trust.

Collective efficacy is judgmental, whereas group potency can be thought of as motivational. Both constructs are potential antecedents to the successful development of AO in schools. Both constructs are empirically measurable. Shea and Guzzo (1987) developed a scale which has been validated and accurately measures the level of group potency over various types of respondents. Groups with higher levels of potency perform better (Campion et al., 1997). As a head teacher, information on the status of the teachers and ancillary staff ability or potential to collaborate would be valuable in strategically driving the school forward and improving performance.

Collective efficacy is a group belief; it is cognitive. Faculty trust in parents and students is an affective response. Academic emphasis is the drive for certain behaviours in the school. Each one of these elements is functionally dependent

and transactional, creating a culture of academic optimism in the school. Hoy et al. (2006 p.145) chose the term academic optimism to reflect beliefs about agency in schools:

> "Optimism is an appropriate overarching construct to unite efficacy, trust and academic emphasis because each concept contains a sense of the possible. Efficacy is the belief that the faculty can make a positive difference in student learning; teachers believe in themselves. Faculty trust in students and parents is the belief that teachers, parents and students can cooperate to improve learning that is the faculty believes in its students. Academic emphasis is the enacted behaviour prompted by these beliefs, that is, the focus is student success. Thus, a school with high academic optimism is a ***collectivity*** in which the faculty believes it can make a difference, that students can learn, and academic performance can be achieved."

It is the measure of this construct at school level that will determine the relevant types of interventions needed to bring about change towards improvement that reflects the social structure that exists in a school. In simple terms, which element of the trio that makes up academic optimism needs to be addressed to effect an improvement in the academic optimism at a collective level in the school?

An optimistic school that needs to change will need to collaborate honestly, be confident it can improve and take that leap of faith in the group, i.e. it needs to trust itself and others. Schneider (2002) described a kind of trust termed relational trust, defined as a system of social exchanges between school participants. A synchronisation of expectations, a teacher can-do attitude is evident in the social exchanges that manifest themselves as relational trust, and Schneider (2002) established trust as a school condition linked to higher student achievement.

The trust debate in the literature is complex and at times confusing (Fisman and Khanna 1999; Alder 2001). Ford (2003) and Simons (2002), in their research of the trust literature, agree that the constructs related to trust are complex and intricate in their forms. Throughout the literature there exists a common theme which reflects Fukuyama (1995) view that trust is centred on an "expectation that arises within a community of regular, honest, and co-operative behaviour, based on commonly shared norms on the part of the members of the community." In this research the community is the school.

In school, collaboration is at the core of WG reform processes and a belief in "forging an equal and interactive partnership among the people, the profession and their government." (Hargreaves and Shirley, 2009, p.71). However, Levin (2008) notes change has left "many of the basic features of a school unaltered." Payne (2008) noted "after a couple of decades of being energetically reformed, most schools, especially the bottom tier schools, and most school systems seem pretty much the same kind of organisation that they were at the beginning."

The drive to collaborate will necessitate cultural and structural change within and between schools and will need collaboration to be embedded in the routine practice of schools. This new way of working will contrast with the historical professional autonomy of teachers; and Hargreaves (1991) argues that the likely outcome of "contrived congeniality" can manifest itself unless we appreciate the school's climate that leads to a true collaborative culture.

The application of AO and its measures will seek to identify the collective efficacy and trust cultures in sample schools with the aim of understanding the school's climate and their capacity to collaborate. It is a litmus test of the school's capacity to collaborate, develop and change towards improving the outcomes for its pupils.

Academic Optimism is not only relevant but critical in understanding how group members, collective confidence, group effectiveness and trust impact on the sample schools. The triad of measures are validated instruments that can be used to assess the conditions that may exist in a school. Research has demonstrated that the construct, academic optimism, is strongly correlated to student achievement in spite of a school's socio-economic status (Goddard, LoGerfo, and Hoy, 2004). This application of the construct in the Welsh context is unique and will create new knowledge about the social and organisational conditions that promote learning across ERW.

2.1 Theoretical Context of Academic Optimism

Optimism is the preference to expect the best possible outcome, which would require the best outcome to be the most likely outcome. If head teachers always prescribe optimism over accuracy, as Armor, Massey, and Sackett (2008) suggest, it would be noteworthy because there are several advantages to being genuine. Thorough predictions can help people decide where best to invest their limited time and money in education, recreation, social relationships, and professional opportunities (Baumeister, Campbell, Krueger, and Vohs, (2003); Forsyth, Lawrence, Burnette, and Baumeister, (2007).

Too much optimism can weaken the motivation to take protective action against risks (Weinstein and Lyon, 1999). Schools generally are risk averse and because they are highly regulated by statutory polices the prevalence of too much optimism is unlikely based on Weinstein et al. (1999) research.

There are also latent consequences to overt optimism: the more optimistic people are, the more likely they are to be dissatisfied when reality falls short of their expectations (Krizan, Miller, and Johar, 2010; Krizan and Sweeny, 2013). Conversely, giving up on an inaccessible goal is good for well-being (Wrosch, Scheier, Carver, and Schulz, 2003). Optimism, whether too much or being realistically optimistic, has consequences on a school community, its behaviour and its actions.

There are identified in the literature benefits of optimistic, positive thinking in social relationships, health, and happiness (Peterson, 2000; Scheier et al., 1989; Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Seligman and Schulman, 1986). Optimism influences people in that people feel empowered to work towards their relationship rather than feel a need to withdraw or avoid harm (Carver, 2003; Fredrickson, 2001; Lyubomirsky, King, and Diener, 2005; Wrosch, Scheier, Miller, Schulz, and Carver, 2003). Specifically, having an optimistic outlook will improve performance when working towards a goal, which then increases the chance of success. It would be beneficial if the head teacher modelled optimism in their school.

In the transcripts all, bar one head teacher, describe their schools as being optimistic and related the construct to performance.

The literature terms this modelling behaviour prescribed optimism. If head teachers prescribe optimism because they believe it can improve performance, then they would prescribe optimism in the presence of goals to perform. In a school goals are explicitly identified as priorities in an annual statutory School Development Plan (SDP). Performance becomes prominent when implementing a decision. In a school the head teacher is the principle decision maker. Hoy (2012) identifies the principal, "as the intellectual leader of the school … in which academic success is the dominant goal." Establishing what optimism might exist in a school from the head teacher point of view is crucial. The literature references two specific phases of prescribed optimism which are important in this thesis: deliberation and implementation.

Pre and post-decision phase: deliberation and implementation (Gollwitzer, Heckhausen, and Steller, 1990). Deliberation defines considering numerous options, and implementation occurs when a head teacher has decided on a sequence of actions and focuses on it. From a head teacher's perspective, the annual cycle of monitoring, evaluation and review is time bound. The deliberation phase of a school year considers the performance historically and the next priorities going forward. It is a time of planning and consideration. However, in the high accountability stake system, optimism at this time might be lower than when implementation of the school's statutory development plan is enabled. Performance becomes the focus through the SDP and being optimistic as a head teacher might promote effective actions amongst staff to enact the school plan effectively.

People express more optimism when they are in implemental, rather than deliberative, decision phases (Armor and Taylor, 2003; Taylor and Gollwitzer,

1995). Whilst this debate was not directly posed to head teachers a question was asked about how optimistic behaviours are created and whether or not optimism could be fostered or taught. The research sought to establish if there are organisational citizenship behaviours or organisational commitment actions that head teachers acknowledge and nurture.

People also prescribe more optimism when commitment to a particular course of action is high (Armor, Massey, and Sackett, 2008). In the school context, this is enacted through school development planning, which is the strategic document for a school over a 3-year period. It details goals, actions and outcomes and is prescriptive. Prescribed optimism predicts that people's beliefs in optimism's influence to affect outcomes is grounded in their understanding of motivation and action. Secondly, what people believe is based on the degree of authentic control they might have. There is anticipation that optimism can improve performance for someone who can directly influence an outcome rather than for someone who cannot (Bandura, 2006; Klein and Helweg-Larsen, 2002). This has implications for LSAs in schools whose authentic control over what they do is limited and this may impact on their belief in being optimistic and their actions in school.

The social significance of trust has been recognised in the social sciences and the compulsion to cultivate trust in schools has been advocated. Trust is an elemental concept in our day to day social exchanges and relationships. In their widespread study of school reform in Chicago, Bryk and Schneider (2002, p5) conclude "that a broad base of trust across school community lubricates much of a school's day-to-day functioning and is a critical resource as local leaders embark on ambitious improvement plans." There is a cohort of researchers who

are leading the field in trying to establish how trust and trust cultures promote improved student outcomes; Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (1998; 2000); Tschannen-Moran (1997; 2004); Tarter, Sabo, and Hoy (1995); Hoffman, Sabo, Bliss, and Hoy (1994); Hoy, Tarter and Witkoskie (1992); Tarter, Bliss and Hoy (1989); and Schneider (2002); Gimbel (2003); Adams (2008), and Forsyth (2008). These authors established trust as a conceptual and empirical construct. They indicated that trust is a complex, dynamic, and multi-dimensional phenomenon that is related to a range of variables relating to effectiveness of schools, human relationships, and behaviour. Trust, i.e. “operates within the cognitive and psychological domain as a motive for behaviour, at the interpersonal level to shape social exchanges, and within organisations, to influence collective performance” (Adams, 2008, p30). However, as Hoffman, Sabo, Bliss, and Hoy (1994) summarised, "despite the popularity of trust as a topic for commentary, and admonition, there is relatively little systematic research on trust in public schools" (p485). Trust is significant and needs to be understood across various dimensions of educational reform and the evaluation in the current educational landscape in Wales.

2.2 Social Cognitive Theory

Bandura’s (1986, 1997) social cognitive theory provides the theoretical foundation for much of the current research on collective teacher efficacy. Social cognitive theory is concerned with human agency, the way people exercise control over the events in their lives (Bandura, 1977, 1986, 1997). Self-efficacy is “beliefs in one’s capabilities to organise and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments” (Bandura, 1997, p2). Self-efficacy is theorised to occupy the pivotal role in determining future behaviour because

it influences individuals' motivation levels, emotional states, and actions (Bandura, 1997).

People often work together to achieve common purposes. Bandura (1997) extended the concept of human agency to include collective agency. Similar to self-efficacy but on the group level, collective efficacy is defined as a group's shared belief in its capabilities to act in ways that produce projected levels of attainment (Bandura, 1997). Collective efficacy is, therefore, the product of the interactive dynamics of group members and is a potentially powerful construct for understanding how groups or organisations choose to act.

Bandura's theory highlights four principal sources of efficacy information which individuals use to construct individual or collective efficacy beliefs; mastery experiences derived from interpretations of past performances; vicarious experiences, derived from interpretations of one's own capability based on comparison with another individual; social persuasion, derived from interpretations of encouragement of feedback from others; and affective states, derived from interpretations of emotions. He emphasises that the sources of efficacy information are not inherently enlightening but must be cognitively processed. Academics state that at the organisational level the cognitive processing of sources of efficacy information is influenced by contextual and environmental variables. This underscores the need to examine the organisational antecedents to the development of teachers' collective efficacy beliefs. (Gibson and Earley, 2007; Jung and Sosik, 2002; Wu, Tsui, and Kinicki, 2010). Bandura's work provides the basis for empirical and theoretical studies of teachers' collective efficacy beliefs.

2.3 Collective Teacher Efficacy

Collective teacher efficacy is defined as "the perceptions of teachers in a school that the efforts of the faculty as a whole will have a positive effect on students" (Goddard et al., 2000). Collective teacher efficacy does not refer necessarily to accurate assessments of the effectiveness of a school's faculty and does not have to coincide with the perceptions of an objective observer (Tschannen-Moran and Barr, 2004). A significant assumption of social cognitive theory as applied to schools is that the teachers' collective efficacy beliefs are the product of the interactive dynamics of teachers within the school context. However, researchers have only just begun to identify the ways in which the organisational context of a school influences the development of teachers' collective efficacy beliefs.

Consistent with social cognitive theory, four sources of efficacy information are also used to construct teachers' collective efficacy beliefs. Goddard et al. (2000) advanced a model that explained collective teacher efficacy as the result of teachers' cognitive processing of the four sources of efficacy in light of contextual conditions impacting task accomplishment and assessment of teaching competence. Applied to schools, scholars have found that teachers' mastery experiences are derived from interpretations of past student performance. However, much less study has been conducted on the experiences that constitute vicarious experiences, social persuasion, and affective states. Researchers have made theoretical assumptions that teachers' vicarious experiences might be derived from interpretations of observing their colleagues or other schools perform a task; social persuasion might be derived from interpretations of encouragement or feedback from the school principal,

and affective states might be derived from interpretations of emotional responses to Academic Optimism stresses in the school environment (Goddard et al., 2000, 2004; Ross et al., 2004).

Scrutiny of the four sources is then made in light of the contextual factors in the anticipated teaching task (Tschannen-Moran, Hoy, Hoy, 1998). Further study is therefore needed to understand how the organisational context might influence teachers' collective efficacy beliefs by contributing to the four sources of efficacy. This study also aimed to extend the line of research on the antecedents to collective teacher efficacy by exploring the ways in which the organisational context, conceptualised as PLC conditions, might contribute to the sources of efficacy information.

2.4 Academic Optimism: A Second Order Latent Construct: Theoretical Framework

The theoretical foundations for this construct have been crafted from two distinct theoretical origins. The literature review will critique both but it is worth noting in this chapter a brief overview of these frameworks since they both have influenced the structure of academic optimism.

Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) frame positive psychology as a means to investigate and describe the emotional states, traits and organisations in which humans interact and flourish. This investigation leads to the understanding of optimal environments and how people work within them. Positive psychology has a natural fit with schools in which the current focus from the government is on deficits (when compared with international benchmarks

PISA 2010) and not on developing the profession through collaborative actions and relationships that create optimal environments in schools.

Secondly, Bandura's (1997) social cognitive theory conceptualises human behaviour as a development, which occurs in a triadic relationship, based on: behaviours, personal factors and the environment. The term reciprocal causality is used to describe this relationship. Bandura (1997) explained:

> "In this transactional view of self and society, internal personal factors in the form of cognitive, affective and biological events; behaviour; and environmental events all operate as interacting determinants that influence one another bi-directionally". (p6)

Bandura (1997) does not suggest that the three factors in the triadic reciprocal causation model make equal contributions to behaviour. The relative influence of behaviour, environment, and person depends on which factor is strongest at any particular moment. These relationships occur in a complicated, multi-dimensional union in which humans control their lives through agentive actions. This applies in schools since teachers are skilled in regulating their behaviour as situations arise and change their behaviours as a result.

Academic optimism (Hoy, Tarter and Woolfolk Hoy, 2006) as a construct was fashioned using Bandura's Triadic Reciprocal Structure. This fusion on academic optimism as an organisational variable directly imposed the trio of reciprocal causation in the following way: collective efficacy equates to personal factors and perceptions of teachers, faculty trust in parents and students, the environment and academic emphasis the behaviours create in the pursuit of achievement within a school.

Academic optimism of schools is a collective construct that includes the cognitive, affective and behaviour facets of collective efficacy, faculty trust and academic emphasis. The research on academic optimism of schools is consistent: this latent construct is related to school achievement even when variables such as socio-economic status, prior achievement and demographic properties are controlled (Hoy and Smith, 2007; Hoy, Tarter, and Hoy, 2006).

It is appealing to the researcher as a head teacher, because it emphasises the potential of schools to overcome the socio-economic factors that are known to impair student achievement. Collective efficacy is the perception of teachers in a school that their efforts as a whole will have a positive effect on students. Tschannen Moran (2001) identifies that when a professional climate promotes trusting relationships, participants, i.e. teachers, are more likely to invest time and effort towards organisational goals. Trust is a key element of an effective relationship. Faculty trust in students and parents is based on feelings that the students and parents are benevolent, reliable, competent and honest and open (Hoy and Tschannen-Moran, 2003). Finally, academic emphasis is a focus on teachers with particular behaviours in the school. The triadic nature of the construct means it is functionally dependent on each facet and interacts to produce a positive learning environment. The researcher's primary goal will be to develop a broadly social constructionist narrative, exploring through case study design the triadic construct in situ in primary schools.

Student achievement and sense of efficacy are related. Researchers have found positive associations between student achievement and three kinds of efficacy beliefs: self-efficacy beliefs of students (Pajares, 1994, 1997), self-

efficacy beliefs of teachers (Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy, and Hoy, 1998), and teachers' collective efficacy beliefs about the school (Goddard, Hoy, and Woolfolk Hoy, 2000). A focus on collective efficacy of schools and student achievement is critical because collective efficacy is a school property amenable to change.

Within schools, perceived collective efficacy represents the judgments of the group about the performance capability of the social system as a whole (Bandura, 1997). Teachers have efficacy beliefs about themselves as well as the entire faculty. Simply put, perceived collective efficacy is the judgment of the teachers that the faculty as a whole can organise and execute actions required to have a positive effect on students (Goddard, Hoy, and Woolfolk Hoy, 2004). Bandura (1993) demonstrated the relationship between sense of collective efficacy and academic school performance, a relationship that existed in spite of low socio-economic status. Schools in which the faculty had a strong sense of collective efficacy flourished, whereas those in which faculty had serious doubts about their collective efficacy withered, that is, declined or showed little academic progress. Continuing research has provided support for the importance of collective efficacy in explaining student achievement. Goddard, Hoy, and Woolfolk Hoy (2000) supported the role of collective efficacy in promoting school achievement in urban elementary schools. They hypothesised that perceived collective efficacy would enhance student achievement in mathematics and reading. After controlling for SES and using hierarchical linear modelling, they found that collective efficacy was significantly related to student achievement in urban elementary schools.

Hoy, Sweetland, and Smith (2002), in continuing this line of inquiry, predicted school achievement in high schools using collective efficacy as the central variable. They found collective efficacy was the key variable in explaining student achievement; in fact, it was more important than either socio-economic status or academic press. Hoy and his colleagues concluded that "School norms that support academic achievement and collective efficacy are particularly important in motivating teachers and students to achieve; however, academic press is most potent when collective efficacy is strong" (p89). That is, academic press works through collective efficacy. They further theorised that when collective efficacy was strong, an emphasis on academic pursuits directed teacher behaviours, helped them persist, and reinforced social norms of collective efficacy.

Goddard, LoGerfo, and Hoy (2004) tested a more comprehensive model of perceived collective efficacy and student achievement. Using structural equation modelling, they also found that collective efficacy explained student achievement in reading, writing, and social studies, regardless of minority student enrolment, urbanicity, SES, school size, and earlier achievement. Research has consistently demonstrated the power of positive efficacy judgments in human learning, motivation, and achievement in such diverse areas as dieting, smoking cessation, sports performance, political participation, and academic achievement (Bandura, 1997; Goddard, Hoy, and Woolfolk Hoy, 2004). Similarly, the results of the school studies reported above highlight the importance of collective efficacy.

2.5 Academic Emphasis

The origins of this variable can be identified in Hoy and Feldman (1987), and Hoy et al. (1991) organisational health index of schools which were positively related to collective trust. However, it was not linked to student achievement. Whilst the school climate did not relate to student achievement, one dimension of the index consistently correlated with school achievement; academic emphasis. Academic emphasis is defined as the drive for academic excellence: high goals are set, and the learning environment is serious, teachers believe in students' ability to achieve, and there is a mutual respect for high academic achievers. Lee et al. (1989) in a parallel but separate study also identified academic emphasis as a key element in facilitating school achievement. This school characteristic might seem like an obvious element of school improvement, but I would suggest that in some schools goal setting is treated as a means of maintaining the status quo, especially in schools deemed coasting. Hoy and Sabo (1998) and Alig-Mielcarek and Hoy (2005) confirmed the academic emphasis/student achievement relationship in elementary schools. Whilst no study has yet to emerge from the literature of this work in a Welsh context, academic emphasis is a school property that fosters student achievement regardless of school level and regardless of SES (socio-economic status).

2.6 Faculty Trust

Forsyth et al. (2011); Tschannen-Moran and Hoy, (1988, 2000) defined this from the existing literature as: "Collective trust is a state in which groups are willing to make themselves vulnerable to others and take risks with the full confidence that others will respond in positive ways, that is with benevolence, reliability,

competence, honesty and openness." More concisely defined by Baier (1986 p.236) as "accepted vulnerability to another's possible but not expected ill will." Previous research had focused on collective trust being exhibited by the faculty, principal and in teachers. There was no distinct relationship between these measurable elements and student achievement. Faculty trust in students and faculty trust in parents was added to the measurement of collective trust. Factor-analysis research across elementary, middle, and high schools confirmed (Hoy and Tschannen-Moran, 1999; and Hoy and Tschannen-Moran, 2003; Smith et al., 2001) the validity of the concept and principle components of collective trust as it exists in schools in the U.S.

The five facets of collective trust outlined formed an integrated, one-dimensional measure of collective trust regardless of school type. Goddard et al. (2001) evidenced that collective faculty trust in students and parents was significantly related to student achievement in elementary schools. Goddard et al. (2009) examined the direct and indirect effects of faculty trust in clients (students and parents). The research established a strong positive predictor of mathematics and reading achievement with faculty trust in clients. Tarter and Hoy (2004) in a sample of elementary schools confirmed faculty trust in students and parents was related to student achievement regardless of SES. Hoy (2002) demonstrated that faculty trust in clients related to school achievement but its influence was stronger on achievement than SES. Tschannen-Moran (2004) comparative study was not of faculty trust in the principal, but faculty trust in the clients, which is more strongly related to school achievement. In a separate longitudinal study by Bryk and Schneider (2002), it was evidenced that trust

among teachers, parents and students produced schools with gains in student learning. Collective trust influences learning and student outcomes in schools.

2.7 Collective Efficacy

The research also evidenced that the relationship between collective efficacy and achievement was stronger than the relationship between SES and student achievement. In a school, collective efficacy represents collective judgments about the capability of the school as a whole. Whilst teachers retain self-efficacy beliefs about themselves they also have judgements about the latent ability of the faculty to perform actions that will have a positive effect on students: collective efficacy is the judgment of the teachers that have the faculty as a whole and can organise and execute the actions required to have a positive effect on student achievement (Goddard et al., 2000).

Goddard (2002) developed a reliable and valid collective measure. Cybulski et al. (2005) and Tarter and Hoy (2004) using structural equation modelling in a range of elementary schools established collective efficacy was related to student achievement after controlling for SES. A comparable study in secondary schools evidenced that collective efficacy was the key variable in explaining student achievement (Hoy et al., 2002). The research also identified collective efficacy was potent when academic emphasis was high. Hoy et al (2002) theorised that academic emphasis works through collective efficacy; when collective efficacy is a dominant measure characteristic then academic emphasis can direct teachers' behaviours to be tenacious in the drive towards high achievement.

The importance of collective efficacy cannot be ignored. Goddard et al. (2004) using SEM identified that improved school achievement in reading, writing and social studies, regardless of minority student enrolment, urbanicity, SES, school size and previous achievement, was directly linked to the school's collective efficacy. Collective efficacy supports student success. Collective efficacy can be changed in a school culture; SES of the students is more problematical to influence as a school.

There are three researched, theoretically valid variables that have been shown to make a difference in achievement regardless of SES - academic emphasis, collective trust, and collective efficacy are emergent group level properties. These variables make up the latent construct - academic optimism. The origin of this term stems from Seligman's (1991, 1998) research on learned optimism; academic emphasis created collective optimism in the school's focus on academics, hence the name academic optimism. Hoy and Tarter (2006a) sampled elementary and secondary schools, in two separate studies, using SEM, which confirmed the concept of academic optimism as a second order latent construct. In concert with each other, these emergent group variables produce potent school climates that are characterised by behavioural norms and expectations that reinforce the self-efficacy beliefs of teachers. When teachers are supported and trusted, schools work with parents and students as partners; then collective collaboration can flourish. Academic optimism is synergistic with a faculty that believes it can make a difference, all students can learn, and high academic performance is achievable.

Capelli and Rogovsky (1994), Cohen and Bailey (1997) research indicates that the widespread use of groups in organisations means that employees are requiring a new set of skills, such as the ability to work as a group member. Consequently group efficacy constructs have emerged as key variables in understanding group effectiveness and ultimately performance in school.

As Rosenholtz states, "teachers' efficacy … is one of the most powerful predictors of collaboration." Current reform efforts increasingly promote collaboration as a key driver for change, so perhaps we should reflect on whether or not schools have the potency to collaborate, and that constructing a climate that builds trust is the keystone in the bridge towards systemic improvement in education in Wales.

This literature review will be specific in its focus on the theoretical frames from which the constructs have been developed around the unifying, second order, latent construct of academic optimism. It will apportion significant emphasis on the work of specific authors in the fields of collective efficacy, the T-trust scale, academic optimism and group potency in the sphere of education. It will also seek to explore elements of the theoretical debate around mistrust, and trust violations. The researcher is suggesting that high trust, high academically optimistic climates in schools equate with successful pupil outcomes; the converse must be considered too.

Trust is assumed to start at a low level which is built and nurtured with associated gains in outcomes for both parties. Shapiro et al. (1992) have modelled this trust development as a linear, staged process. Jones and George

(1998) and McKnight et al. (1998) suggest that, in fact, high levels of trust are exhibited at the start of a social encounter. Their research is further supported by Berg et al. (1995) and Kramer (1994) who identified that high levels of trust are evident despite lack of knowledge or incentive to trust the other party. Noonan and Walker (2008) identified the relevance of trust and its maintenance in schools using narrative based methods in exploring the experiences of twenty five Canadian principals (head teachers).

In this study (Noonan and Walker, 2008), the principals indicated that their roles influenced their understanding of trust. They identified changes in leadership and management over a number of years which impacted on their trust brokerage. For example, the emergence of Professional Learning Communities had shifted their role from the leader who knows all the answers to one in which the principle is a broker of information and relationships and a mediator of values and decision making.

The research also identified the importance of inclusivity and ethos of trust in decision making and ensuring all stakeholders feel they have a voice. This raises tensions. Trust in these circumstances is constructed on two conditions: interdependence and risk. (Rousseau et al., 1998). Trust in conditions of interdependence, in which one party's interests, i.e. the head teacher, cannot be achieved without relying on another, is fragile. Tscannen-Moran (2004) and Baier (1994) identify this as vulnerability and the opportunity for betrayal is real. O'Neil (2002, pp.6-7) states "since trust has to be placed without guarantees, it is inevitably sometimes misplaced: others let us down and we let others down. When this happens, trust and relationships based on trust are damaged." As a

head teacher, mistakes in maintaining trust cannot be repeated without a significant deterioration in the relationships and norms of the school. The literature suggests that these breakdowns are often slow and incremental. Govier (1998, p5) posits, “we underrate the significance of trust is our strong tendency not to notice it until it breaks down.”

This observation reflects research in which the erosion of trust in cognition based relationships impacts on the organisations trust climate (Knight, 1995). It would be interesting if those schools identified as underperforming had instances where trust had been misplaced or broken down.

Gimbel (2003, p4) advocates that, “it seems easy to say that an honest, authentic leader can promote a climate of trust, but teachers are in a subordinate position and fear authority. This process of leading is an attempt to influence the behaviour of others to do things differently. Therefore, (leaders) tend to base their behaviour on power and distrust rather than on trust and intimacy.”

Noonan et al. (2008) also interpreted the vulnerability that school leaders can experience by being open also generated trust with their staff. There was reciprocal generation of trust, as Tschannen-Moran (2004) explains, “teachers have greater confidence when they feel they can predict the behaviour of their principal.” This raises an interesting avenue of exploration in terms of the school’s levels of trust concentration and if, and how, broken trust can be repaired or not. Is the emerging role of head teachers linked to stewardship of the school trust account?

This is a particularly relevant point. The literature is populated with examples and definitions of trust. It is not well blessed with research on how and when trust erodes. The factors and circumstances that cause trust to erode need to be explored. The research indicates two distinct steps that result in the erosion of trust - a trigger event and an assessment (e.g. Lewicki and Bunker, 1996). A violation of trust episode is often the starting point of the trust erosion process. Trust is considered violated when the trustor perceives the trustee as acting in a way that does not fulfil his/her expectations (Elangovan and Shapiro, 1998; Sitkin and Roth, 1993).

This research will explore if these trust violations, which would be established through narrative and group discussion, can be causally linked to the current levels of relational trust in a school, its academic optimism, and measured group potency. This is a critical point which reflects the research of McAllister (1995) on cognition-based trust, which is based on the knowledge of the trustee's credentials and reliability of past performance. Cognition based trust is common and a characteristic of professional relationships in work organisations. Fisher and Brown (1988, p107) argue that trust might be "the single most important element of a good working relationship." It would be reasonable to suggest that if schools are deemed to be underperforming, then the working relationships need to be reflected on and questions the levels of trust in that school.

The theoretical framing evidenced in the literature review will broadly seek to support the research goal of establishing a relationship between the identified constructs and the practical use of these constructs in primary schools. This is the contribution to knowledge. The application of validated organisational

constructs in a changing landscape in Wales will serve to establish a new knowledge about the pre-states in a school. Coupled with this exploratory approach will be the measurement of Academic Optimism in sample schools, across a defined region and phase of education (Primary). The author also seeks to establish at which point mistrust or violations of trust in schools impacts on the collective efficacy of the teaching staff and their measured group potency to successful moves towards changing the school's performance. Goddard, Hoy, Woolfolk et al. (2004) synthesis of existing research into student performance and collective efficacy postulate that:

> "Just as individuals react to stress, so do organisations. For example, immediate past performance on state-mandated tests, which is typically widely publicised, plays a key role in influencing the mood of local schools. Organisations with strong beliefs **in-group** capability can tolerate pressure and crises and continue to function without debilitating consequences; indeed, such organisations learn to rise to the challenge when confronted with disruptive forces. Less efficacious organisations however are more likely to react dysfunctionally, which in turn increases the likelihood of failure. Thus, affective states may influence how an organisation interpret and react to the myriad of challenges they face. Admittedly, however there is little research on the impact of affective states of organisations on the collective efficacy beliefs and performance of participants." (p.6)

Little and Madigan (1997) have demonstrated that collective efficacy is a strong positive predictor of work group effectiveness. Research suggests that perceived collective efficacy is strongly related to student achievement in schools (e.g. Bandura, 1993; Goddard, Hoy and Woolfolk Hoy, 2000). Sampson, Morenoff, and Earls (2000) argue that collective efficacy beliefs are important to group functioning because they explain *how organised capacity for action is tapped to produce results.* For example, it is posited by Sampson et al. that dense and trusting networks reflect high levels of social capital. Putnam (1995) suggests that social capital equates with the features of social life,

networks, norms and trust. Social capital enables participants to act together more effectively to peruse shared objectives. It is apparent that an understanding of collective efficacy in a school, its climate and culture are important elements in the school improvement mix.

There is a strong imperative to work together in schools. Bandura (1977) developed the concept of self-efficacy perceptions or beliefs in one's capacity to organise and execute courses of action required to produce given attainments. The literature reveals that three distinct types of efficacy exist that are important in schools. The self-efficacy judgements of students (Pajares, 1994, 1997), teachers' beliefs about their own instructional efficacy (Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk, Hoy and Hoy, 1998), and teachers' beliefs about the collective efficacy of their own school (Goddard, Hoy and Woolfolk, Hoy 2000). Each one of these efficacy constructs is based on judgements about a future state in which student, teacher or the collective organise, execute and action to generate a set of achievements. Efficacy is problematical inasmuch as it is based on beliefs about capability without actually being indicative of the capability at an individual or group level. Bandura (1997) indicates that "a capability is only as good as its execution."

2.8 Self-Efficacy and Collective Efficacy

There is a linage of these constructs in the literature that build towards the construct of academic optimism. The evolution of these concepts from the field of social cognitive theory demonstrates the need to understand the relationships, factors and judgments that are related to schools that are educationally productive.

Self-efficacy is different from other well-known concepts of self, such as self-esteem and self-worth, for example. Self-efficacy is specific to a task. It is formed from a judgement about task capability. Gist and Mitchell (1992) state self-efficacy is not intrinsically evaluative. Pajares and Miller (1994) research indicated that "as self-referent perceptions of capability to execute specific behaviours, efficacy beliefs are better predicators of individual behaviour than self-esteem or self-worth." Bandura (1986) advocates that existing self-referent constructs, such as self-concept, are related to outcomes by their influence on self-efficacy beliefs.

There is a clear fit with these constructs in education. The difference between what a teacher believes is their competence and actual competence is termed in the literature *teacher efficacy.* This term is centred on teachers' perceptions of efficacy, judgements, sense of efficacy. This is a significant feature of the construct and it is not the same as teacher effectiveness or good teaching. Teacher efficacy is about the judgements made about capability to accomplish a task.

The meaning of teachers' sense of efficacy has been debated in the literature with the construct being linked to other characteristics that support productive teaching practices. Allinder (1994) describes teachers with high self-efficacy beliefs as being more organised and better planned; student centred (Czerniak and Schriver, 1994); (Enochs, Scharmann, and Riggs, 1995) and humanistic (Woolfolk and Hoy, 1990). Teachers' efficacy judgements are also strongly related to trust (Da Costa and Riordan, 1996); openness (DeForest and Hughes, 1992) and job satisfaction (Lee, Dedrick and Smith, 1991).

2.9 Collective Efficacy

Teachers' efficacy is based at the individual level construct; collective efficacy is an organisational level construct. It is based on the principle that in a school there are not only the teachers' self-efficacy beliefs but a set of beliefs about the capability of the school faculty as a group, a collective. These group perceptions are termed *perceived collective efficacy.* Bandura (1997) expands further by suggesting that collective efficacy represents the beliefs of group members, "the performance capability of the social system as a whole." (p 469). Translating this into schools is based on the judgement that teachers as a group can organise and implement the course of action required to have a positive effect on students. I would suggest that collective efficacy within a school as a collective property will be determined by the *trust account* within that school. Not only the individuals but also the collective agency will influence this trust account, as an organisational fund. It is a keystone assumption in social cognitive theory that choice, and therefore agency, is influenced by efficacy beliefs. Bandura (1997) posits that agency is exemplified in the way that people exercise some form of control on their daily lives. Applied to teaching, social cognitive theory would suggest that decisions teachers make about their practice are directly linked to their sense of efficacy for teaching. The construct of efficacy within this theoretical frame is an important belief that optimises performance (Bandura, 2000). Working together in a school involves high interdependence and trust, and teachers must depend on each other to meet personal and organisational goals. The literature is not replete with research into the efficacy belief and trust in schools, especially collective efficacy. However, the research for collective efficacy as a measurable indicator and its impact on student performance has been established. Goddard, Hoy and

Woolfolk (2000) sampled 452 teachers in 47 urban elementary schools. This study identified that a one-point increase in schools' collective efficacy score equated to an 8.5-point increase in student achievement scores.

A group's sense of collective efficacy is only going to influence organisational outcomes when it is potent enough to mobilise the group to do something collectively. Collective efficacy, perceptions of teachers, that in school their efforts will have a positive impact on students, may reach a collective tipping point when the levels of relational trust reach a point at which collaboration can occur.

2.10 Intra-organisational Trust

Trust is considered a fundamental ingredient for motivating productive working relationships. (Braddach and Eccles, Creed and Miles, 1996); Ring and Van de Ven, 1994, Berman and Jones, 1999). Ganesan (1994); Osterloh and Frey, (2000) identify trust as promoting co-operative behaviour within and between stakeholder groups. Nahapiet and Ghoshal, (1998); Tsai and Ghoshal, (1998); Clegg and Unsworth et al. (2002); Politis (2003) recognise trust as being associated with creativity, innovation and knowledge transfer (a primary function in a school). Trust has also been contributory in positive organisational transformations (Scott 1980; Miles, Snow et al., 1997); (Lusch, O'Brien et al., 2003).

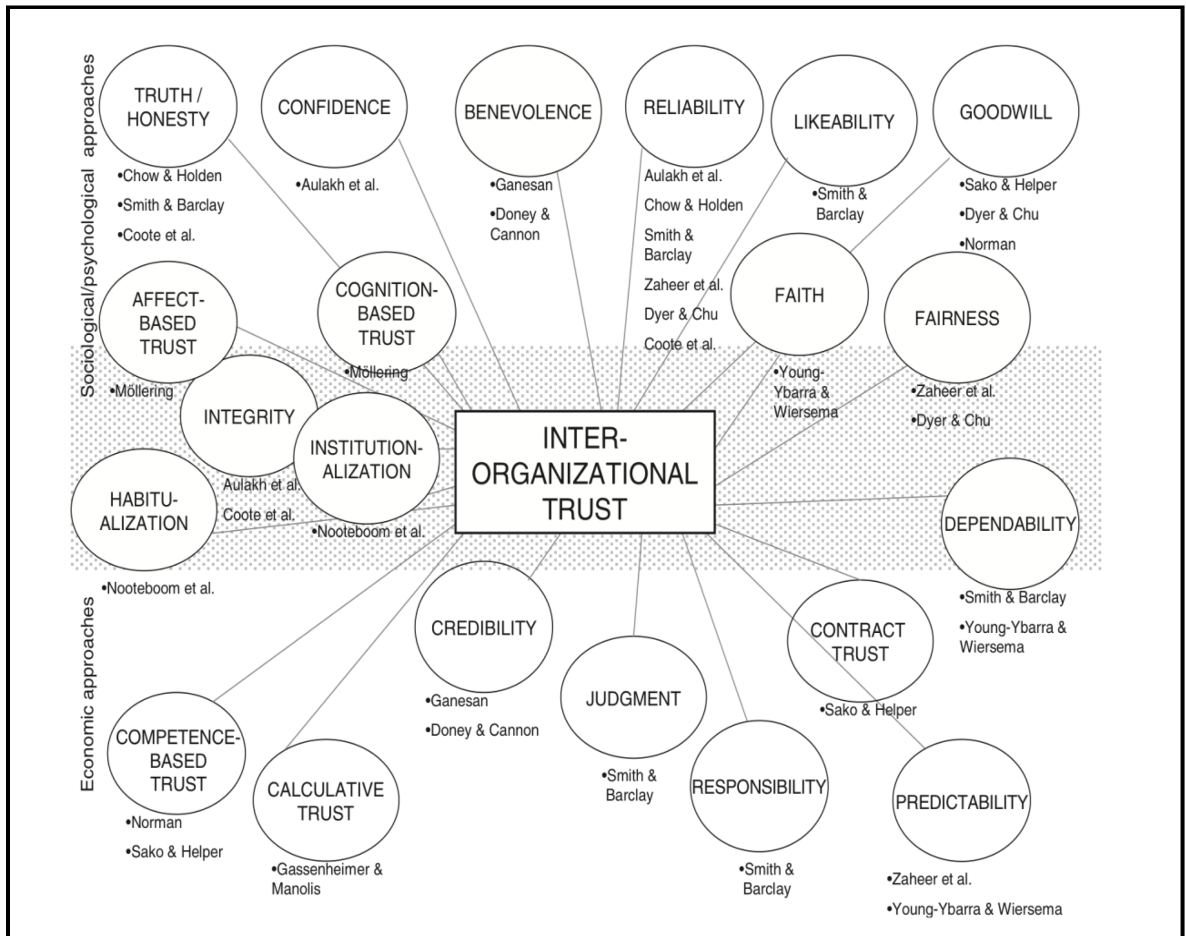
However, when attempting to review the literature on trust it becomes immediately apparent that there is no consensus on a clear definition of what trust is or on its dimensional form; however, it is agreed that it is a

multidimensional concept. The diagram overleaf (Fig 2) is indicative of the issue in the literature. Trust as a multidimensional concept is often cited in the literature. Its content, role and how many dimensions make up trust is not clear. The number of dimensions and roles can vary from five to zero. The literature on inter-organisational trust reveals the following as dominant themes of research which are empirically testable in the field: credibility, benevolence, confidence reliability, honesty,competence, and fairness

The themes identified can create confusion and the use of the words creates discussion about what is being measured. Is credibility similar to capability; is dependability the same as goodwill? The operationalisation and measurement of inter-organisational trust, it has been argued by Medlin and Quester (2002), should be treated as a global one-dimensional construct because of the inherent ambiguity in the nature and interpretation of what trust is.

The nature of this research is probing for the reciprocal relationships that may exist between trust and co-operation, trust and performance, and if collective efficacy can explain a school's current performance. It is the causality and antecedents to trust and its consequences that interest me. The research to date into academic optimism indicates that trust is a reciprocal concept, in that trust is both a cause and partly an effect of this construct. It is the researcher's aim to test and validate this research in a new context.

Fig 2: Dimensions of trust based on the major theoretical approaches (Seepanen et al., 2005)



Trust relationships are established in the staffroom, corridors and classrooms of a school. Policies, practice and procedures determine how these relationships are bounded in a school environment. Schools are highly regulated organisations and as such the internal conditions are influential on how trust is formed and evolves, which in turn influence student outcomes. I would describe this as the tone of the school.

An element of the construct termed AO is academic emphasis. Sweetland and Hoy (2000) suggest that in a school a component of academic emphasis is a learning environment that is orderly and serious. A learning environment that is

orderly and serious is the organisational structure in which standards are enacted. This structure in a school is an indicator of the degree of trust in that school. Alig-Mielcarek and Hoy (2005) hypothesised that academic emphasis would have a positive effect on student achievement in a school. “Students, teachers, parents and administrators all need to be on the same page in encouraging, supporting, recognising and rewarding the academic accomplishments of students; it’s a collaborative and school wide effort, not a solo performance” (p.47-48). This takes place within the structured trusting, orderly environment school climate.

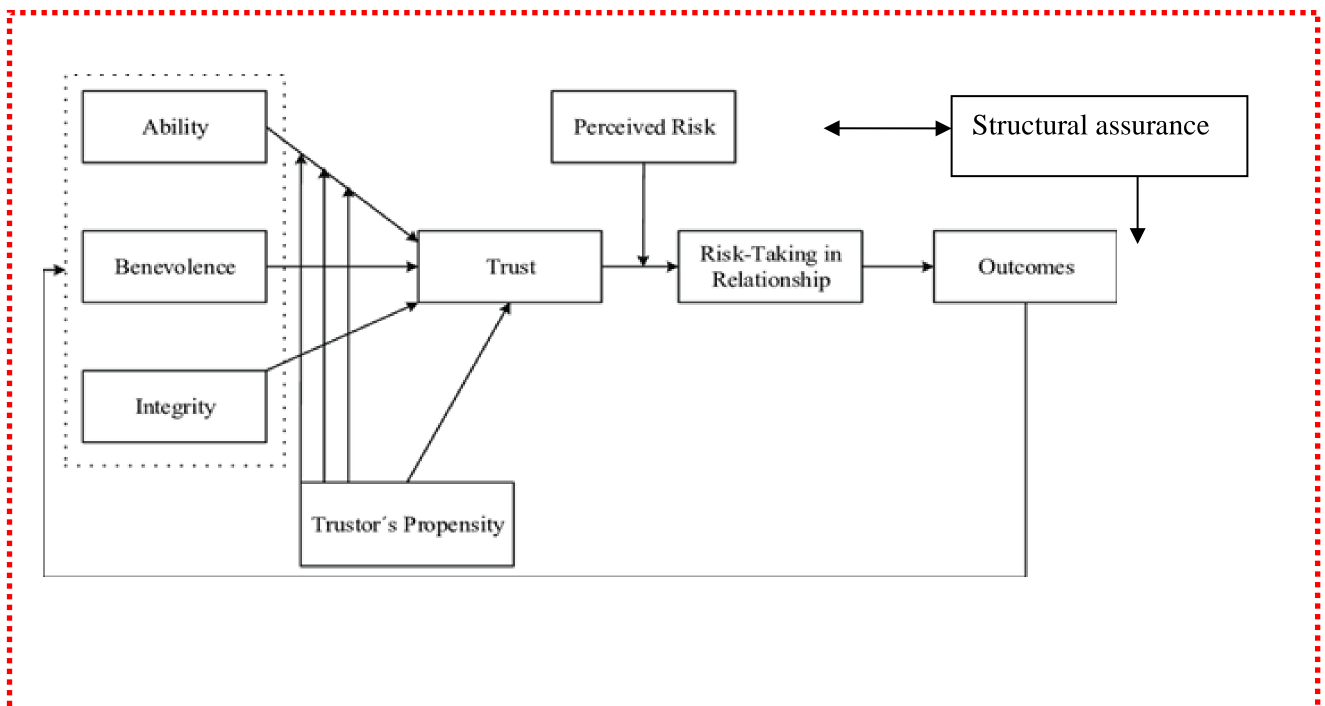
McKnight et al. (2002a) refers to intuitional based trust and the structural conditions in which the environment is trustworthy. Institutional based trust has two dimensions; structural assurance and situational normality. In this thesis these two dimensions are particularly pertinent to schools.

Structural assurance refers to a person’s (teacher, LSA, or head teacher) belief that appropriate structures, regulations for example are in place to promote successful interactions in a particular environment (Shapiro, 1987; Zucker, 1986). In schools which are highly regulated, structural assurance is assured through internal/external policies, strong governance arrangements and external scrutiny.

Situational normality refers to a person’s belief that taking a risk in a particular environment will lead to a positive outcome. In a school, risk would be associated with a teacher or LSA innovating the curriculum or substantial change of staff to improve standards led by the head teacher. In the context of

a school, a teacher would perceive situational normality to be high in a school with an ordered learning environment and the *attributes* of the staff in that school reflect ability to do the job, *benevolence* and *integrity* (McKnight et al., 2002a). These are factors of perceived trustworthiness in which the trustor (teacher) will experience a positive or negative outcome of this, the risk taking choice. Situational normality links to the academic emphasis component of AO and reflects the climate of trust in a school. It is the author's view that situational normality influences collective efficacy too, and will seek to justify this belief through semi-structured interviews with head teachers. In effect, situational normality is an antecedent of AO.

Figure 3: Causal model of interpersonal trust. (adapted from Mayer et al. 1995)



The red dotted line represents the authors' view that situational normality is a boundary antecedent to the construct of interpersonal trust and a pre-cursor condition to AO. Structural assurance is also represented in this model and the bi-directional nature of its interaction with perceived risk taking is illustrated leading to a positive outcome.

Open communication between different parties is a determinant of trust (Lambert, 1995). Allied with this open communication is listening, and valuing ideas of others also contributes to the development of trust. Communication behaviours that also contribute to trust include task feedback (Podsakoff et al., 1996). Organisational structures and their systems impact on the degree of trust in organisations. Organisations communicate rules and standards to employees through the systems they put in place.

Workers who view systems, decisions, and procedures as fair, will tend to extend their trust (Magner, Welker and Johnson, 1996). Employee participation in the decision-making process and a degree of job independence (Krone 1994) add to the degree of trust. The level of involvement in the decision making process reflects an open process in which transparency of information shared directly influences organisational decisions. Teachers who have influence and autonomy in their work have described having higher trust in their head teacher.

One of the research aims states: What factors emerge and underlie the construct of AO? Through semi-structured interviews with the head teachers, specifically answering the following questions:

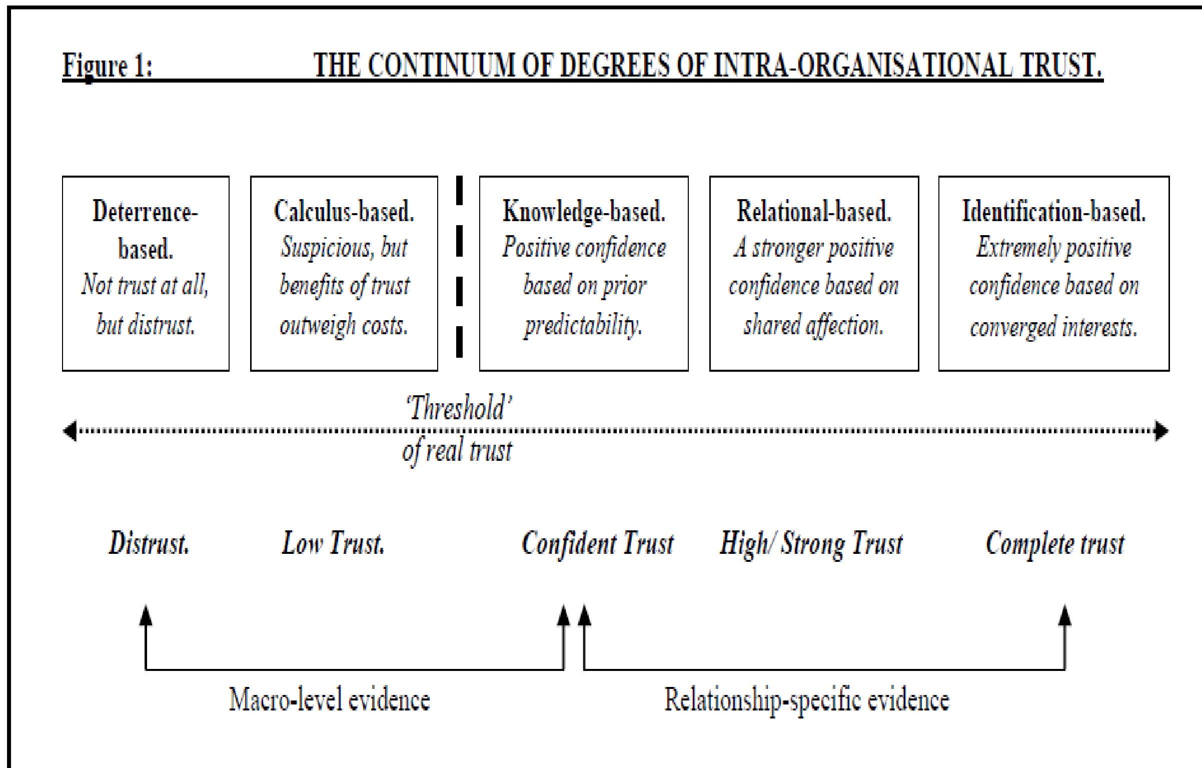
- Trust is identified as a key factor in academic optimism. It is characterised by trust amongst students, teachers and parents … what are your thoughts on trust ... is it linked to school performance?
- What do you do to build trust? What do you do if it's broken? Can you give an example in both cases?

- Trust in regard to academic optimism is defined as a "willingness to be vulnerable to another party based on the confidence that the party is benevolent, reliable, competent, honest, and open" (Hoy, Tarter and Woolfolk Hoy, 2006, p.429). Which element best describes your leadership?

In reality, people do not trust the same in all times and in all situations. It could be implied that the importance of each element is dependent on who is being trusted and more importantly, the nature of interdependence between the parties involved. People have a tendency to trust people they perceive as similar to themselves - characteristic-based trust; such trust is based on conventions of obligation and co-operation rooted in social similarity. The researcher notes the following types of trust were to have synergy with the schools in the context of this research: calculative trust, institution-based trust, knowledge-based trust, uneven trust, unconditional trust, and optimal trust.

Trust is difficult to measure across a school. There are a trust surveys termed the t-trust survey for example, Figure 2. Dimensions of trust details the range of views and terms used to describe organisational trust. In this thesis the researcher applied the continuum of intra-organisational trust (Dietz et al., 2006) to identify if there is a threshold over which head teachers cross in their determinations in trusting their staff. Trust is not a binary either/or choice; it is multi-faceted and vindicated by experience, suggesting trust can move along this continuum in a school environment as trust relationships evolve.

Fig 4: Dietz et al. 2006, adapted from Williams, (2001 p.371)



2.11 Trust Relationships in Organisations

The literature on trust is wide-ranging, (e.g. Mayer, Davis and Schoorman, 1995; Robinson, 1996; Whitener, 1997; Kramer, 1999), with four noted reviews (Gambetta, 1988; Kramer and Tyler, 1996; Lane and Bachmann, 1998; Nooteboom and Six, 2003). However, the generalisability of trust remains extremely "fragmented" (McEvily et al., 2003: p 91). There are three specific types of trust present in the literature. Trust within organisations (i.e. as an intra-organisational phenomenon, between employees and supervisors/ managers, or head teachers) is the focus of this research. Secondly, trust between organisations (i.e. an inter-organisational phenomenon), and thirdly, trust between organisations and their customers. The precise nature of trust remains difficult to define noted as "central, superficially obvious but essentially complex" concept (Blois, 1999: p.197).

In this research the trustor can be considered as the head teacher, and the trustee the staff, although both relationships are interchangeable. Intra-organisational trust can also be considered in three parts: trust as a belief, as a decision, and as an action. Trust is personal, combined, and a confident set of beliefs about the other party and one's relationship with her/him. This leads one to accept that the other party's likely actions will have positive consequences for oneself. Trustworthiness and trust are two separate constructs (Mayer et al., 1995: p.711, p.729): trustworthiness is a quality that the trustee has, while trusting is something that the trustor does. A head teacher is regarded as trustworthy and competent by the responsibilities they carry as school leaders. Additionally, head teachers are regarded as honest in the interactions they have in school. Integrity, authenticity and a moral purpose are judged through these interactions.

While A may consider B to be trustworthy this does not automatically mean that A will actually trust B. A's belief in B's trustworthiness is nonetheless expected to be a strong predictor of A's decision to trust B. This belief is based on "probabilities" (Nooteboom, Berger and Noorderhaven, 1997) or a "strength of feeling" (Bhattacharya et al., 1998: p.462) that elevates it above mere hopefulness … or gullibility (McEvily et al., 2003: 99).

Trust as a school- constructed relationship and how head teachers show belief, and decision making actions with the staff, is important because schools are social places in which trust is an often an assumed construct. Trust can be the extent to which a person is confident in, and willing to act on the basis of, the words, actions and decisions, of another (McAllister 1995). The willingness of a

party to be vulnerable to the actions of another party based on the expectation that the other will perform a particular action important to the trustor, irrespective of the ability to monitor or control that other party (Mayer, Davis and Schoorman 1995). This is particularly relevant for the head teacher in a school whose position implies that teachers and particularly LSAs will not have the ability to control the school leader. There is an expectation that the head teacher will be benevolent. Other researchers offer that this relationship can be best described, as noted, by Lewicki, McAllister and Bies (1998) an expectation or belief that the other party will act benevolently (Whitener et al., 1998). A psychological state comprising the intention to accept vulnerability is based upon positive expectations of the intentions or behaviour of another (Rousseau et al., 1998).

Trust is also the decision to really trust the other party. For this state of trust to exist, both the expectation of trustworthy behaviour and the intention to act based upon it must be present (Huff and Kelley, 2003: p.82). This can be considered a point at which a threshold is reached. Clark and Payne (1997: p.217) interpretation of this trust as “a process model where the decision to trust is based on an underlying subjective base of trust which conditions the intention to trust” (see similarly Costa, 2003). This decision can be considered as the “willingness to render oneself vulnerable” (Mayer et al., 1995; Rousseau et al., 1998). A considers B to be trustworthy, and intends to allow her/himself to be subject to the risk of damaging actions on the part of B, on the basis that such outcomes are unlikely. This decision implies an intention to act. For A to demonstrate plainly her/his trust in B, (s)he must follow through on this decision by engaging in any of the trust-informed risk-taking behaviours proposed by

these authors (e.g. Sitkin and Pablo, 1992; Mayer et al., 1995; Costa, Roe and Taillieu, 2001).

Gillespie (2003; 2004) divides these behaviours into two types: ‘reliance’-related behaviours (for example, a head teacher deliberately reducing control over, or monitoring of, and the subordinate’s actions, i.e. the teacher or LSA) and ‘disclosure’ in the sense of sharing damaging information with another party. These risk-taking behaviours started by A in the light of her/his calculation of B’s trustworthiness need to be kept separate from behaviours that indicate A’s own trustworthiness, or B’s behavioural response to being trusted. The act of trusting another is only a consequence of the decision to trust; it is not guaranteed. Although A might be willing to trust B, there may nevertheless be consequences for A beyond her/his relationship with B that may predict the decision, such as the impact on party C’s assessment of A should A decide to trust B (Nooteboom, p.2003).

This research uses a conceptualisation that reflects the distinction drawn by McEvily et al. (2003: p.93) between trust’s three necessary constituent parts: as “an expectation, a willingness to be vulnerable and a risk-taking act”. This is based on a judgment in the school setting. Butler and Cantrell (1984) proposed integrity, competence, consistency, loyalty and openness as crucial elements in making this judgment. Cunningham and McGregor (2000: p.1578-9) and Mishra (1996: p.265) propose predictability (or reliability). The four attributes of the trustee - ability, benevolence, integrity and predictability. These four attributes are interdependent (Ross and LaCroix, 1996: p.335) and the exact combination

will be characteristic to the circumstances (faculty trust in the school) and to the trustor, head teacher, teacher or LSA.

Lewicki et al. (1998) argued that the trust belief can be grouped and combined to accommodate inconsistencies and errors, if they still judge the quality of the other's trustworthiness, and/or the benefits of continuing to trust them, to be sufficient. This is particularly important when trust is suspected to have been broken. Lewicki et al. (1998) implication is that there is a process of weighing up or a trust standing which can survive violations if the group determines it is beneficial to do so. These variables will be discussed briefly.

Influencing variables have been categorized as: Lane and Bachmann (1998) separate them into micro-level (i.e. relationship-specific) factors, and macro-level factors (i.e. those external to the relationship). Whitener et al. (1998) distinguish between individual factors, relational factors and organisational factors. Payne and Clark (2003) divide them into dispositional factors, interpersonal factors and situational factors. This illustrates the complexity of how trust works across many levels in an organisation.

At the micro- level the trustor 'A' is her/ his disposition when trusting others; Rotter (1967) called this 'generalised trust'; divided into generalised trust in others, and generalised trust in organisations such as the education system as a whole. This differs for individuals, and this affects individuals' decision-making on trust (Kiffin-Petersen and Cordery, 2003: p.107). Johnson, George, and Swap (1982) found that pre-disposition to trust is pertinent in the early phase of interactions with another, but its influence ebbs over time as more direct

information of the other person is gathered. In this thesis, time served by all staff was surveyed and faculty trust was correlated with this aspect of AO; in a school, the cultural values and norms, including a readiness to engage in co-operation and to trust others (see Huff and Kelley, 2003; Inglehart, 1999; Zak and Knack, 2001). This is an important aspect of the trust relationship. Schools are very much influenced by tone or ethos. The pre-disposition to trust is key variable when there is a change of head teacher and new co-operative actions or a key school event, e.g. a poor Estyn inspection report which will impact on the norms of a school culture.

People "tend to make incoming information fit with their former attitudes, rather than the reverse" (Robinson, 1996: p.576-577). This implies that pre-disposition and attitudes exert an influence on her/his reported trust in B, regardless of B's efforts or any trust-influencing independent variable, academic emphasis or collective efficacy as examples.

For example, a teacher might be confident in the ability of her/his head teacher to represent her/his work to others, but be unwilling to share personal or even work-related problems with that person (Gillespie, 2003). There are other external influences on the trust relationship identified in the literature. Each aspect of these will influence and shape the trust relationships and associated actions.

Raub and Weesie (1990) and Bijlsma-Frankema and Koopman (2003: p.547, p.551) propose that there is influence of the 'shadow of the past' and the 'shadow of the future'; whether the trustor feels her/his position in the

relationship is precarious or stable (Payne and Clark, 2003). Schools are places where relationships can be influenced by previous encounters between staff. In my experience as a head teacher old violations or events do significantly taint at the micro level. At the macro level whole school relationships are often tested when a school's stability is under threat. I have led two amalgamations of staff on two separate occasions. In both experiences the external organisational factor of a change of head teacher has influenced the trust relationships across all groups of staff. These new school structures resonate with research by Sheppard and Sherman (1998) with a proposed dependence/interdependence ('shallow' and 'deep' trust for each). Lewicki and Bunker (1996: p.119, p.124) offer a three-phase model of developmental trust - 'early', 'developing' and 'mature' - the quality of trust will vary according to the stage of progress in the relationship. In my experience this was evident in both schools I led and reflects Williams (2001) who suggests that trust differs by the degree of awareness (in-group and out-group membership) and between the group. Wicks, Berman and Jones' concept of "optimal trust" (1999: p.101) infers that parties' trust stages can assume different degrees, as appropriate for the tensions and value of the relationship. (Lewis and Weigert, 1985; Zucker, 1986). Weibel states (2003: p.668), "interpersonal trust is influenced by the institutional framework, but the institutional arrangement never completely determines the quality of social interaction". This is a valuable point when considering AE which could be assigned as an external factor in the development of relational trust in a school. AE relates to a serious and ordered environment, the *institutional arrangement* and was the simplest factor to influence me as a head teacher in the pre-decision phase of trusting me prior to information about me being gathered by school staff groups.

The degree to which one trusts another varies along a continuum of intensity (Williams, 2001: 379). These are illustrated in Fig. 4 which proposes there are five trust gradations. These are given brief descriptions here. The interviews with head teachers will exemplify these trust gradations and conditions around them in the schools in this case study. This thesis will also seek to establish if there are thresholds between these gradations which can be crossed depending on the trust relationship that exists in the school at a point in time.

'Deterrence-based trust' (Rousseau et al., 1998: p.399) exists when there is no positive expectation of goodwill and the threat of sanctions … the expectation of compliance guaranteed; there is effectively no risk and no possibilities to consider. It is distrust. The trustor's inclination to trust coupled with the risk effectively means trust is not present. In a school setting, if the school is exhibiting deterrence-based trust across all of the staff groups, it is in a perilous state and not functioning effectively.

'Calculus-based trust' (Lewicki and Bunker, 1996: p.119) cannot be considered real trust; trust is only considered a valuable strategy on the basis of a strict cost-benefit analysis; there is a profit motive behind this trust type and suspicion about the other can be a consequence. This trust type is unlikely in a school since schools are not profit driven.

Fig. 4 identifies that there is a threshold of trust between 'calculus-based' trust and 'knowledge-based' trust (Lewicki and Bunker, 1996: p.121). This is a particularly important aspect to the continuum. The term threshold is suggestive

of a boundary which can be crossed over to more productive relational aspects of trust development, an important action in a school. Schools are high trust environments which need very productive trusting relationships to become successful. The head teacher, as the steward of the bonds of trust in their school, needs to be mindful that when trust is poor, staff can cross this threshold towards disengagement. This threshold is crossed when misgivings withdraw to be replaced by positive expectations based on confident knowledge about the other party, their motives, abilities and reliability. High trust starts here as the school moves towards complete trust. Teachers are sensitive to the trustworthiness of their head teachers. As their expectations are vindicated by experience, more influential degrees of trust may develop and set the tone for trusting relationships in the school. The development along this continuum will be influenced by the time staff spend together and is termed relational-based trust.

Relational-based trust (Rousseau et al., 1998: p.399) is more personal and emotive in nature. The quality of the relationship over time is more important rather than from observation of the other party's specific behaviours. Blois (1999: p.200) identifies the stronger degrees of trust coming from an appraisal of the other party's "dependable goodwill" rather than from observation of their reliable habits. Creed and Miles (1996) identify a distinction between the trustee's 'characteristics' (i.e. their personal qualities and motives), and 'process based' evidence.

Complete trust on the continuum is a merging of common interests. In a school this would be an expected outcome. Schools are places driven toward student

achievement and attainment. We all want every child to succeed. This point on the model is exemplified as identification-based trust (Lewicki and Bunker, 1996: p.122), when parties assume a common identity and each party can embody the other's interests with their full confidence. Tyler (2003) terms 'social' trust as being composed of relational and identification-based trust. This would be the expected trust type in schools as they are, by their very nature, social organisations.

Whitener (1997: p.396-397) notes how "employees typically engage in multiple exchange relationships, benefit differently from each other, and respond to each relationship with different behaviours and attitudes" (see also Dirks and Ferrin, 2002: p.611). This is clearly resonant with the many and multiple interactions a head teacher would have in the school day. Their response in these exchanges influences the school's AO which is collective measure of efficacy, standards and trust present in those responses.

Clegg and Wall (1981) noted that in management, trust tends to weaken as one moves down the organisational hierarchy. This resonates with the way schools are structured - LSAs, teachers and senior leadership teams - which is hierarchical. Den Hartog, Schippers and Koopman (2002) found that employees' trust in their supervisor was related to their trust in management in general. Employees can distinguish between different referents and may have different relationships with each of them; it needs to be clear to respondents to whom the items refer (i.e. who is the referent). The development, growth and protection of these relationships are important in a school. The head teacher

must be viewed as pivotal referent in the way these relationships are brokered, sustained and move the school culture towards identification-based trust.

Trust can be viewed within the context of four distinct types of trust. General trust refers to the trust we grant in general to members of the groups to which we belong. Factors like group cohesion and interactions with other actors within that group regulate the level of trust we are willing to grant to group members. Personality based trust reflects our willingness to trust certain individuals based upon traits that they possess. In this research this is an important consideration because it is a head teacher talking to head teachers, all of whom have similar traits in terms of running schools effectively. Furthermore, this also supports the knowledge-based trust type in that head teachers have similar knowledge and terms when describing their schools. An individual's trustworthiness includes integrity, credibility, consistency, fairness, competence, and leadership style, which all impact on personality based trust.

Process based trust evolves through our interactions with others over time. This form of trust is relational and social. By extending our trust in another person, combined with the other person's conforming to our expectations, we learn to trust. The researcher notes that there is scarce reference in the literature to that moment in time when trust, or trusting, starts. There is also scant reference to the process when trust is violated and the severity of that event in schools and its consequences.

Environmental based trust emerges from systems and structures within an organisation. A school's policies can communicate its expectations of trust and

how the school procedures are fair, which can increase trust. The human resource function of a school fosters trust, through performance appraisal systems, fair and equitable pay structures and training opportunities. In this thesis the collective measure that captures these important aspects of environmental trust is termed AE, the drive for standards in a serious and ordered environment.

The benefits of organisational trust are numerous. Trust co-ordinates collective action; at an operational level, trust lubricates organisations in the following ways. Trust augments job satisfaction and worker motivation, and these impact on performance. A trust climate also simplifies the workers' perceptions and interpretations of organisational action. Organisational change depends on the level of trust within an organisation and is a key issue in schools who are delivering WG policy which often means change in practice across all school staff.

The researcher would note that a trust typology that could be referenced to suggestive empirical evidence would allow for researchers to compare different studies across a range of disciplines. Trust in schools setting may reach an optimum when cautiousness gives way to genuine belief in the participant's behaviour and expected outcome: a delivery of expectation; a consensus, without obligation to other parties; an optimal level of trust; an academically optimistic school climate.

2.12 Trust in Schools

Trust contributes directly to improved standardised test scores (Bryk and Schneider, 2002; Sweetland and Hoy 2000; Tschannen-Moran, 2004). Trust also enhances other factors that contribute to learning, teacher collaboration (Meier, 2002; Tschannen-Moran, 2001), sharing decision making (Sweetland and Hoy, 2000); an ability to respond to trends quickly (Hoy, Gage, Tarter, 2006); collective teacher efficacy (Goddard, Hoy and Moran, 2004) and organisational commitment (Tschannen-Moran, 2003).

In the domain of education, trust is defined by Hoy and Tschannen-Moran (1999) as: “Trust is an individual’s or group’s willingness to be vulnerable to another party based on the confidence that the latter party is benevolent, reliable, competent, honest and open.” Meier (2002) notes that the confidence in another is not given easily, but must be earned on an ongoing basis. This suggests that time and reciprocation are mediating variables in this transactional process.

Bryk and Schneider (2002, p5) concluded that, “a broad base of trust across the school community lubricates much of a school’s day to day functioning and is a critical resource as leaders embark on ambitious improvement plans.”

Adams (2008) and Forsyth (2008) have researched trust as a conceptual and empirical construct. Both authors identified trust as complex phenomena inter-related to several variables concerning the effectiveness of school organisations, human relationships and behaviour. Trust shapes social

exchanges and "within organisations to influence collective performance" (Adams 2008, p.30).

The mutuality of trust in schools is an interaction between several distinct groups. Teachers, parents, students and head teachers are dependent on each other to achieve goals. This mutuality creates vulnerability, as each agent is reliant on the other agents to fulfil their responsibility. These internal shared understandings of roles and intentions are termed by Bryk and Schneider (2002) *relational trust.* Relational trust is centred on people's deliberation of latent intent. This differs from organic trust, which the literature suggests is based on common or ethical beliefs among a homogenous group of people, like teachers. Organic trust is presumptive. It is instinctual on the part of members in that the organisation and its members mean to do well, without the need to analyse motivations of that group. This is a critical distinction to consider when the expectation is for groups of teachers to collaborate and work together in a high trust relationship. The growth of relational trust is multi-faceted and includes the personalities of each party, shared values, attitudes, and the enabling processes of the schools.

Hoy and Sweetland (2001) researched the link between enabling bureaucracies and trust relationships in schools. They defined an enabling bureaucracy in terms of formalisation (rules and procedures) and centralisation (hierarchy). Enabling bureaucracies are noteworthy by the teachers who solve problems and their own decision-making. Hoy and Sweetland (2001) indicate that an enabling bureaucracy cultivates trust between teachers and that teachers' trust of the

group, i.e. their colleagues, would strengthen the enabling structure of the school.

Trust is difficult to conceptualise and operationalise in ways that are theoretically sound, empirically testable, and applicable to management's practise. The scope of this literature was to provide insight of the fundamental discussion of trust and to provide a typology from which the researcher could identify some of the issues under investigation. Research validates the importance of intra-organisational trust in fulfilling a organisations mission and enhancing the value of work for individuals in those organisations. Intra-organisational trust is an important area of research in the context of schools.

2.13 Trust and its Implications in Practice

A trusting belief dominates the intention to trust someone. For example, if the teachers did not believe that head teachers are predictably competent, honest and benevolent, then the likelihood of the teachers trusting the head teacher is low. This raises an important issue concerning trusting beliefs and the need for head teachers to be the kind of person that others feel is trustworthy. This would imply that the intent to trust is primarily based on perceptions or beliefs, and consideration needs to be the way in which head teachers present themselves and behave in a way that is consistent with trusting beliefs. The researcher is not suggesting that perception management is the way that head teachers should act to build trust in schools. This occurs when a head teacher's actions match the presentation over time; a trust history needs to be established.

There is an emotional element to trusting beliefs and intentions. If you like your head teacher you are more likely to feel safe in the belief that the head teacher is benevolent towards you. The trusting leap is based around confidence and security in the head teacher, i.e. an expectation of benevolent action. It could be implied, as Gabarro (1987) has, that leaders (head teachers) dedicate time to develop a measure of positive personal relationships with their subordinates, so the subordinates feel comfortable,confident and secure. .

The requirement for honesty and a degree of transparency is needed for that moment when the trusting leap, crossing a threshold, is made towards the head teacher. Head teachers can develop trusting behaviours by reducing control measures directed towards the staff. This clearly creates a tension between responsibility and staff autonomy. Coupled with this, decrease in control measures would involve moving from a formal relationship to a more personal, informal relationship. Informality would indicate a reduction of guarded behaviour, hyper vigilance would not be necessary, and the person can be trusted. Informality can have a positive impact on a person's self-esteem. Locke at al. (1988) demonstrates that trusting behaviour by a manager to a worker can motivate the worker. Kohn (1993) counters, with research indicating that control measures tend to express to the subordinate that they are not to be trusted.

Head teachers have positional power, which raises the question of trust and power. Head teachers should recognise that their employees have power over them, which at its simplest is the head teacher depending on them to deliver an effective school. Benevolent use of managerial power and control

communicates that a head teacher is willing to create a trusting relationship. McKnight et al. (1996) posit that trust is built or destroyed through iterative reciprocal interaction; the initial period of the relationship is crucial - termed the pre-decision phase - as the reciprocal interactions provide insight into the head teacher as the primary referent of trust in a school.

Head teachers begin each new work relationship by demonstrating to trust the staff until they have reason not to. Head teachers should take minor initial risks with their people, as a symbolic signal of their wish to establish a trusting relationship. This risk taking allows movement along the continuum in which trust moves along to new levels of higher trust; conversely initial trust should be evaluated to assure that trusting behaviours are reasonable. This allows the cognitive trusting leap to be taken. Krammer (1994, p226) indicates, “After all, at the very heart of the dilemma … is not simply whether to trust or distrust, but rather how much trust and distrust are appropriate in a given situation.”

Conclusion

The literature evidenced that the triadic nature of academic optimism has a reciprocally causal nature, i.e. the three emergent group properties are functionally dependent on each other. Collective trust in students and parents strengthens collective efficacy, which augments trust. Teachers who trust parents enable a school to insist on higher academic standards without the anxiety of being undermined. High standards reinforce collective trust. Collective efficacy has a proven positive effect on achievement and academics; academic emphasis strengthens collective efficacy. A climate of academic

optimism is formed through the interaction of this trio of functionally dependent school properties.

From its initial study, the relationship between academic optimism and achievement had been established in geographically different regions of the U.S., with Smith and Hoy (2007) in Texas elementary schools, Di Paola and Wagner (2012), Kirby and Di Paola (2009) in Virginia schools; McGuigan and Hoy (2006) in Ohio State, identifying an enabling structure (Hoy, 2003; Sinden et al., 2004) as a predictor of academic optimism.

This research tested the utility of the construct in a defined locality in West Wales. Does the construct apply in a new context? Are the emergent group properties similar in Wales? How does relational trust impact on the reciprocal causality of academic optimism, if it does at all?

CHAPTER 3

3.1 Rationale

The rationale for using a mixed methods approach is based on the researcher's role in seeking the different narrative views on the construct AO from the perspective of the head teachers in the study. The research on AO prior to this thesis was grounded on large qualitative studies with over 1000 respondents to the SAOS (in the U.S., Canadian, and Taiwanese's schools) being statistically correlated with other school mediating variables (standardised mathematics/reading scores, for example). I want to establish what other head teachers' views and thoughts are on the construct AO. The research aim seeks to evaluate the factors that influence the construct termed AO and its antecedents. Mixed methods allow for integration of data to generate insight into this landscape, in this thesis a sample of schools. To date there has been no research into the views of the school leader on the construct; mixed methods will provide new information on this 2nd order construct in the context of schools in Wales.

The aim of the research is to identify whether the construct termed *academic optimism* is evident in a range of different groups in primary schools across a defined geographical region. The process to gather new knowledge, the approach and the ethical limitations will be considered. This study is structured towards mixed methods research and, as such, will reflect the critical realist paradigm.

Adopting this paradigmatic position is opposed to the proposals that are espoused in the positivist and interpretivist domains. Critical realists (CR) argue

that the social world, for example, a school, is more fragmented than positivists would portray; they also argue that interpretivist reliance on social construction and that discourse, whilst important, would not agree that language constructs reality and can be limiting. Critical realists identify that "many entities exist independently of us and our investigations of them" (Ackroyd and Fleetwood, 2000).

CR is concerned with the interplay between social structures - in this research primary schools and the individuals within that structure - i.e. social customs or discourse around efficacy beliefs and relational trust and academic optimism.

The appeal of CR in this research is that it argues that these structures may not be easily observed or are latent but have an impact on how we make sense of our social world. The fact that these entities might not be directly observable does not rule them out of consideration for research. CRs are interested in connections between people's interpretations and the structures that frame the material world. For example, the fact that at a collective level a school might be deemed to be academically optimistic has a real effect on how that school performs is beyond discourse. CR, as Fleetwood (2004) stresses is "something that is real if it has an effect or makes a difference." The emphasis of this methodology is to develop theory around academic optimism and provide explanations that best capture reality.

The theoretical composition of academic optimism, the validity and reliability of its measurement in both secondary and elementary schools is established. (Hoy, Tarter, and Woolfolk Hoy, 2006a, 2006b; Smith and Hoy, 2007). The

relationship between academic optimism and other school level characteristics is recognised. Academic optimism as a predictor of student achievement, regardless of SES, is well tested. (Bevel, 2010; Kirby and DiPaola, 2009; Smith and Hoy, 2007; Wagner 2008).

Academic optimism has been applied in the U.S., Canadian and Taiwanese schools but not in Wales and not amongst different groups of staff in those schools that are part of the regional consortia ERW.

The choice of a mixed method methodology will support the research aim and may contribute to the understanding of academic optimism as an emergent construct within distinct groups in primary schools. The research aim is complex and based on the interactions of a range of variables. Scifferdecker and Reed (2009) support the use of mixed methods and Tashakkori and Creswell (2007) state: "Investigators collect and analyse data, interrogate findings, and draw inferences using both qualitative and quantitative approaches or methods in a single study." Cresswell and Garret (2008) identify the mixed methods as "a movement in its third decade that blends eclectic views of knowledge, traditions of enquiry, methods and results; stays practice-orientated; and uses what works, not an elitist stance."

This chapter will also reference the Five P framework, which includes: Paradigms, Pragmatism, Praxis, Proficiency and Publishing (Cameron, 2011). This will be used to structure an exploration of the key issues, *specifically* from this framework: Paradigms, Pragmatisms and Praxis. This conceptual trio will

impact on the choice of mixed methods and the philosophical position, Pragmatism, adopted throughout the study.

Mixed methods research offers utility and for this research I had to learn a range of new research skills to undertake this study. In adopting this approach, key deliberations had to be made. I had to state the philosophical foundation, paradigmatic position and defend the methodological choices for this thesis. A concern for the researcher was the need to learn a whole new set of research skills. The adoption of the Five P framework as a guide to support the choices of methods used would ensure that I would develop the required skill and competency in following the rules of combining mixed methods and data analysis from the data gathered in the thesis.

Fig 5: Overview of the framework, key issues and challenges. (Cameron, 2011)

Table 1: The five Ps of Mixed Methods Research (MMR)

Five Ps	Issues & Challenges	Bazeley's (2003) Learning Objectives
Paradigms P1	*Criticism:* From paradigmatic purists and claims of eclecticism. *Challenge:* Need to document and argue paradigmatic stance in MMR.	· Have sufficient understanding of the philosophical bases of research to determine if and how apparent paradigmatic differences in approach might influence their work and be resolved.
Pragmatism P2	*Criticism:* Epistemological relativism and short-sighted practicalism. *Challenge:* Become informed about the key debates and source MMR literature in the chosen field. Rigorously defend the stance and choices made at the interface between philosophy and methods.	· Be familiar with key literature and debates in mixed methods, and with exemplars of a variety of mixed methods approaches to research; · Learn to take risks, but also to justify choices made.
Praxis P3	*Criticism:* Problems related to methodological and data integration. *Challenge:* Informed choices, utilisation and application of MMR designs, methods and data analysis.	· Be able to determine the appropriateness of a selected method or methods, based on the question(s) being asked (be question-driven in their choice of methods), and be able to determine whether mixing methods provides a cost-effective advantage over use of a single method; · Have knowledge of the variety, rules and implications of different sampling methods, and of alternative approaches to dealing with 'error' or deviance from the norm; · Be prepared to recognise and admit what is not known, and seek advice · Develop skills in working collaboratively with researchers using different approaches or methods.
Five Ps	**Issues & Challenges**	**Bazeley's (2003) Learning Objectives**
Proficiency P4	*Criticism:* Superficial claims of utilising MM and the need to be proficient in both QUAL and QUANT methods. *Challenge:* Become skilled and competent in both chosen QUAL and QUANT methods and data analysis, as well as skilled and competent in mixed methods and integrated data analysis.	· Have well developed skills in carrying out research using at least one major methodological approach, but also a comprehensive understanding of a range of approaches and methods (if they didn't already), particularly to understand the principles underlying those methods; · Have an ability to interpret data meaningfully, and to ask questions of the data, rather than to simply follow a formula; · Know and understand how software can be used to assist analysis tasks.
Publishing P5	*Issues & challenges:* Political nature of reporting and publishing MMR in academic and discipline based literature such as: disciplinary traditions; levels of acceptance of MMR within disciplines and; reporting MMR in its entirety given word length limitations.	· Develop new ways of thinking about the presentation of research results, especially where the methods used and information gained does not neatly fit a conventional format.

3.2 Paradigms

Brannen (2005) argues that methodological choice does not exist in a void; that choice is driven by ontological and epistemological assumptions. Defining a paradigm is complex and for this research Denzin and Lincoln (1998) description is adopted as: "the net that contains the researcher's epistemological, ontological and methodological premise … may be termed a paradigm. All research is interpretive; it is guided by the researcher's set of beliefs and feelings about the world and how it should be understood." The literature demonstrates a range of variation in how paradigms are labelled and the levels of abstraction within them. Maxwell (2005), Mertens (2005) and Neuman (2006), state that the paradigmatic stance is made explicit in the research methods. In mixed methods, research in this stance is termed pragmatism and in this research is the interface between philosophy and methods. This is the stance taken in this research project.

Patton (2002) reflects the position taken in this research by stating "a pragmatic stance aims to supersede one-sided paradigm allegiance by increasing the concrete and practical methodological options available to researchers and evaluators. Such pragmatism means judging the quality of a study by its intended purposes, available resources, procedures followed and results obtained, all within a particular context and for a specific audience." Tashakkori and Teddlie (2010) identify that, by adopting MM research principles, the research is distinguished by two approaches:

- Rejection of the either/or at all levels of the research process (i.e. either quantitative or qualitative).

- The researcher subscribing to the iterative, cyclical approach to research.

This research is exploratory and developmental, which, using the MM research principles and the philosophy, pragmatism supports. The research has to have some practical importance and be of use.

3.3 Praxis

Praxis is defined as the practical application of theory and raises the issue of methodological and data integration in the research design. There is the possibility that this research methodology will create what Perlesz and Linsay (2003) and Johnstone (2004) term dissonant data. This research design will address this by using methodological triangulation. Bryman and Bell (2003) define triangulation as “it entails using more than one method or source of data in the study of a social phenomena” (AO in this case). In this research triangulation will be used to confirm the reliability and validity of the construct, AO. By combining methods, this research is informed by the literature (Denzin, 1989: Shih, 1998) that the combination of quantitative and qualitative data may corroborate each other and support a more defined conclusion than either source could achieve on their own. Kopinak (1999) identified that qualitative data obtained from interviews and ethnographic observation verified the quantitative survey. This approach to triangulation reflects the positivist and critical realist perspective, based on the assumption of an actual social reality within the schools under study.

Secondly, triangulation serves towards the purpose of completeness. Previous research into AO has been quantitative in essence, using a range of measures.

The benefits of combining methods has been illustrated by Rogers and Nicolass (1998) who, in establishing a more comprehensive picture of patterns in primary care, employed different methods from critical realist perspective to reveal different facets of the same reality and to examine reality from different perspectives.

To date the precise definition of mixed methods are diverse and highly differentiated. For this study the definition proposed by Creswell and Clark (2007) supports the research aim "as a methodology, it involves philosophical assumptions that guide the direction of the collection and analysis of data and the mixture of qualitative and quantitative data in a single study or series of studies. Its central premise is that the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches in combination provides a better understanding of research problems." Teddlie and Tashakkori (2010) define Mixed Methods (MM) as "the broad inquiry logic that guides the selection of specific methods and that is informed by conceptual positions common to mixed methods practitioners."

3.4 Philosophical Position

The scope of this research is broadly emergent in that it seeks to apply a validated research construct in a novel and distinct context in Wales. The research aims are designed to be of practical use in the school environment and, as such, the philosophical position adopted is influenced by the need for this work to have a practical value to primary schools. The research paradigm acknowledges this by not confining itself to within the normal limits of methodological purism and will deploy a research paradigm to investigate the phenomenon of AO in a new geographical context. The research position will

work from a critical realist perspective in an attempt to demonstrate the importance of context and causality identifying the value of ontological depth for interpretivist research. Specifically, a focus on context, meaning and causal influences within the case study schools is key to understand the research-practice gap in this field of educational research. This is termed in the literature as the rigour versus relevance debate (e.g. Bridgman, 2007; Pettigrew, 2001; Reed, 2000; Starkey and Madan, 2001), the premise being that management research is rigorous but lacks relevance.

The research aims are complex and draw on a range of theoretical frames. Critical Realism not only addresses the research-practice gap but can address the issue of adopting divergent research approaches. Adopting a critical realist position also informs the research design which will be multi-approached and not positioned within the accepted research paradigms. This research is developing in the sense that it seeks to reiterate the primacy of context, meaning and interpretation as fundamental to the relevance debate as the measurement of single or collective phenomena. Smith (2006) argues that using critical realism as a philosophical choice enriches the ontological interpretation of insight whilst maintaining social and material phenomenon. Lipscomb (2008) considers CR as epistemological pluralist, a logical way of recognising the associations between ontological, epistemological and methodical tenants in research. The next section will explore the fundamental characteristics of CR with a focus on the concept of causality.

3.5 Critical Realism

Critical realism was developed by Bhaskar (1978; 1979; 1993) as a way of responding to the confines of existing philosophical paradigms, e.g. empiricism, interpretivism and postmodernism. In the contemporary literature it has generated interest in a range of disciplines (Ackroyd and Fleetwood, 2000; Danermark et al., 2002; Fleetwood 1999; Learmonth, 2007; Mingers, 2009; Mingers, 2004a; Pawson and Tilley, 1997; Reed, 2005; Sayer, 2000). CR offers this research the opportunity to become applicable into research practice and recognises the complexity of the research aims and the context of schools in which the research is being conducted.

CR offers four central components that this research will acknowledge and commit to:

A realist ontology, the belief that there are, in reality, causal mechanisms whose interaction generate the events in primary schools under study. These mechanisms might not be actually observed, for example social structures, or as identified in the literature around AO, enabling structures. Their existence has to be recognised because of the causal efficacy. This is a counter to the empiricist claim of the primacy of empirical data (termed the actualist fallacy).

An epistemology centered on our knowledge is socially constructed and distinguishes between the transitive subject knowledge and the intransitive domain of the objects of that knowledge. This counters the post-modern assertion that being itself is limited to the human knowledge of that being (the epistemic fallacy).

The research is committed to methodological pluralism since it is seeking to explore the existence of a variety of conceptual strata in chosen case study schools. The exploratory aims need a range of methods to access their meaning or existence.

Mingers (2009) views CR as a philosophical approach that identifies with social theory being inevitably transformative providing an explanation that will lead to action. This would support the research aim of not being purely descriptive or just social theory. The aims are evaluative and will not create a positivistic split between facts and values in the schools in this research.

A key conceptual thread of CR is the distinction it makes between events that do occur and the structures or mechanisms that cause them. These generative mechanisms have causal properties, and it is their interactions that generate events. Previous research on AO has identified these generative mechanisms as a triad of bi-directional variables that are measurable, and at a collective level influence a school's performance.

Collective teacher efficacy, faculty trust in clients and academic emphasis have all been confirmed to have strong and positive relationships with academic optimism. A review of the literature Hoy, Tarter, and Woolfolk Hoy (2006b) identified that there were important commonalities among the three school characteristics. They are collective emergent school properties; they all influence and shape the normative and behavioural environment of a school, and they all are highly correlated with each other. Hoy and his contemporaries theorised that there exists a single latent construct that is formed through the

integration of these three school properties (Hoy et al., 2006b). With a sample of 3,400 teachers in 146 elementary schools, Hoy and his colleagues performed a second factor analysis to test this hypothesis. The high factor loadings on each of the three dimensions on academic optimism and a good overall model fit supported their hypothesis that collective teacher efficacy, faculty trust in clients and academic emphasis are three separate aspects of a single, latent school variable called academic optimism.

Hoy et al. research is philosophically in the positivistic tradition with a retroductive methodology. It hypothesises mechanisms; AO that, if it existed, would explain observed and measured results. CR goes towards the stratification of causality and explains events in a localised context generating the causal mechanisms at work. In this research these could exist at a range of levels - types of organisations, geographical region or at endogenous levels - relationships between individual and groups, i.e. the teachers and learning support staff, in the case study schools.

The choice of mixed methods as a research approach is centred on the principle that it will focus the research questions on real life contextually rich environments, i.e. primary schools. It will also explore the meaning of the construct, academic optimism, using a range of multiple methods bridging the dialectical stances often referred to as the paradigm wars. The choice of mixed methods draws on the pragmatic perspective of what works and gives primacy to the research question equally valuing objective and subjective knowledge. (Morgan, 2007) argues: “There is a frequently held misconception that quantitative research uses numbers and qualitative research is a narrative. This

is a misleading simplification … it is not the technique that makes something quantitative or qualitative, but it is the intent of its uses. Is it testing hypothesis or is it helping to hypothesise or describe the data?" (Newman 2000 pp 4-5).

Punch (1998) states "it was not inevitable, or essential, that we organise our empirical data as numbers (p.58) but both approaches could be used to induce or test theory." The methodology in this research, pragmatism and its mixed methods approach, reduces the choices between methods, logic and epistemology (Tashakkori and Tedddlie, 1998). The research aims support CR because CR seeks to draw the distinction between the events as they occur and the underlying structures that generate them. This is either observable or unobservable and it is the interactions that generate the actual phenomena, AO. Previous research on AO has been empirical and its methodology retroductive; hypotheses are tested to explain observed or measured results. Whilst this research methodology adopts elements of the positivist empirical tradition by using the SAOS scale, it will use case study techniques and interviews to explore the interaction between agency and structure with the primary school setting.

CR recognises that social structures are intrinsically different to physical structures. In essence, the social structure does not exist independently of social activity, which in this research is linked to the triadic elements in AO, especially collective efficacy and faculty trust since social activity is the generative mechanism for these elements. It is difficult to identify except through such activities, is not independent of actors' (teachers, LSAs, head teachers) conceptions of their activities, and is relative to particular times and cultures.

The dualism of action and structure as interacting systems (Mingers 2004) identifies agents as causal mechanisms. If agents are defined as teachers, LSAs and head teachers, then they are causal mechanisms in themselves who act out on the basis of reason and motive. AO will clearly influence this. These activities are habituated in a pre-existing structure of roles and expectations. Activity transforms the social structure. Archer's (1995) morphogenetic model exemplifies this as: at time T1 the existing structure conditions/actions are about to take place; at time T2 activity occurs; then at time T3, as a result of the activity, the social structure is transformed. AO can be viewed as part of the causal mechanism that shapes people's motives, efficacy beliefs, and trusting behaviours in primary schools; it is potentially the prime shaper of the collective social structure in the schools in this research.

3.6 Methodology

The research aims are real questions in schools and the research methodology requires a mixed methods approach. Modell (2007) proposes that CR can provide a framework of the validation of mixed methods research. This framework develops a coherent philosophical foundation for producing knowledge. Pragmatic thinking is either explicit or implicit in mixed methods research, whereas CR provides a unified and reliable philosophical foundation of combining research methods. Smith (2006) suggests that the predominant dependence on positivism or interpretivism may account for inconsistencies in research practice. Smith (2006) argues that these issues are located between researchers' implicit ontological assumptions and actual outcomes. The ontological theme identified in the research aims is that AO, a second order

latent construct, is an entity that exists or not within distinct groups and is empirically testable and explored through case study to provide ontological depth and new meaning. The research is proposing to gain insight into the phenomena AO in “real life” settings.

Jorgensen (1989, p14) suggests, “While the researcher may have a theoretical interest in being there, exactly what concepts are important, how they are or are not related, and what therefore, is problematical should remain open and subject to refinement and definition based on what the researcher is able to uncover.” The adoption of a CR approach acknowledges research by Porte and Ryan (1996) which suggested that it is possible for researchers to focus their attention on social structures without losing focus on the individuals. They argue that CR ethnography works by assuming that the relationship between social structures and individuals is a bilateral process. In this research the enabling collective characteristics of AO influence individual actions; those actions measurable as AO maintain or transform the social structure. CR provides a rationale for the combination of quantitative and qualitative methods, i.e. mixed methods.

The use of mixed methods is widely advocated in social and health research (Pawson and Tilley, 2001; Creswell, 2003; Johnstone, 2004). Blaikie (1991) argues that combining qualitative and quantitative methods can be a “methodological minefield”, because of complex ontological and epistemological issues. Creswell et al. (2004) argues that a careful rationale is needed to avoid confusion. This section will briefly examine the problems associated with mixed methods and will explore why a critical realist rationale and a critical realist methodological triangulation approach fits the research aims of this work.

Quantitative approaches are associated with the positivist paradigm and incorporate standardised measures and statistical techniques. The philosophy of this paradigm is based on the setting aside of preconceptions in order to identify objective facts based on empirical observations. The goal of this type of research is to discover generalisable laws that are based on the identification of statistical relationships between dependent and independent variables (Ackroyd 2004).

Qualitative approaches based on non-numerical narratives are associated with the interprevistic paradigm, the emphasis being on how the world is socially constructed and understood (Blaikie, 2000). The research methods are generally small scale and intensive, and the interaction between the researcher and the participants is viewed as integral to the research process.

Qualitative research can be characterised as an attempt to obtain an in-depth understanding of the meanings and definitions of the situation presented by informants, i.e. head teachers, rather than the production of quantitative measurement of their characteristics or behaviour. This concern to reveal the subjective beliefs of those being studied is common to ethnography, participant observation and other strands of qualitative research. For many researchers the subjective beliefs of the people being studied have explanatory primacy over the theoretical knowledge of the researcher has.

With this in mind the researcher has not set out to test a pre-conceived hypothesis but aims to synthesise meaning from the observations and

theoretical work undertaken, and uses a qualitative research instrument to establish which schools to conduct case study research with.

Ward-Schofield (1993 p.202) states, "… at the heart of the qualitative approach is the assumption that a piece of qualitative research is very much influenced by the researcher's individual attributes and perspectives. The goal is not to produce a set of results that any other careful researcher in the same situation or studying the same issues would have produced. Rather it is a coherent and illuminating description of and perspective on a situation that is consistent with the detailed study of the situation."

The controversy over the quantitative and qualitative methods argument is outside the scope of this chapter. Methodological purists take an absolutist standpoint and will argue in favour of their preferred methodology (Petter and Gallivan, 2004). Purists take a view that mixing methods is incompatible since they have mutually exclusive assumptions and no common ground. Leininger (1994) argues that the quantitative and qualitative paradigms are so radically different they cannot be reconciled.

Methodological pragmatists, (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1994; Johnston and Onwuegbuzie, 2004) accept the same paradigmatic assumptions as the purists but contend that researchers should use whatever methods are needed to get results, including shifting between alternative paradigms, the logic being that neither the quantitative nor qualitative paradigm can develop a complete analysis. Creswell et al. (2004) argues that they need to be used in combination to complement each other.

Existing research into AO has been in the quantitative paradigm exploring its existence at a collective, individual and cultural level, usually associated with other variables such as mindfulness and collective responsibility and using SEM to prove hypothesis. One existing study using the qualitative paradigm and case study design investigated the existence of AO in two schools. The research aims will use mixed methods not only to establish the existence of AO in distinct groups but case study methods to make sense of what is termed dissonant data. Bryman (2004) notes that it is difficult to link empirical findings with highly contextualised interpretative findings. Since AO is termed a second order latent construct, it would seem sensible to use quantitative methods, the SOAS survey to inform the preparatory stages of qualitative research into its meaning within different school groups.

3.7 Rationale for Using a Case Study: A Critical Realist Perspective

Yin (1994, p13) defines a case study as: "an empirical enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomena within its real life context especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident." The research aims defined by the literature review seek to gain an in- depth understating of the phenomena AO in a new context in Wales. A further distinction is made in the literature about a case study: intrinsic and instrumental.

Stake (1994), (p237) describes two types of case study – intrinsic and instrumental. An intrinsic case study is: "… not undertaken primarily because the case represents other cases or because it illustrates a particular trait or problem but because in all its particular and ordinariness, the case study is of

interest … the purpose is not to come to understand some abstract concept or generic problem … the researcher subordinates other curiosities so that the case may reveal its story"

The instrumental study attempts to provide insight or refinement of theory. "The case is of secondary interest; it plays a supportive role, facilitating our understanding of something else" (Stake, 1994, p237). Supporting this classification Darke et al. (1998) state, "case study research has often been associated with description and with theory development, where it is used to provide evidence for hypothesis generation and for exploration of areas where existing knowledge is limited." This research is exploratory in its nature and Darke et al. (1998) suggests that the use of case study in research is useful in newer, less well-developed areas, particularly where the investigation of the context and the subtleties of the situation are critical.

Layder (1993) maintains that "a key aspect of the realist case study is a concern with causality and the identification of the causal mechanisms in social phenomena" (p16). Critical Realism is defined by Layder (1993) as an attempt to preserve the scientific attitude towards social analysis. This occurs in parallel with the acknowledgement of the importance of actors, (head teachers, teachers, LSAs) and in some ways incorporating them into this research.

The comparative case study method will be used to address the issues identified in the aims of this study. Attempting to generate additional data than the researcher is conscious of at the time of data collection via the SAOS, the research can be viewed of as ethnographic. Atkinson and Hammersley (1994)

indicate that ethnography is explorative, working with unstructured data, case orientated and interested in meanings. Silverman (1985) propose that ethnography is involved observations of what are naturally occurring events. Alvesson (1994) suggests that ethnographic research is best used when a researcher tries to get close to a community being studied, relying on rich accounts as well as a rich variety of naturally occurring events. Geerts (1973) comments that this ethnographic approach provides thick description, in which layers of meaning are expressed. However, although first-hand experiences of having *been there* can offer a deeper level of understanding than questionnaires and listening to stories in interviews, the author had to be pragmatic about the time available and the scope of the study. Wolcott (1995) posits that ethnographies are time-consuming, often personally tiresome and stressful to conduct. With these issues in mind the research method has adopted a self-ethnographic posture acknowledging the fact of, as a researcher and head teacher, conferred equality with other participants in the study. I work in the field in which I used my knowledge and experiences to gain empirical material for research purposes.

My role as a head teacher when interviewing other head teachers conferred a great deal of trust on the researcher. There is a common language of experiences between head teachers which meant the responses to interview questions were honest. In being honest, the transcripts provided rich descriptions of the views of those head teachers about their school behaviours, trust, and beliefs. In the interview my views are not recorded or used to influence the responses. The head teachers in this thesis are colleagues and are trusted individuals, which contributed to the understanding of AO as a construct in their

schools. The richness of their narrative reflects the fact that as a group we all trusted each other to be open, honest, vulnerable and confidential in the interviews and subsequent thematic analysis of those narratives.

The choice of schools to serve the case study was based on the researcher's existing contacts within these schools, and the willingness of the head teachers of these schools to participate in the research. The preliminary contact was made via an e-mail which asked for voluntary participation in the initial SAOS online survey (see e-mail in appendix 3). The head teacher's willingness was established by a face-to-face discussion of the study and the methods that would be used to collect empirical material. It was beyond the scope of this study to include more schools as the methodology used was intensive and the exclusive character of each school had to be maintained. By focusing on a small sample, group common features, such as geographical location and size, were preserved.

Burns (1994) maintains that the case study, because of its ability to generate rich subjective data, may generate more intensive research. The case study allows for in-depth analysis of phenomena, more importantly the chosen subjects are bounded systems, and entity in itself. Burns (1994) suggest a case study should focus on a bounded subject that is either very representative or extremely atypical. Bell (1993) considers the case study approach relevant to individual researchers, as it allows the researcher to concentrate on a specific situation or attempt to identify processes at work. Bell (1993) indicates that these processes may remain concealed in an extensive survey like the SAOS.

In the sample schools the delivery and scheduling of questionnaires was strictly controlled via e-mail and web-survey. Data on gender, time in school, job role and time served in education are collected. The data on the sample schools size was collated via my school website at: mylocal**school**.wales.gov.uk.

This data would provide indicative returns on performance over time, free school meal indices, spend per pupil and gender profiles of the pupils. The purpose of using this data is that it is a standardised reference set from which inference can be drawn. Interviews are scheduled and questions asked were identical in order of delivery. Head teachers will have agreed to have the interviews taped. The researcher had strong personal relationships with the staff and head teachers from the sample schools. It was also felt by the researcher that the nature of the study would need a certain level of trust. The researcher was able to make observations as an inside ethnographer rather than the professional stranger (Alvesson 1999).Generalising this case study would need a larger research project. This study is a comparative case study trying to establish or is “representative of some population” (Jancowitz 1996 p, 180) i.e. primary schools.

The comparative case study method relies in part on comparing the organisation under study with others in a systematic way. In this approach it is hoped that the different positions concerning the research aim will be revealed. In this way, a degree of validity and reliability can be inferred by comparing similar with similar in terms of organisational form, i.e. primary schools

The specific approach employed by the researcher for this study was a multiple case study design. For each school, a case study involving the SOAS questionnaires and interviews with the head teachers was constructed. It must be noted that the SOAS questionnaire provided an avenue from which the interview questions and schedule were drafted. Yin (1989, p53) argues that, “Each case must be carefully selected so that it either (a) predicts similar results (a literal replication) or (b) produces contrary results but for predictable reasons (a theoretical replication).” In this project the case study method was chosen to convince the reader of general phenomena.

3.8 The Research Instruments

Combined methods approaches within a critical realist framework lend themselves towards illustrative case study. In this study the author will employ a mixed methods approach to address the research aims and to gain an understanding of how academic optimism emerges in the sample schools and how distinct the construct may present amongst different groups in those schools (a quantitative survey (SAOS), followed by a series of semi-structured interviews with sample groups). The aim of the quantitative survey will be to establish the existence of the three dimensions of AO in the schools under study. The qualitative interviews will be conducted to explore how AO manifests itself within distinct groups. It is envisaged that these smaller case study sample schools will also be potentially measured using relational trust and group potency scales. The SAOS initial results data will be used to lens in on chosen schools.

Quantitative data

Collective efficacy, collective trust, academic emphasis and academic optimism were measured using a Likert type survey instrument. Mean scores for each school for these variables were calculated. The initial graphical analysis provides a profile of the proportion of staff employed in these schools. Each school has one head teacher. Those schools whose profile indicated a head teacher only are ignored in the SEM modelling in this chapter.

Profile of each school by role across the sample

Role	Respondents	% of sample
Head teacher	18 out of 110	16%
Teacher	54 out of 110	49%
Learning support assistant.	38 out of 110	34%

The table above indicates the sample group and the respondents. The profile is indicative of a significant proportion of the sample comprised of LSAs .Only those schools whose profile included **all** three sub-groups in the returns were included. In this research, including the LSAs sub group in the analysis is unique and a contribution to the existing knowledge on the emerging construct academic optimism. The head teachers of the chosen sample schools were interviewed and the chosen quotations are included in this chapter. Commentary on their responses to the presentation of the data on their schools from the survey and subsequent dialogue on four distinct categories identified in the literature are key elements of the latent construct termed academic optimism. The researcher also is seeking to identify antecedents from this dialogue which may be distinct factors that could influence academic optimism

in a school. The rationale for this approach is detailed in the methodology chapter in which a mixed methods study is advocated.

Academic optimism was operationally defined using the SAOS, which is a combination of three subscales: Collective Efficacy Scale Short Form (Goddard, 2002); Faculty Trust in Clients subscale in Omnibus Trust Scale (Hoy and Tschannen-Moran, 2003) and Academic Emphasis subscale in Organisational Health Inventory (Hoy, Tarter, and Kottkamp, 1991; Hoy and Sabo, 1998; Hoy and Tarter, 1997). These three subscales measured each of the three components of academic optimism: collective efficacy, faculty trust in students and parents; they worked together to define academic optimism as a single second order latent variable.

The whole SAOS consists of 30 items scored on a Likert-type scale. Originally, there were twenty-two of the items scored on a range of 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree), and eight of the items were scored on a range of 1 (rarely) to 4 (very often).

The academic emphasis section of the instrument consists of eight items scored on a six-point scale ranging from rarely (1) to very often (6). The survey measures the extent to which the school focuses on student academic achievement. One sample statement reads “Students respect others who get good grades” (SAOS, Hoy and Miske 2005).

The instrument origin was derived from a subscale of the Organisational Health Inventory which research has shown to be reliable and validated (Hoy and Miskel, 2005; Hoy and Tarter, 1997; Hoy et al., 1991).

Collective efficacy is measured on the SAOS using twelve items, scored using a six-point Likert scale with (1) as "strongly disagree" and (6) as "strongly agree." "Perceived collective efficacy of a school is the judgment of the teachers that the faculty as a whole can organise and execute actions required to have a positive effect on students" (McGuigan and Hoy, 2006, p.216). "Teachers in this school believe that every child can learn" is an example of the types of statements respondents will be asked to address. The instrument is a reduced version of the collective efficacy scale (Goddard et al., 2000) and previous research has demonstrated the construct validity and reliability of the scale (Goddard et al., 2000, 2004).

The third piece of the SAOS entails ten, six-point, Likert scale items used to determine to what extent a school's faculty trusts in parents and students. Survey participants will be asked to respond to statements such as "Students in this school can be counted upon to do their work." This part of the instrument is a shortened version of the Omnibus Trust Scale (Hoy and Tschannen-Moran, 2003). The reliability and construct validity of the scale have been supported in several factor-analysis studies (Hoy and Tschannen-Moran, 2003). This survey was distributed to schools via email using an on- line survey tool (see Appendix 2). The survey was piloted in one school to test applicability of design and ease of use.

The methods chosen for this research will generate two types of data and information. Questionnaires yield quantitative data (in this research the SAOS measures the three dimensions of the construct academic optimism) whilst semi-structured interviews yield qualitative information. The examination of this data involves a framework on which the data can be given form. Significance and meaning is a subjective process, and as such, two researchers can reach wholly divergent conclusions about one data set.

Principle Factor Analysis is a statistical measure assuming that for a group of observed variables there are a set of latent variables called factors (smaller than the number of observed variables), that can explain the interrelationships among those variables. This thesis used PFA in conjunction with SAOS to collect responses across the whole school on the three components of the 2nd order latent construct AO. The collation of SAOS data assumes that you have not measured your set of items flawlessly. The latent variable that makes up common variance is termed a factor.

This thesis sought to establish if there was some latent construct that defines the interrelationship among items from the SAOS and principle factor analysis was appropriate. The researcher assumed that there is a construct called AO that explains why you see a correlation among all the items on the SAOS detailed in Chapter 4. The use of PFA was to see if there is an underlying dominance of one of the three components of AO and how those components interact and present across the sample of schools in this thesis.

The Pearson correlation coefficient is a measure to determine the relationship (instead of difference) between two quantitative variables (interval/ratio) and the degree to which the two variables coincide with one another - that is, the extent to which two variables are linearly related: changes in one variable correspond to changes in another variable. This statistical measure was used in the interpretation of the SAOS returns. The primary rationale for this measure was to establish if there was a relationship between each component of AO and how those components interact with each other when correlated with other measures gathered from the sample schools. The triadic nature of AO notes interaction and bi-directional flow as part of its reciprocal structure. Pearson correlation coefficient would test this statistically. SPSS V2 software was used to calculate the correlation analysis, PFA and the results are detailed in Chapter 4.

Preliminary qualitative interviews will take the form of guided conversations based on a semi-structured interview programme. The purpose of these interviews is to corroborate the findings from the initial survey/questionnaire. Yeung (2003) has identified that quantitative data sources are not necessarily more reliable than qualitative sources. It is reasonable to assume that the patterns of AO that emerged from the survey are more reliable than just anecdotal comments of interviewees. The SAOS survey is validated and statistically relevant, which indicates that previous research results are unlikely to be chance findings. The quantitative survey is providing a platform from which the qualitative stage of the research can develop.

3.9 Interviews

Holstein and Gubrium (1997 p13) state that the interview is a "pipeline for transmitting knowledge." Millar and Glassner (1997 p103) argue that the interviewer should aim to accomplish "deeper, fuller conceptualisations of those aspects of our subject's lives we are most interested in understanding." Through discussion, the researcher accomplishes a meaningful understanding of the interviewee's social world.

The subjectivity of the researcher can create tensions. Eisenhardt (1989) claims that the use of multiple investigators enhances confidence in research findings; she suggests "interviews can be conducted by two person teams, one researcher conducts the interview, while the other records notes and observations" (p538). This study was limited in scope and this approach not feasible.

Berg (1989) suggests that interviews are conversations with a purpose and provides a typology of how these conversations develop. Bell (1993) recommends that the interviewer could follow up ideas, review and investigate motives, which the survey could not do. In the interview schedule there was no additional time given to re-visit the interviews. The interviews were completed once only.

McCracken (1998, p25) argues "… one of the most important differences between most qualitative and quantitative research is the former demands a much more complex relationship between investigator and respondent."

In this research this was a key consideration in that the interviewer had existing professional relationships with the sample head teachers, as respondents.

Jones (1985, p46) suggests "… the interviewers have already predicted, in detail, what is relevant and meaningful to their respondents about the research topic; in doing this they have significantly pre-structured the direction of enquiry within their own frame of reference in ways that give little time and space for their respondents to elaborate their own." The nature of the interview was informal and semi-structured which mitigated pre-structured thinking by the researcher.

For the purpose of this study head teachers, were the key respondents, and it was decided to make use of an i-phone for the semi-structured interview, with notes being made by the researcher. The recorded information would be used to code key points that arose from the interview. This ensures that the data gathered is open to scrutiny prior to use

Interviewees are known to construct narratives around critical instances and potentially over-emphasise unusual events (May 1991). They can be influenced by the interview process and as Rubin and Rubin (1995) indicate interviewees "say the right sort of thing." In this research, dealing with a diverse group within the sample schools needs the independent confirmation of the primary quantitative survey instrument. The data from these semi-structured interviews will augment the survey results.

The interviews will not be coded into pre-determined categories but recorded in their own natural language. The flexibility of a semi-structured interview format lends itself to exploratory dialogue around the construct AO, enabling alternative lines of enquiry to be developed around the research aims. Porpora (2001) reflects that critical realists tend to focus attention on the development of qualitative research methods rather than quantitative approaches. An explanation for this is based on the fact that qualitative methods can be altered more easily to explore lines of inquiry as they emerge in the search for explanations. As potential explanations emerge during conversational interviews, the situation is adapted to explore those issues and the research process is not wholly committed to the measurement of predetermined validated variables.

The researcher was aware of the problem of two interviewers using the same procedure and getting the same results, i.e. replication. In this case study, quantitative and qualitative data will be gathered and used. This was driven by the researcher's desire to gain an insight and it enables a process of cross-checking the results from another, as Jankoicz (1996) refers to this approach as "triangulation". For the purpose of this study questionnaires and semi-structured interviews were used.

3.10 Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis was chosen as the qualitative method to analyse the very large data set of 160,000 words of transcribed narrative from the interviews with the head teachers. In approaching thematic analysis, particular focus was made on the need to conduct this approach in a structured way. Trustworthiness is one way

researchers can convince others that their research findings are worthy of attention (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The appeal of thematic analysis to the researcher, who is not an expert in quantitative methodologies, is that it offered this researcher the opportunity to understand the meanings these narratives present in an accessible way without using complex software like Nivio.

Thematic analysis interprets key features of a large data set and the researcher must take a well-structured approach to handling the data. Qualitative research, the process of data collection, data analysis, and writing is not always in distinct steps; they often are interrelated and occur simultaneously throughout the research process (Creswell, 2008). Thematic analysis as documented by Braun and Clarke (2006) is presented as a linear, six-phased method; it is an iterative and reflective process that develops over time and involves a constant moving back and forward between phases. This movement builds a rich understanding of the narrative through which the researcher becomes the instrument for analysis detailing the process in a trustworthy and credible manner.

The re-reading and immersion in the transcripts often led to the researcher re-generating new codes as the literature was re-considered or re-read. The triangulation of diverse data highlighted in phase 1 provided the opportunity to confirm the researcher's interpretations, and development of themes is clearly derived from the quantitative data from the SOAS survey return data. I addressed Lincoln and Guba's (1985) criteria for trustworthiness during each phase of thematic analysis. This was the approach adopted throughout the thematic analysis and can be replicated providing criteria to ensure the integrity of findings throughout the thesis.

Establishing trustworthiness during each phase of thematic analysis for this thesis step by step:

Phase 1: Familiarising yourself with your data, detailed engagement with data, re-reading transcripts, triangulate different data from SAOS survey. Document theoretical and reflective thoughts generate potential codes/themes.
Phase 2: Generating initial codes, researcher triangulation use of a coding framework and audit trail of code generation and code rejection.
Phase 3: Searching for themes, researcher triangulation keeping detailed notes about development and hierarchies of concepts and themes. Linking common themes as they emerge.
Phase 4: Reviewing themes, researcher triangulation themes and subthemes established, review literature to explore sub themes and connections to other bodies of work.
Phase 5: Defining and naming themes, researcher triangulation documentation of theme naming phase.
6: Write the key themes and exemplify them with extracts from interviews checking coding and analysis in sufficient details. Thick descriptions of description on reasons for theoretical, methodological, and analytical choices throughout the entire study.

Thematic analysis is the process of identifying patterns or themes within qualitative data. Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest that it is the first qualitative method that should be considered because it “provides core skills that will be useful for conducting many other kinds of analysis” (p.78). An added benefit, principally from the perspective of learning and teaching, is that it is a method

rather than a methodology (Braun and Clarke 2006; Clarke and Braun, 2013). Contrasting to other numerous qualitative methodologies, it is not tied to a particular epistemological or theoretical perspective. This makes it a flexible method, a considerable advantage given the multiplicity of factors in schools and the research aim and objectives.

Qualitative methods are used in learning and teaching research (Divan, Ludwig, Matthews, Motley and Tomlienovic-Berube, 2017). Nowell, Norris, White and Moules (2017) describe how the lack of emphasis on rigorous and relevant thematic analysis has implications in terms of the credibility of the research process. In this thesis, Braun and Clarke's (2006) 6-step framework will be applied offering a clear framework for doing thematic analysis evaluatively.

The literature offers many ways of conducting thematic analysis (e.g. Alhojailan, 2012; Boyatzis,1998; Javadi and Zarea, 2016). Variety can lead to some confusion about the nature of thematic analysis, including how it is distinct from a qualitative content analysis (Vaismoradi, Turunen and Bonda, 2013).

Thematic analysis identifies themes, or patterns in the data and uses these themes to address the research question. Braun and Clarke (2006) distinguish between two levels of themes: semantic and latent. Semantic themes '…within the explicit or surface meanings of the data and the analyst is not looking for anything beyond what a participant has said or what has been written.' (p.84). In contrast, the latent level looks beyond what has been said and '…starts to identify or examine the underlying ideas, assumptions, and conceptualisations – and ideologies - that are theorised as shaping or informing the semantic

content of the data' (p.84). In this thesis semantic and latent meanings are being sought as a contribution to knowledge, since the views of head teachers offer semantic answers, but the latent meaning behind these views and identification with the literature must be sought to offer a contribution to knowledge.

Braun and Clarke (2006) differentiate between a top-down or theoretical thematic analysis, driven by the specific research question(s) and/or the analyst's focus, and a bottom-up or inductive one driven by the data itself … identify the 'essence' of what each thematic analysis allows for the analysis of a large amount of data from multiple participants to be analysed and synthesised into a meaningful account (Boyatzis, 1998). By providing a structured methodology for identifying key themes within a data set and not constrained by one specific epistemological position (Boyatzis, 1998), Braun and Clarke's (2006) guidelines on thematic analysis were used as they offer an up-to-date description of the method. An inductive thematic analysis of semantic information from interview transcripts was used in order to develop 'bottom-up' themes (Braun and Clarke, 2006). An advantage of an inductive approach is that it is open to participants' experiences rather than seeking views on topics informed by the evidence base (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p.92).

Antaki (2002) argues that there is often an absence of clear guidelines around thematic analysis, an issue that Attride-Sterling (2001) identifies as a difficulty in the simplification of methodological analysis. Braun and Clark (2006) state that the use of tools or guidelines that are rigid can reduce flexibility and constrain analysis. The opacity of qualitative data analysis is a common source of criticism levelled at this approach (Murphy et al., 1998). Furber (2010) states

that there is a need for transparency so that research reviewers, including those who have sponsored a study, can see how the findings were derived. Dixon-Woods (2011) highlights the need for techniques that augment coding transparency. A lack of depth to analysis processes has been raised as a concern (Attride-Sterling, 2001). Popay et al. (1998), for example, state that there is limited detail in most reports of analysis and findings from qualitative research to interpret the context and meaning of data.

Subjectivity, inherent in interpretive qualitative research (Sword 1999), has been criticised. It could be argued that no analysis approach is completely free of assumptions and biases and such a charge relates to the philosophy of knowledge informing differing methodologies.

Quantitative research's link with positivism emphasises the desire for objective knowledge, with participants regarded as objects whose data can be universalised (Elliott et al., 1999). Conversely, qualitative research is underpinned by various traditions (e.g. phenomenological, critical, post-modernist) that focus on human experience and social life, including people's use of language (Elliott et al., 1999). Flick (1998) argues that the researcher's communication with research participants is an explicit part of knowledge production in qualitative approaches. Flick (1998) states that the researcher's feelings and reflections on their actions during the research process become data in their own right and this might apply to data such as field notes.

This study has a very small sample, i.e. 8 head teachers relevant to the geographical area of analysis, as is considered applicable in qualitative

research (Lyons and Coyle, 2007). Regulation on sample size for thematic analyses is non-specific and should be guided by the needs of the study (Braun and Clarke, 2006). This approach suits this research in that the interviews seek to contribute to the knowledge by extrapolating the views on the construct from the head teachers in the sample. In choosing a small sample the researcher, as a head teacher, acknowledges the manageability of the research scale.

Smith and Eatough (2007) suggest an absolute minimum of 6 participants and Bird (2005) states that between 8 to 20 participants is appropriate. A sample size of 8 was chosen, striking a balance between an in-depth understanding of participant experiences, characteristic of smaller sample sizes in qualitative research and considered a representation of head teachers, whilst minimising the risk of shallow analysis associated with larger scale research (Boyatzis, 1998).

Head teachers were engaged using a purposive, stratified sampling strategy. The resulting sample is a cross-section of a range of primary schools in across the ERW region, to include a Welsh medium school, rural and urban contexts. The schools range in terms of pupil population from 100 to up to 300 pupils, with a range of time served head teachers. No participants were excluded over the course of this study. Interviews were conducted at a time and place convenient to the participants, after consent had been agreed. Each interview was recorded and transcribed.

All of the participants were interviewed at their schools. Each participant was interviewed once. Interview length was determined by the participant having

said all they had to say and the interviewer having asked all that was relevant to the study, as is suitable for thematic analysis research (Boyatzis, 1998; Braun and Clarke, 2006).

Interviews were only conducted in locations where confidentiality could be maintained and recorded on a phone .The contributor's right to stop taking part in the research after the interview was reiterated before the interview began. No head teacher chose to withdraw from this study.

The interview was intended to enable participants to comment on the results of the SAOS survey and offer their views of the sub-components of the construct. Of particular interest was the view of the sample head teachers on their schools being optimistic. This is an important aspect of this research in which the antecedents of AO are identified. A semi-structured format was developed in order to aid head teachers to offer their views on the construct. Semi-structured interviews offer structure, although also being flexible enough to allow for unanticipated ideas to emerge. (Robson, 2002). The interview schedule (appendix 3) was drafted using the literature and definitions of the sub-components of AO. This is a contribution to knowledge in that this aspect of the construct has not been examined using this methodology to date.

Thematic analysis methodology was applied to interview transcripts. During interviews, the researcher directed the content and direction of the interview. However, as with any didactic relationship, it would be simple to assume that the researcher had no influence over the themes of conversation, especially with head teachers who might have been reluctant to offer views on new

information and possible negative qualitative date on their schools from the SAOS survey across the school unit of analysis, LSAs, teachers, and head teachers.

All personal identifiable information was anonymised. Head teachers were allocated a letter of the alphabet coded against their true identity and held electronically on a secure server in school. All published excerpts from the interview transcripts have been made anonymous without containing any identifiable information. Head teachers were made aware that the interviews would be 'typed-up' by a third party.

Critical realism is consistent with a thematic analytic approach, which is not intrinsically related to any distinct epistemological position (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Critical realism is sympathetic to both the traditional positivist ideology of traditional science as well as the constructivist views of post-positivism (Robson, 2002). Critical realism holds that knowledge or 'truth' can exist and be shared by a number of individuals. However, each individual's experience of truth will be influenced by their own subjective construction of that truth. The aim of this research is to identify common as well as conflicting truths in the experiences of a number of head teachers who are running schools by focusing on participant responses to open interview questions. The research aimed to provide an account of the experience of head teachers interviewed, through inductive, bottom-up analysis of participant responses. Analysis was data driven and no attempt was made to analyse the data in accordance to existing theory. However the literature identifies and offers that thematic analysis can be criticised for not identifying with any particular epistemological position (Braun

and Clarke, 2006). Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest that this demonstrates strength, in that it can be applied more flexibly. This research seeks to contribute to knowledge by using quantitative transcript data to find the antecedents to AO in the schools involved in such research.

Thematic analysis relates to involving developing themes from qualitative data (Boyatzis, 1998). This broad definition captures all qualitative research methodologies. Different qualitative methodologies, in conjunction with an explicit epistemological position, apply ‘lenses’ through which data is analysed and made sense of. Braun and Clarke (2006) state that thematic analysis specifically relates to the process of identifying, examining and recording patterns in data sets that are related to a specific research question and describe a specific phenomenon, in this study the antecedents to AO.

Thematic analysis offers an appropriate methodology. It allows for the analysis of a large amount of data from multiple participants to be analysed and synthesised into a meaningful account. It provides a structured methodology for identifying key themes within a data set and is not overly constrained by aligning with any one particular epistemological position (Boyatzis, 1998).

The interview transcripts were transcribed by a paid professional transcription service. Some authors advocate that researchers should transcribe interviews themselves, to ease immersion in the data (Pope, Ziebland and Mays, 2000). The researcher conducted the interviews himself and had already been exposed to the data once; on receiving of the transcriptions they were also read over and checked, immersing the researcher in the data. The analysis of data was guided

by Braun and Clarke's (2006) account of thematic analysis. These guidelines offer an up to date and practice-based conceptualisation of the method.

The transcripts were read over numerous times to enable familiarisation with the data and initial ideas were noted. Transcripts were then subjected to line-by-line coding of the data. These initial units of analysis, or codes, had been identified and they were grouped together with other similar codes into possible thematic categories. Themes were repeatedly reviewed until they were judged to be dependable across all head teachers and at the school individual level.

The identified themes are intended to provide a thorough description of the data set (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Pope et al. (2000) state that this continuous and organic analysis is almost inevitable in qualitative research, due to the researcher's continual involvement in data collection and analysis processes. They state that is not possible to eliminate what has formerly been heard from the analysis, but that this can be a strength in that the researcher's participation in these processes is a significant source of information. In order that the most important themes could be appropriately addressed in the context of this study, some themes were considered not appropriate for inclusion.

Lyons and Coyle (2007) suggest that thematic saturation indicates that an appropriate sample size had been achieved. The analysis focused on the semantic content of interview transcripts, rather than latent information and the interpretation of meaning. A semantic approach identifies themes within the "explicit and surface meanings of the data and the analysis not looking for anything beyond what a participant has said or what has been written" (Braun

and Clarke, 2006, p.13). Alternatively, a latent approach "starts to identify or examine the underlying ideas, assumptions, and conceptualisations and ideologies that are theorised as shaping or informing the semantic content of the data" (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p.13). A semantic approach reflects the critical realist epistemological position in that it limits over-use of subjective interpretation and focuses on identifying semantic themes within and between the transcripts.

This study focused on providing a description of the patterns in semantic information in the data set, and then summarising, interpreting and theorising around the broader meaning and implications of the patterns found. Interpretation often occurs in consideration of previous data and theory (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

Latent level analysis attempts to identify the principal concepts that explain the data throughout analysis. It is concerned with explaining the shape and form of the data, rather than a semantic level explanation. This study focused on a semantic level explanation because of the purpose to represent participant views from a perspective and gain the understanding and views and experiences of head teachers in the selected primary schools offering their views on AO.

This study used an inductive thematic analysis methodology to focus on the semantic information obtained from interviews to examine the views of head teachers on the components of AO and optimistic schools, and develop 'bottom-up' themes. Inductive thematic analysis contrasts with a deductive, 'top-down'

approach that would typically use a more structured interview format and direct participants to respond to specified topics informed by the existing evidence base (Braun and Clarke, 2006). An inductive approach benefits from the point that it is open to hearing about contributors' experiences, rather than seeking their views on topics biased by the evidence base. Inductive analysis is not driven by the researcher's theoretical interests, or pre-conceived analytical frames (Braun and Clarke, 2006). It is noted that Braun and Clarke (2006) highlight that researchers can never wholly free themselves from their theoretical and epistemological position. So, this data driven form of analysis must be considered in light of an individual researcher.

3.11 Data Collection Methods

Questionnaires:

The method of collecting data using survey questionnaires is well used and involves obtaining views and opinions. A questionnaire was deemed purposeful in investigating and yielding information for this study.

In order to address the research questions, multiple sources of data were compiled and analysed. Essential to case-study research is the use of multiple sources of information to explore the system (or case) over an extended period of time (Creswell, 2007). The types of data collection used in this study were two-fold. Interviews and survey will be used and employed in order to thoroughly explore and better understand the issues around AO. Kerlinger (1996) posits survey/questionnaires advantages as: that they can be completed at the respondent's convenience, higher level of standardisation, lack of interviewer bias, anonymity - in the study this is crucial because of the nature of

the SOAS measure and its contentious content.

3.12 Ethics

The research methodology has to reflect ethical considerations when it is designed. The SRA state that "if social research is to remain of benefit to society and the groups and individuals in it, then social researchers must conduct their work responsibly…." The notion of accountability in education research can become marginalised unless, as Ali (2005) argues, the research design acknowledges "not only scholarly responsibility but also a moral imperative." The key issue for this research is the informed consent of the participants and a clear communication of the anonymity of the schools involved. Gaining this consent is critical since the research aims are exploring whether a school is AO and how that may relate to its performance. Bryman (2008) points out that the idea of informed consent is easier said than done, since the research has yet to take place. For example, the researcher will need to acknowledge the institutional and contextual pressures that may be influencing the direction of the research.

CR faces a challenge in the identification and clarification of the ethical aspects of their research: What triggers their research and what inhibits it? Is the research socially and ethically legitimate? This is a critical point in view of the data collection (Data Protection Act 1998) and this research being conducted via electronic means. Is it secure and should it be publicly known or presented in forums? This research commitment to what Wilson and Greenhill (2004) term a non-Habermasion approach that advocates focus on issues of equality and questioning the status quo. Ethically this is strength of CR since it emphasises

structural and contextual conditions. CR has the potential to understand truth, agency. Unless this research acknowledges the ethical issues of confidentiality and anonymity around social formations in schools then the research risks becoming abstract and devoid of specific content. This research is ethically complex as Clark and Sharf (2007) acknowledge "it probes the very personal subjective truths of peoples' lives, which in turn exposes our own frailties, concerns and questions as interpretative researchers." Well-meaning advice to "proceed ethically and without threatening the validity of the research endeavour insofar as it is possible to do so" Cohen (2009), provides no comfort against the ethical dilemmas that might arise out of the research aims. Joseph (2002) counters this issue by arguing that CR accounts, with attention on issue of power and hegemony, may help to examine society (or a school) as structured and stratified. From the ethics perspective CR informs us about the conditions under which hegemony operates its influence on AO and the conditions under which AO emerges. CR offers a richer social ontology that accounts for the material/subjective dimensions of social reality. Ethically, although the approaches to this research are rigorous about confidentiality and anonymity, there will be tensions in what data emerges and how that might comprise the research aims as they are explored. But without participation by the identified groups in schools, the empirical test of AO as a second order latent construct amongst distinct groups, will be limited. As Small (2001) argues "codes of ethics cannot adequately meet the unpredictability of individual research instances."

Summary

Researchers have two methods, each using many techniques for gathering and generating empirical material, i.e. quantitative and qualitative. By using the SOAS instrument and conducting a series of taped semi-structured interviews, the researcher aims to verify one method against another in an approach known as triangulation. This chapter concludes with the critical realist approach and mixed methodologies being compatible with methodological triangulation identified by Risjord (2002) which circumvents the issues associated in the literature with paradigm switching. The rationale for adopting a critical realist framework is reinforced by case study design. The use of both quantitative and qualitative approaches will provide balance in this research study and will lead to retroductive reasoning and the development of a theoretical model of AO as a construct amongst diverse groups in the schools sampled. This will be the contribution to new knowledge.

CHAPTER 4

Research findings

4.1 Locality

This chapter reports the results of the data analysis of 10 ten primary schools in the geographical locality of Llanelli representing 122 responses from a 30 item Likert questionnaire (cleaned down to 94), the school community (defined as head teachers, teachers and learning support assistants - LSAs). Carmarthenshire has 112 LSOAs (Lower Super Output Areas). The results from West Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation 2014 shows that Carmarthenshire has 25 Lower Super Output Areas that are within the 30% most deprived areas in Wales. The majority of these areas (60%) are located in the region in this study (15 LSOAs).The unit of study is eight sample primary .The range of eFSM learners in these schools is 13% to 40% plus of the total school aged population. These schools are in an economically deprived area. The Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation 2014 ranks specific small areas in Wales in terms of deprivation. In this thesis 3 out of 10 of the schools fall in the 10% most deprived areas in Wales and overall the majority of the schools are located in areas classified as deprived or economically disadvantaged.

The chapter will also include the findings from eight semi-structured interviews with the head teachers of these schools. These interviews focused on four broad themes and emerging antecedents testing the views on: Optimism, Collective Efficacy, Faculty Trust and Academic Emphasis, the three elements of the construct termed Academic Optimism. These concepts are identified in the literature interacting together indicative of what a school's collective relationships are like and how each factor contributes to AO as an organisational

measure. The chapter will include the results of statistical techniques, exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis to identify the factors that emerge as underlying dimensions in supporting the theory that academic optimism is a latent construct that exists in the case study schools across this defined geographical area. The chapter will also give an interpretation of eight semi-structured interviews with the head teachers of the sample schools.

Table 2: Gender profile of the sample schools

Gender profile across the sample schools.	
Male respondent	17 out of 110. (15%)
Female respondents	93 out of 110. (85%)

This table above indicates the gender composition of the sample schools, notably female in composition. It is interesting to note that the composition of head teachers in the semi-structured interviews is more balanced with a 50/50 split male/female. The sample group in the table is higher in terms of females (a difference of 10%) than the Wales data in figure 1.2.below. Less than 20% of the sample across all groups is male, significantly below the 24.6 % in figure 1.2 for teachers. No male LSAs are in this sample group and not representative of the 11% noted in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Gender profile of the learning support workers and teachers across Wales (2017)

	March 2017	
	Number of school learning support workers	Percentage (%)
Male	3,470	11.0
Female	27,968	89.0
TOTAL	**31,438**	**100%**

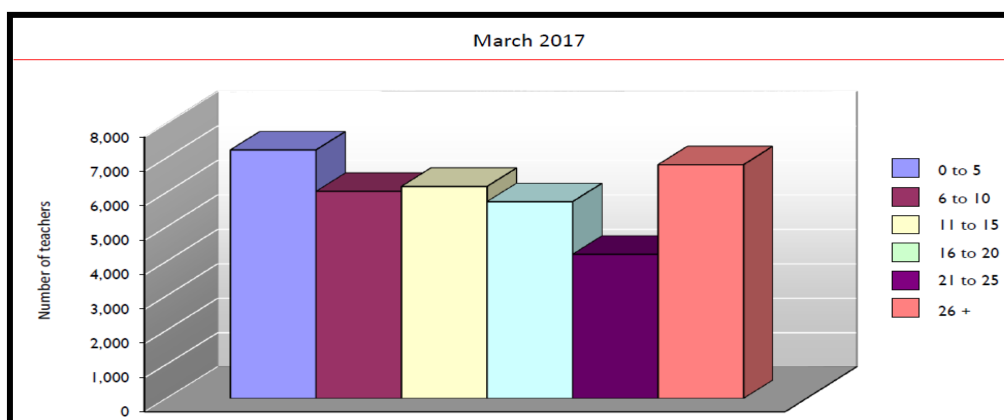
1.2 Number of school teachers registered with EWC by gender

	March 2013		March 2014		March 2015		March 2016		March 2017	
	Number of teachers	Percentage (%)	Number of teachers	Percentage (%)	Number of teachers	Percentage (%)	Number of teachers	Percentage (%)	Number of teachers	Percentage (%)
Male	9,386	24.8	9,294	24.7	9,185	24.6	9,092	24.6	8,893	24.6
Female	28,476	75.2	28,379	75.3	28,170	75.4	27,859	75.4	27,289	75.4
TOTAL	**37,862**	**100%**	**37,673**	**100%**	**37,355**	**100%**	**36,951**	**100%**	**36,182**	**100%**

Reference Annual Statistics Digests – March 2017 Education Workforce Council.

In the sample group time served since QTS (qualified teacher status) in the school was captured and is profiled below against the profile of teachers across Wales. (No data is available for LSAs).

Table 4: All Wales profile of time served in school.
Reference Annual Statistics Digests – March 2017 Education Workforce Council.



In the table above the % sample group of teachers versus time served in school. Note the similarity in the time served over 15+ years in the table and the 26+ years on the bar chart, indicating a mature time served teaching profile across Wales and in the sample. What was not established was if the respondent had been in the same school for the time period recorded. This would be beneficial in future research on AO.

Table 5: Number of years' service across all groups of the sample schools.

Number of years' service.	% of the sample
0-5 years	6 out of 54 = 11%
5-10 years	17 out of 54 = 31%
10-15 years	12 out of 54 = 22 %
15 years +	19 out of 54 = 35 %

Over half of this sample group evidence more than 5 years of service in the same school. 35% of this sample has over 15 years' service. Of this group all were female, included four head teachers. The majority of this group are teachers only; two LSAs demonstrate more than 15+ years' service in the same school. In the 0-5 years group there are 5 head teachers (2 male). The majority of this group are learning support assistants, all female. Six teachers present in this group, of which one is male.

4.2 SAOS Survey Instrument

Data used was collected from the School Academic Optimism Survey (SAOS). The SAOS measured AO and the sub-constructs of academic optimism (collective teacher efficacy, faculty trust in parents and students and academic

emphasis) and is comprised of 30 questions using a Likert scale format, School Academic Optimism Survey (SAOS) that measure each sub- construct: CTE, FT, and AE.

The SAOS that measures collective teacher efficacy (CTE) defined as the judgment or belief of teachers that the faculty as a whole can organise and execute the actions required to have positive effects on students (Goddard, Hoy and Woolfolk-Hoy, 2000). Items 1-12 are given a Likert score from 1-6 with "1" representing Strongly Disagree and "6" representing Strongly Agree. According to the scoring guide provided for the SAOS by Hoy (2012), the following items (3, 4, 8, 9, 11, 12) are reverse scored for the collective teacher efficacy (CTE) construct, meaning 1=6, 2=5, etc. (see Appendix B).

The School Academic Optimism Survey (SAOS) that measures faculty trust in parents and students (FT) is defined as a willingness to be vulnerable to another party based on the confidence that that party is benevolent, reliable, competent, honest, and open (Hoy and Tschannen-Moran, 2003). Items 13-22 of the SAOS were also given a Likert scale score of 1-6 with "1" representing Strongly Disagree to "6" representing Strongly Agree. According to the scoring guide provided for the SAOS by Hoy (2012), number 22 is the only item that is reverse scored for the faculty trust in parents and students (FT) construct with 1=6, 2=5, etc. (See Appendix B).

The SAOS that measures academic emphasis (AE) is defined as the extent to which a school is driven by a quest for academic excellence — a press for academic achievement (Hoy and Miskel, 2005). Items 23-30 measuring AE were given a

Likert scale score from 1-4 with “1” representing Rarely Occurs and “4” representing Very Often. According to the scoring guide for the SAOS provided by Hoy (2012), no items measuring academic emphasis (AE) are reverse scored (See Appendix B).

The SAOS was found by Sims (2011) to have high reliability for academic optimism with a coefficient of .92 and high reliability for each of the sub-constructs with coefficients for collective teacher efficacy (CTE), faculty trust in parents and students (FT) and academic emphasis (AE), at .77, .91 and .81, respectively. The research examined three sub-scale measures of the construct academic optimism. The focus on the sub-scales demonstrated the investigative nature of the research. My aim is to identify the construct across the whole school community. Previous research has focused on either principals or teachers. This research is empirically testing the research instrument across all groups in school. This is an under-researched area with little discussion around the impact of the different sub-groups on the behaviours in the school that may impact on the school’s academic optimism. The following table illustrates the individual means for each school, for each sub-scale. The range for AO across all schools = 3.76 to 4.68 which indicates a difference across the sample schools. The construct is validated as a measure of difference in this thesis.

Table 6: Mean score across sub-scales and AO across all schools

	Academic Optimism	Collective Efficacy	Faculty Trust	Academic Emphasis
Mean for all schools	4.26	4.9338	4.6117	3.3452
N	94	94	94	94
Std. Deviation		.44827	.60586	.38229

It is interesting to note that the spread of schools higher or lower than the mean AO score of 4.26 for the sample of eight schools is a 50/50 split. The lowest mean score of 3.76 is significantly lower than other mean scores with the lowest AE score; in the transcripts the HT of this school makes a comment that the teachers, not the pupils, are the most important people in the school. This is a counter intuitive comment to all the other HT in the sample group. The mean AO score at 4.26 would suggest that the schools sampled have higher than average scores for AO across all those staff surveyed.

Table 7 below is a breakdown of the triad of factors that combine to create AO by job type. 1 represents the LSAs; 2, teachers, and 3, head teachers (HT). It is interesting to note that CE for 1 and 2 are similar with CE for 3 being the lowest. FT is similar across all three groups. AE is highest amongst the LSAs and lowest amongst HT. Collective Efficacy, Faculty Trust and Academic Emphasis measured across all three groups. Note the variations in score which are not equal. Of note is the Academic Emphasis score across all groups.

Table 7: The triad of factors that comprise the construct AO measured across all groups in the sample by job type

V3 Job Type		Collective Efficacy	FacultyTrust	Academic Emphasis
1	**Mean**	**4.9895**	**4.6077**	**3.3038**
	N	**39**	**39**	**39**
	Minimum	**3.83**	**2.30**	**2.00**
	Maximum	**6.00**	**5.50**	**4.00**
2	**Mean**	**4.9170**	**4.6152**	**3.3904**
	N	**46**	**46**	**46**
	Minimum	**3.75**	**2.80**	**2.13**
	Maximum	**5.75**	**5.50**	**4.00**
3	**Mean**	**4.7789**	**4.6111**	**3.2933**
	N	**9**	**9**	**9**
	Minimum	**4.25**	**4.00**	**3.00**
	Maximum	**5.42**	**5.30**	**3.75**

Table 8: The type of factors that comprise the construct AO measured across all groups in the sample by gender and by V5 time served in school.

V4 (gender)		Collective Efficacy	Faculty Trust	Academic Emphasis
1	Mean	4.9607	4.6195	3.3696
	N	82	82	82
2	Mean	4.7500	4.5583	3.1783
	N	12	12	12
Total	Mean	4.9338	4.6117	3.3452
	N	94	94	94
V5 (time served in school in years)		Collective Efficacy	Faculty Trust	Academic Emphasis
0-5 yrs	Mean	5.0015	4.4750	3.4020
	N	20	20	20
5-10 yrs	Mean	4.9290	4.5724	3.3338
	N	29	29	29
10-15 yrs	Mean	4.9485	4.7800	3.2265
	N	20	20	20
15yrs +	Mean	4.8736	4.6320	3.4080
	N	25	25	25
Total	Mean	4.9338	4.6117	3.3452
	N	94	94	94

Table 9: Job type versus time served in school Blue = 0-5 years, green, 5-10 years, beige 10-15 years, purple 15 years plus.

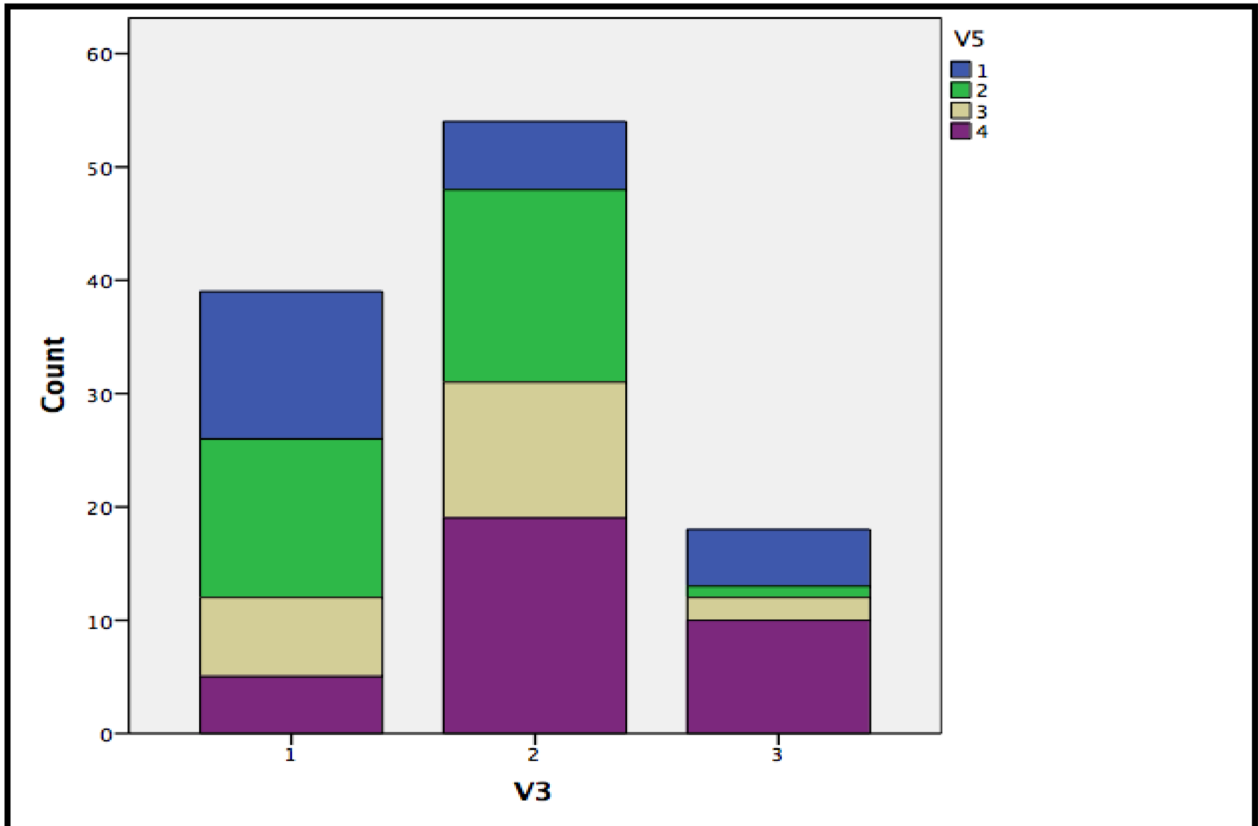


Figure 2 illustrates the profiles of job type, versus the time served in school. The indicative bars demonstrate the significant variation in profile 2 (LSAs) in which time served (V5) is concentrated at either end of the range. Either 1 = 0 to 5 years or purple at 15 + years. Bar 1 (teachers) demonstrates a more uniform profile. Bar 3 (head teachers) is indicative of a significant maturity in the respondents' being in post for 15 + years.

Figure 6: Collective Efficacy

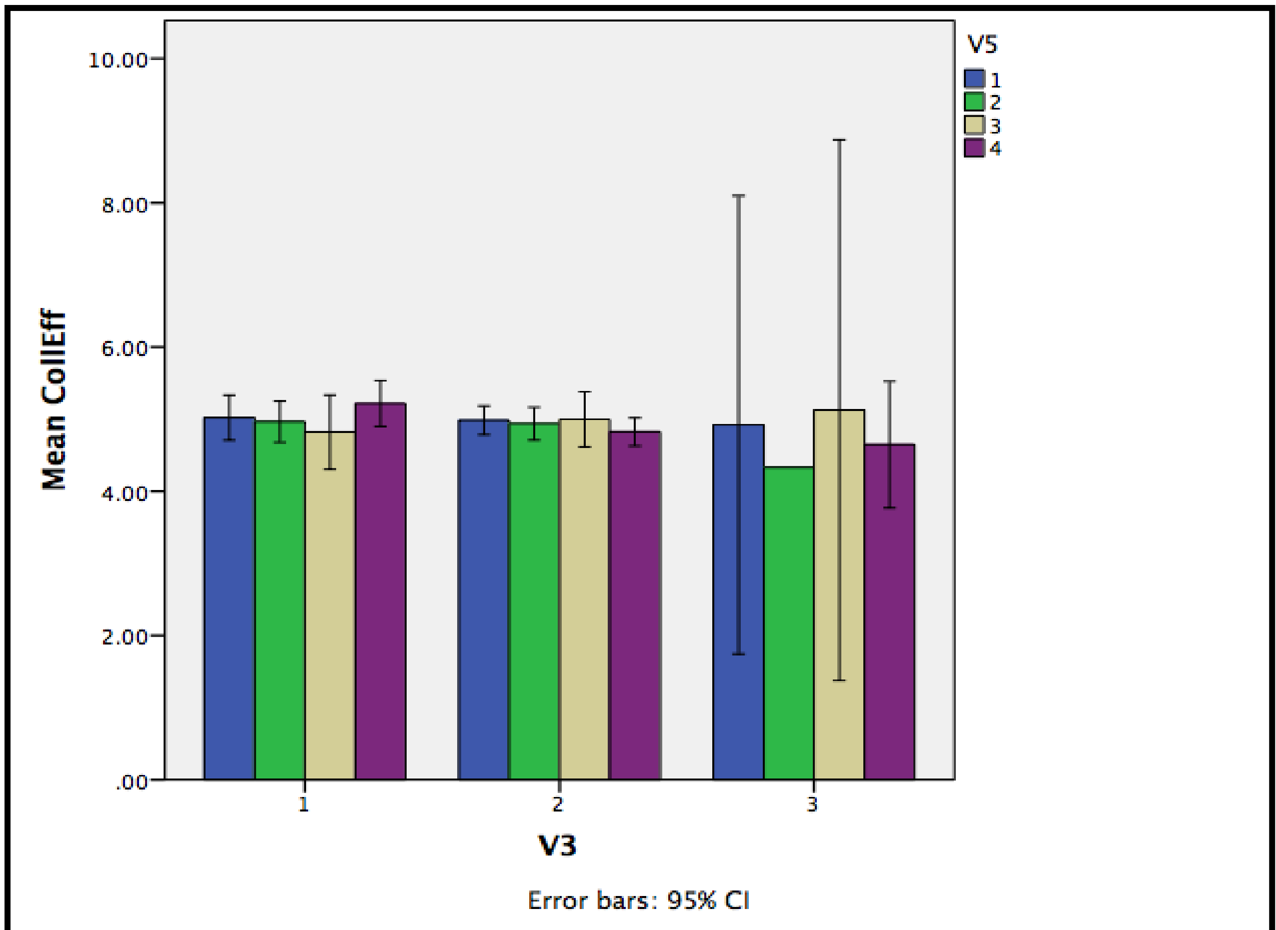


Figure 6 presents the V3 variable (job type) versus V5 (time in post) for collective efficacy. The error bars represent the standard deviation of the data from its mean. It is interesting to note that the range of values (bars) for 1 and 2 are tightly grouped across all bars for time in post except for 3 which demonstrate a greater variation for collective efficacy for head teachers with a greater range (the bars) in columns 0-5 years (blue) and beige (10-15 years). There are significant outliers in this group. The variation is important to note since collective efficacy has an impact on the school's culture and it can also play a role in how school leaders socialise and supervise teachers. CE is identified in the literature as the key variable in explaining student achievement. Academic emphasis is stronger when collective efficacy is high. Collective efficacy is also

critical when facing difficulties and future challenges. High efficacy equates with people who seek challenge, and HT are responsible for social persuasion. This occurs when the HT convinces the group that they have the ability to perform the task to gain positive results. The more the group believes in the encouragement, the more likely collective efficacy will increase. The explanation for the variation is not evidenced in the literature. It could be suggested that efficacy is context specific and varies according to the context the HT is in, i.e. the school. A HT might have high efficacy in one aspect of school management and have low efficacy in curriculum design. Efficacy is also future-orientated it is based on what the HT can do in the future and not on past events. The current school system of accountability and outcomes would offer some explanation for these outliers in this group. Belief has a strong influence of performance outcomes. The literature indicates that the stronger the beliefs people hold about their own capabilities, the more they achieve.

Figure 7: Faculty Trust

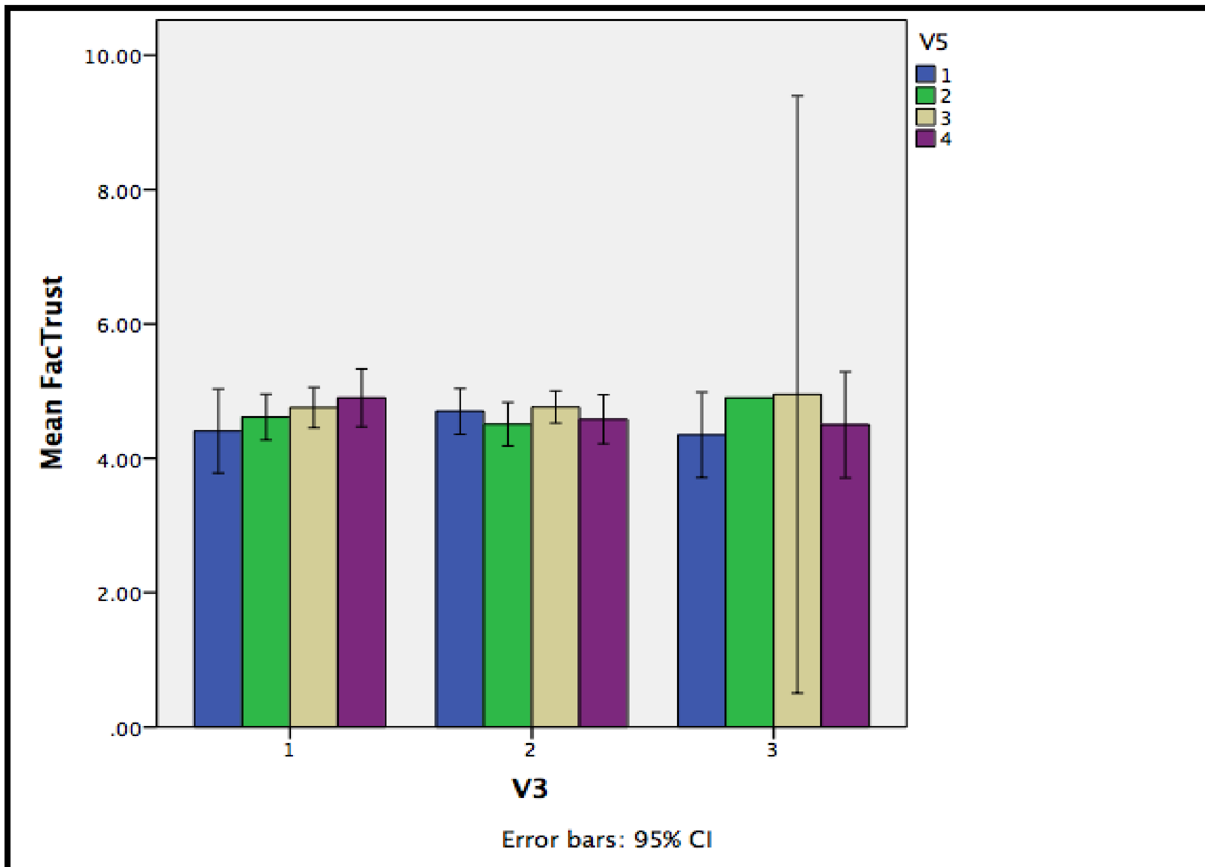
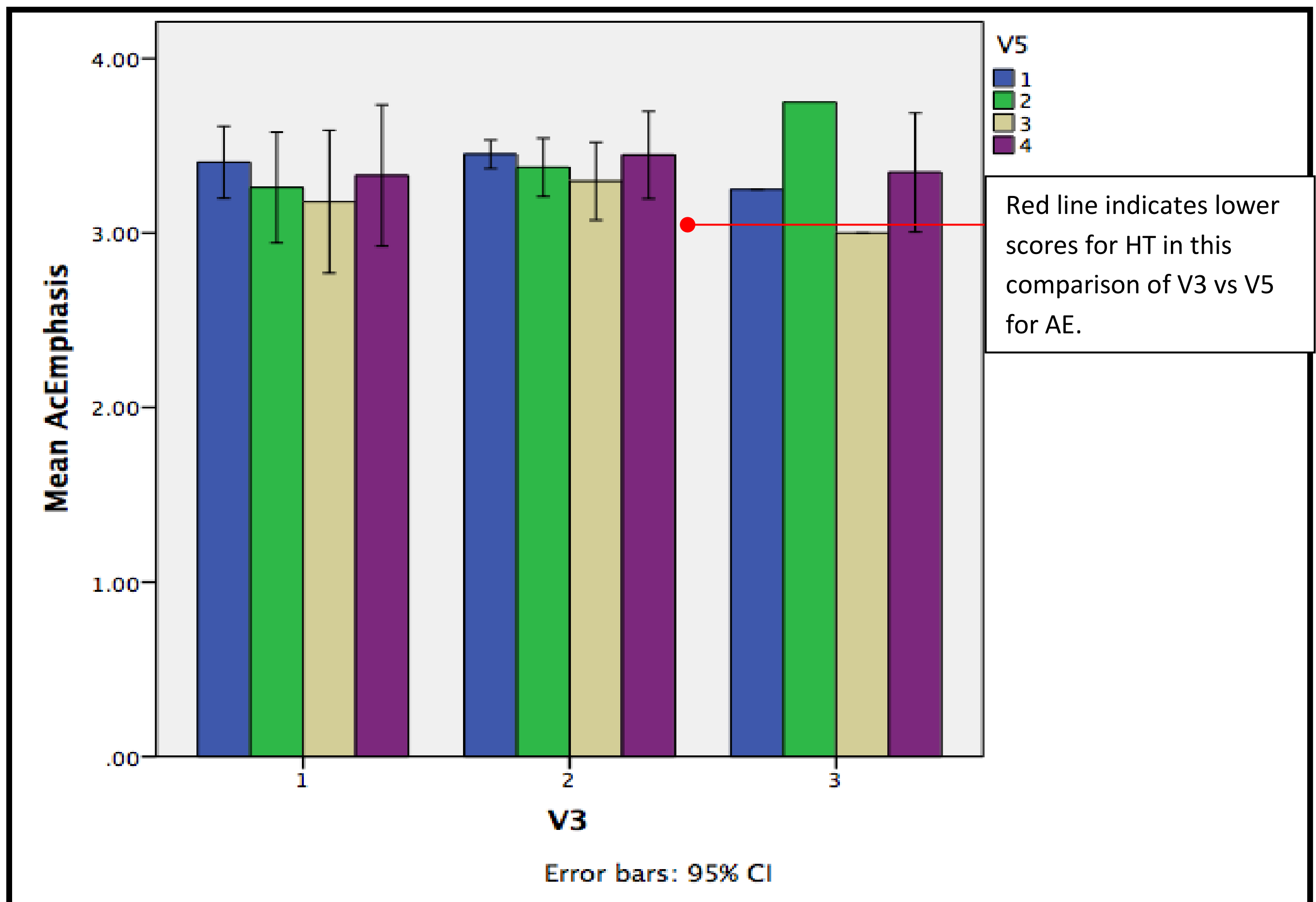


Figure 7 presents data for faculty trust, V3 versus V5 note the variation in V 3, bar 3 error bar. The error bars represent the standard deviation of the data from its mean. These outliers in bar 3 are indicative of responses from the LSA's group. This is suggestive that within this sample of time served staff there is a perceived breach of trust and significant degree of trust invested at the individual level. In the interview transcripts the lower valued scoring LSA was termed a "black cloud…a spoiler…" This person clearly identifies with this view and indicates that her trust has been broken in this school. When asked why this person was thought of as a "black cloud" an off-record response was that she was miserable because she wasn't paid the same as everyone else. Although she was not as qualified as the rest of this group she consistently raised the issue publicly.

Figure 8: Academic Emphasis (AE)



The error bars represent the standard deviation of the data from its mean. Academic Emphasis across V3, V5 demonstrates a smaller degree of variability and tighter groupings across all variables measured. The literature defines the term academic emphasis as “the extent to which a school is driven by a quest for academic excellence” (Goddard et al., 2000). This graph is suggestive that across all the schools sampled and across all groups, this group attribute reflects how each school values academic success. The literature also argues that a school with high academic emphasis is one in which teachers set high but achievable goals for students in an ordered learning environment. In this example an interpretation can be drawn that these goals are agreed and understood by all staff accounting for the small variation in the range by job type

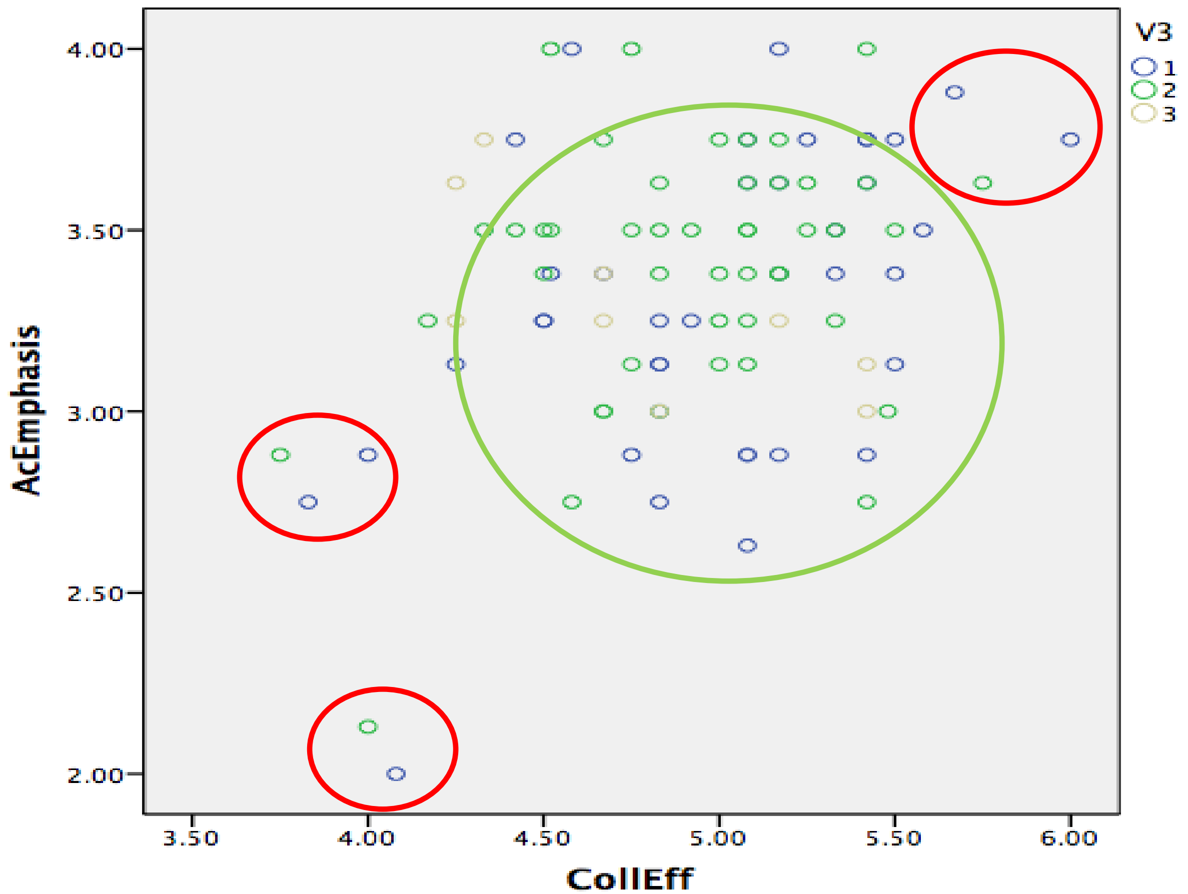
versus time served in school. It would be interesting to note the views of the head teachers when asked specifically about this group attribute in their school whose scores are lower than the other two groups. In a recent explanatory case study (2012) it was noted that academic emphasis starts at the top with the prominence on academic success, second only to teaching among all school related factors that contribute to student learning. Why then would this group attribute be lowest amongst school leaders? This is exemplified by the red line on the graph previously. Academic emphasis represents to what extent teachers exemplify the behaviours that are created from collective efficacy and faculty trust. Academic emphasis is behavioural part. There is a distinct difference that will be explored in the interview process with head teachers.

Table 10: Pearson Correlation Coefficient for the collective variable measure using the SAOS survey instrument across all groups

Correlations of sub-scales with each other.		Collective Efficacy	Faulty Trust	Academic Emphasis
Collective Efficacy	Pearson Correlation	1	.380**	.330**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.001
	N	94	94	94
Faulty Trust	Pearson Correlation	.380**	1	.251*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.015
	N	94	94	94
Academic Emphasis	Pearson Correlation	.330**	.251*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.015	
	N	94	94	94

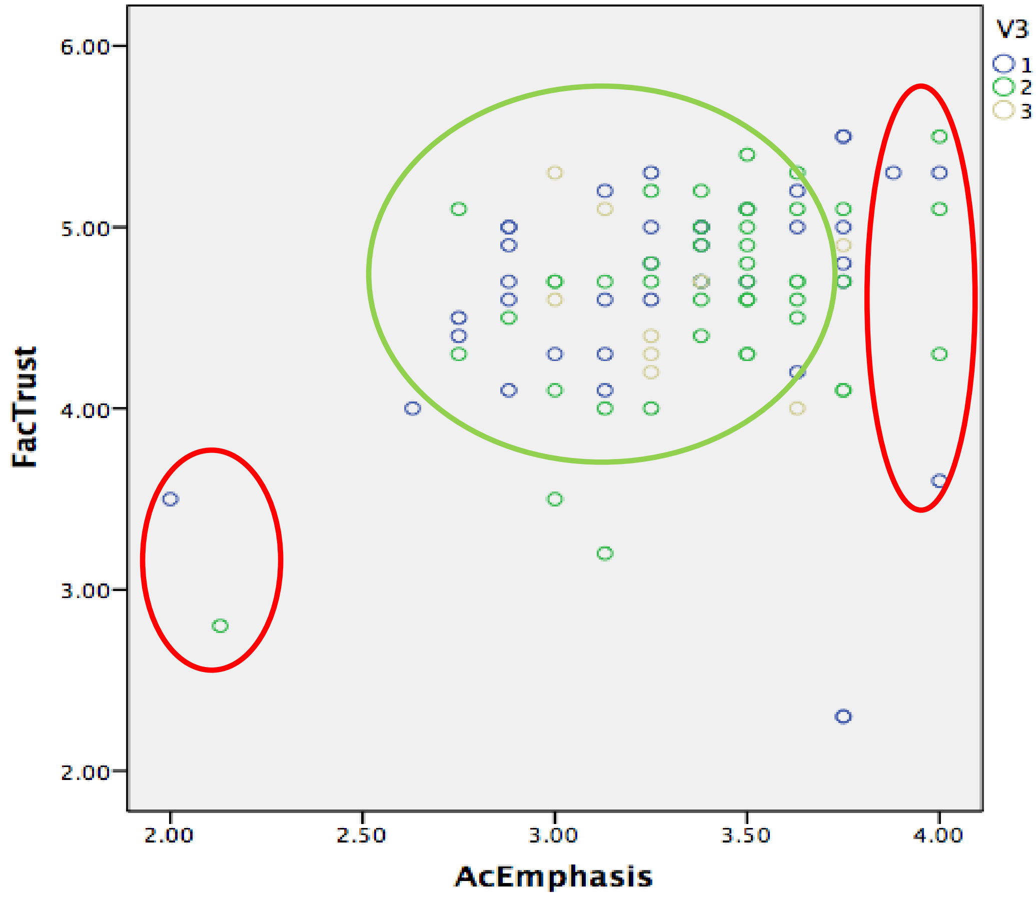
In the above Table 10, each dimension of academic optimism across the schools sampled demonstrates a medium relationship, Cohen (1988) with each other. Collective efficacy and faculty trust demonstrate the strongest correlation at 0.380; collective efficacy and academic emphasis 0.330 and faculty trust and academic emphasis significantly lower at 0.251. These three aspects of academic optimism in the literature are transactional in their relationship with each other. This interaction shapes the normative environment of the school. In this research sample there is an imbalance in these transactional relationships. This would suggest that there is, within the sample schools' evidence of trust violations, possible issues of competency, reliability, honesty and openness in terms of information sharing. This will be explored through the interviews with the head teachers of the sample schools.

Fig 9: Academic Emphasis plotted against Collective Efficacy across V 3



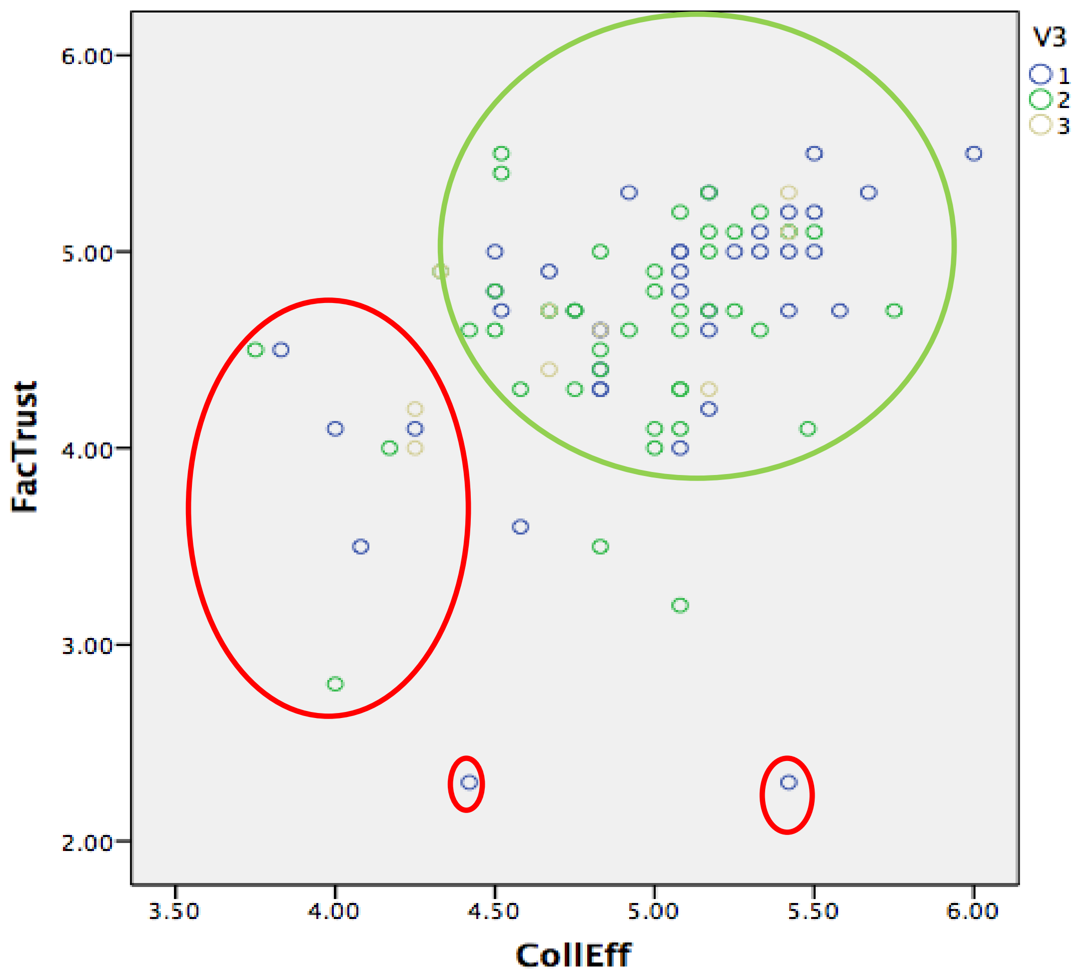
From the output above there is a moderate positive correlation between the two variables (green circle). There are evident outliers (red circles). There is no suggested curvilinear relationship and it would be appropriate to calculate Pearson product moment correlation for these two variables. From the table above, this scatter plots the Pearson Moment Correlation for AE versus CE = .330** which is regarded as a medium relationship (Cohen, 1988).

Fig 10: Faculty Trust plotted against Academic Emphasis across V 3 (job type)



From the output above there is a small positive correlation between the two variables (green circle). There are evident outliers (red ovals). There is no suggested curvilinear relationship and it would be appropriate to calculate Pearson product moment correlation for these two variables. From the table above this scatter plot the Pearson Moment Correlation for FT versus AE = .251* which is regarded as a small relationship (Cohen, 1988).

Fig 11: Faculty Trust plotted against Collective Efficacy across V3



From the output above there is a stronger medium positive correlation between the two variables. There are evident outliers (red ovals). There is no suggested curvilinear relationship and it would be appropriate to calculate Pearson product moment correlation for these two variables. From the table above this scatter plots the Pearson Moment Correlation for FT versus AE = .380** which is regarded as a medium relationship (Cohen, 1988).

Academic optimism can be reliably represented by the three (3) subscales of faculty trust, academic emphasis, and collective efficacy across all three groups in the sample schools in a defined locality. The SAOS survey instrument has not been empirically tested in this way and the literature identifies the use of the

instrument with specific groups: teachers, principals etc. The inclusion of learning support assistant with teachers and head teacher represents the potential contribution to knowledge Principal Axis Factoring, was used to investigate this research question.

Analysis of Cronbach Alpha reliability test with all the variables from the SAOS survey. If the Cronbach alpha is below 0.7 then removal of the negative values is recommend (shaded values in the appendix Table 10)

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.636	30

Re-run of the Cronbach Alpha analysis with the negative items removed:

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.826	**24**

4.3 Faculty Trust

The ten faculty trust items were subjected to single-factor PAF analysis as previously published (Tschannen-Moran and Hoy, 2000). The suitability of data for factor analysis was assessed first. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin value was high at 0.835 - above the recommended 0.6 (Pallant, 2007) - and Bartlett's test of

Sphericity was significant (p<.001). These support the factorability of the correlation matrix.

Principal Axis Factoring analysis revealed three components with eigenvalues greater than 1 (5.232, 1.377, and 1.098), explaining 70.63% of the common variance (respectively, 47.566, 12.516 and 9.981%). The scale reliability was very strong (Cronbach Alpha = .826 consistent with previous results (Hoy and Tschannen-Moran, 2003; Hoy et al., 2006).

Fig 12: Faculty Trust:

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.826	9

4.4 Collective Efficacy

The 12 items from collective efficacy were assessed for suitability before being subjected to a two-factor PAF analysis. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin value was .613 - above the recommended .6 (Pallant, 2007) - and Bartlett's test of Sphericity was significant (p<.001). These support the factorability of the correlation matrix. Principal Axis Factoring analysis revealed six components with eigenvalues greater than one (2.907,1.867,1.244,1.145,1.089, and 1.007), explaining 71.21% (respectively, 22.359%, 14.362%, 9.573%,8.805%,8.378%, and 7.743%) of the common variance. The scale reliability was weak (Cronbach Alpha = .512 and not consistent with previous results (Hoy and Tschannen-Moran, 2003; Hoy et al., 2006).

Fig 13: Academic Emphasis

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.512	6

4.5 Academic Emphasis

The 13 items from the three Academic Emphasis scales were used in various Organisational Health Inventory scales designed for the grade bands of elementary (5 items total), middle (9 items total), and secondary schools (8 items total). Each of the three scales was developed as unidimensional scales (Hoy and Tarter, 1992; Hoy and Tarter, 1997a; Hoy and Tarter, 1997b; Hoy and Sabo, 1998), and their reported internal reliability measures are good to excellent (Cronbach Alphas of α = .87, α = .94, and α = .93, respectively).

The initial PAF analysis was run (n = 94) to establish if a universal scale could be utilised in this study. As such, it was set to extract a single, unidimensional factor that could be employed in any school, regardless of students' ages or grade levels. The suitability of data for factor analysis was assessed. Scrutiny of the correlation matrix showed over half correlations r = .3 or greater. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin value was .769 - above the recommended .6 (Pallant, 2007) - and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was significant (p <.001). These support the factorability of the correlation matrix.

Principal Axis Factoring analysis revealed three components with eigenvalues greater than one (3.320,1.206, and 1.081), explaining 36.892%, 13.406%, and 12.016% of the shared variance in that order.

Fig 14 Collective Efficacy

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.727	9

4.6 Principle Factor Analysis (PFA)

The use of PFA attempts to produce a small number of combinations of original variables that can explain the variability in the pattern of correlations. The research instrument has not been empirically tested across all stakeholders in the school and as such this research is interested in understanding the factors making up the overall conceptual components (FT, CE, AE). This approach also would validate the overall structure and content of the questionnaire. The items in the questionnaire would be grouped together to provide threads or themes that could be explored through the semi-structured interview with head teachers of the sample schools. The rotated factor matrix table presented lists the final factor loadings and items within each factor for the faculty trust, collective efficacy and academic emphasis.

There are several promising factors that have emerged from the factor analysis. The 36 item Likert SAOS survey instrument was subjected to Principle Factor Analysis (PFA) using SPSS 22, extraction method maximum likelihood, Varimax

with Kaiser Normalisation. Prior to performing the PFA, the suitability of that data for factor analysis was assessed. The correlation matrices for all three sub-scales, FT, CE, AE revealed over half the coefficients of .3 and above. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin values of 0.835, 0.613, 0.769 respectively exceeding the value of 0.6 (Kaiser 1970, 1974), which is statistically significant supporting the factorability of the matrix. PFA revealed a range of components across these subscales exceeding eigenvalues of 1. The PFA analysis also revealed a structure with all three subscales showing a strong number of loadings and variables from the SAOS instrument loading sustainably on only one factor. These factors are identified below with the associated subscale noted. For example, AE = Academic emphasis, T = Faculty Trust, CE= Collective Efficacy.

Table 11: Presents the principle factor analysis extrapolated factors from the Likert survey instrument data

Factor 1
Teachers here believe that pupils are competent learners**. AE**
Pupils in this school care about each other. **T**
Pupils in this school can be counted upon to do their work. T
Teachers think that most of the parents do a good. AE
Teachers in this school trust their students. T
Teachers in this school trust the parents. T
Factor 2.
Teachers in this school believe their students have the ability to achieve academically. AE
Pupils respect others who get good grades. AE
The Pupils in this school can achieve the goals that have been set for them. AE
These students come to school ready to learn. CE

Pupils seek extra work so they can get good grade. AE
Academic achievement is recognised and acknowledged by the school. AE
Pupils try hard to improve on previous work. AE
Factor 3.
Teachers can believe what parents tell them. AE
Teachers can count upon parental support. AE
Parents in this school are reliable in their commitments. FT
Factor 4.
Home life provides so many advantages that students are bound to learn. CE
The opportunities in this community help ensure that these students will learn. CE
The learning environment is orderly.AE
Factor 5.
Teachers here are confident they will be able to motivate their students. FT
Teachers here don’t have the skills needed to produce meaningful results. FT
Factor 6.
Teachers in this school are able to get through to the most difficult pupils. FT
If a child doesn’t want to learn teachers here give up. FT.

The rationale for extrapolating these factors was to determine if the dimensions of the construct are valid across the three groups included in the survey. The findings in this section present an exploration of the construct termed academic optimism across a range of primary schools in a specific geographical locality, Llanelli. Using

descriptive statistics and factor analysis the validity of the construct is proved across all the named groups within each school. The findings are unique in that the construct has not been applied in this way before. There are newly identified factors across the sample schools. Each factor is identified with the associated dimension of the construct academic optimism.

The purpose of the research design is an exploratory study of the construct termed academic optimism and the predominant dimensions to this construct and its antecedents in the schools sampled. The utility of this measure as an organisational variable will be considered. The following section presents qualitative findings from semi-structured interviews with the head teachers. The questions that were asked are included in the appendix.

This section presents summary extracts from the transcribed interviews with head teachers which totalled over 160,000 words. Salient sections are presented to capture head teacher views on the construct AO. This will generate new knowledge in that AO is substantially supported by quantitative research in the USA, Taiwan and Turkey. To date a qualitative approach has not been used to explore those antecedents and head teachers' understanding of the construct's three elements through semi-structured interview.

4.7 Emerging Themes

Themes identified from the transcripts with quotations. (Comments from the head teachers which represents over 160,000 transcribed words on interviews).

Thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006) was used to identify common themes from the interview narratives. The question that was asked is identified and the specific response was noted in the examples below. This research was specifically seeking to draw out descriptions that the head teachers had about the behavioural characteristics of their individual schools and the staff in those schools. The reading of the transcripts took time and the essence of the responses are captured in the following comments.

<u>Theme 1: Optimism as a school characteristic</u>

Question: Is your school an optimistic school?

School 1

…well, at the moment I would presume the school is in high optimism, so they've got something positive to look forward to … take it on board myself that everybody is as optimistic as I am.

School 2

…the staff in this school is very optimistic … they're optimistic about how they can get the children to where they want them to be.

School 3

…Yes, we're very optimistic … get the best out of the children, I would say we are an optimistic school …

School 4

… Our school is an optimistic school. I think it's very important to be optimistic. I think it's important as a leader to be as optimistic as possible and to be resilient.

School 5

… I think we're a very optimistic school. I've got a good team I think they're pretty optimistic once there's a structure in place … also to keep a good atmosphere going across the school.

School 6

… I would describe optimism in my school as VERY good with most of the staff, I have one member of staff that has a black cloud over their head … facing change can have a detrimental effect on her optimism.

School 7

… I found myself telling staff "you have to be optimistic". I don't feel I'm going to persuade them.

School 8

Yes, and they sign a code of conduct abiding by the aims – "all staff will be positive and optimistic about what children can achieve."

INT: Are you generally optimistic as a person?

P1: (Slight pause) … No. I don't think I am.

School 9

We've had a real problem with keeping staff morale high. Where I'd say we are lacking in optimism, is possibly one or two LSAs that tend to take a more pessimistic view of lots of things … so, we've got five teachers here that are actually very optimistic.

School 10

… I always try and promote an optimistic feel in the school. As regards optimism being linked to school performance, I think that the two are tied, because if you have an optimistic outlook on life, you are more ready to give it a go.

Summary

In summary the head teachers view their schools as optimistic, except school 7 in which the head teacher expresses that not being optimistic. There is a distinction emerging between an individual optimism and group optimism. Pessimism as the opposite of optimism is also identified. The optimistic approaches illustrated will have implications on organisational commitment and performance which will be explored in Chapter 5. The views offered also identify the group level dynamic of optimism in schools. It is interesting to note that the common view is that schools are places of optimism and it is a behavioural asset in the view of head teachers in this thesis.

Theme 2: Commentary on the associated link with optimism and school performance and or a successful school

Question: What are your thoughts on optimism being linked to school performance?

School 1

P1: They can relax a little bit and be optimistic, and sometimes that then obviously impacts on perhaps their performance within the school, they don’t have to perform as much or strive to improve things within school setting.

INT: Do you think raising standards impacts on optimism? Does optimism change around standards, then?

P1: Yes, I think they do, but you have to support people in different way, and that's what I've tried to do.

School 2

INT: So do you agree with the statement that optimism is an underlying characteristic of school performance?

P1: Definitely. Yes. I think that when you're optimistic, you set the tone for the school. You set your targets high; I tell my staff they can do great things and it just makes everyone succeed.

P1: If it's an optimistic school, I'll guarantee it's a happy school. Happy children enjoy their learning, and happy learning moves to better standards, higher standards, and wanting to achieve.

School 3

INT: So how would you describe your school in terms of optimism? Are you an optimistic school?

P1: Yes, we're very optimistic. We like to try and get the best out of the children, seeing the best in the child, so yes, I would say we are an optimistic school.

School 4

INT: Do you think optimism links to your school's current performance?

P1: I think it does. We could be doing better, possibly trying to push harder, it's trying to push that average higher, which is our next challenge.

School 5

INT: Quite right. So do you think an optimistic school is a successful school?

P1: Yes, absolutely.

School 6

INT: Do you think optimism is an underlying characteristic of a successful school?

P1: (Pause). Yeah, I think it helps to be optimistic. There are, obviously, a couple of teachers on the staff that are pessimistic and moan a lot, that is pessimism, and it doesn't help – so, optimism, yes – it does help.

School 7

INT: So do you think optimism is a characteristic of a successful school?

P1: I believe it is, because if you've got staff who … OK, we'll give it a go, we'll give it a try … if you can evaluate yourself properly and say, look, it sounded good but it didn't work, then there's no point in doing it, so you've really got to be optimistic about giving something a go, willing to try, but also willing to say OK, that didn't work, and leave it go.

School 8

INT: So did you think the underlying characteristic of a successful school is optimistic?

P1: Absolutely. As a Head I would I just want to have a team of people who are just willing to give things a go and believe.

School 9

INT: OK. So do you think that optimism is an underlying characteristic of a successful school?

P1: Yes.

INT: Optimistic schools are successful schools?

P1: Yes, definitely.

School I0

INT: That's optimism, OK? In your experiences, you said that optimism was linked to successful school performance.

P1: Yes. I do think optimism is an underlying characteristic.

Summary

These participant responses indicate that these head teachers view optimism as an important influence when considering the performance of the school. Again, there is an emerging distinction between individual and group level optimism. In the literature this can be identified as state versus trait optimism. The counter to optimism emerges again as pessimism in one response which reflects the duality of the concept of optimism. There is an interesting aspect to these comments in that there is a suggestion that an optimistic school which performs well is linked to other staff's organisational citizenship behaviours. This will be expanded on in the next chapter.

Theme 3: Commentary on cultivation of optimistic behaviours

Question: As a head teacher are you conscious of the need to cultivate optimistic behaviours in your school? How do you facilitate this?

School 1

P1: I consider myself to be a positive person. I try to be on an even keel when I come in and that's been commented on by some of the staff.

School 2

INT: How do you personally facilitate this?

P1: We discuss things and we discuss things as a whole school. We're a very strong team. No-one is every wary about saying how they feel. They are also very genuine about what they feel.

P1: I try and pick up on people who are not optimistic, because I feel I've got a very positive nature and I think it's important for the staff to understand that as well and for them to realise – yeah, well if this doesn't work we will tweak it, we'll take it this way – I think it's important that they have confidence in themselves, can say honestly how they feel without fear of anyone …

School 3

INT: What do you do to keep the optimism going?

P1: We try, where possible, to have a walk around at least once a day to show face within the class and ask what people are doing.

School 4

P1: I create optimism myself, as my role as Head. That's how I do it. I create that atmosphere and it's my mission to do that. That's what I like to do, and it rubs off.

School 5

P1: I think everybody comes to every staff meeting. We all meet together. We all talk together … they become more and more optimistic, that they are contributing to raising our standards within the school.

School 6

P1: That's it, I'm still struggling a bit with how to, that's why I've said I … it's written in the policy, it's written in the code of conduct … I have brought staff in and said "you are expected to be positive and I've heard you walking down the corridor picking up on all the things the children are doing wrong – we've now had training that says you must try this many positive statements before you do a negative one"… when I'm near and they know that I'm there and they kind of put on an act …

School 7

P1: Through performance management. All staff are able to identify things that they feel they are low at or that they don't know.

P1: Optimism is expected in my school, so I think by having an opportunity to have your say … if you don't agree with something … at least it's listened to.

School 8

P1: We try to keep optimistic by being happy around each other.

School 9

P1 I think that as a head teacher it's better to be optimistic rather than the opposite. It's a bit of an act somedays …

School 10

P1: It's a balance, somedays I don't feel or behave optimistically … the pressure we are under to perform well, listen to lots of problems, and cajole staff can sap any optimism you might bring to school … some days are better than others … a balance.

Summary

Individual and group properties are emerging in these comments. These comments are developing a contribution to knowledge in that they are indicative of organisational citizenship behaviours (OCB). It is my view that these are antecedents to all three aspects of the collective group construct AO. The literature identifies that OCB seeks to understand work-based behaviours that link to organisational effectiveness. OCB is regarded as extra effort and cannot be insisted on by the head teacher but must be fostered within the school. One respondent mentions a process by which some control of these behaviours is manifested through school based performance management. Interestingly and uniquely one respondent identifies counter-workplace behaviours, termed CWB, in that staff put on an act when they are around. In the literature there is reference to OCB linked to leadership behaviours, particularly the group

acceptance of goals. It would suggest that this school does not accept these leadership goals. OCB and CWB have been linked and oppose each other. These constructs are likely to be so strongly negatively related that they may be considered “opposites”. OCB will be increased when CWB is decreased, and vice versa. This research will establish what kind of OCB, CWB are evidenced in the head teachers’ views of their schools and the consequences on AO for these schools.

Theme 4: Can optimism be fostered and taught? Head teachers’ view

School 1

INT: You’re a positive person, but can you teach optimism?

P1: Yes. No.

INT: You don’t think so?

P1: No, I don’t think so.

Some people cannot leave – excuse the term, baggage – at the school gate and come in. Some people just carry it with them and I can read some of those people now within school setting.

INT: Which impacts on everybody’s collective optimism, doesn’t it?

P1: Yes.

School 2

P1: I think that if you are trying to develop a school that has an optimistic nature and I think if the staff are all immersed in that, it’s bound to happen.

School 3

P1: I think fostered … I don't think you can teach it … I think it's the ethos of the school, the ethos of the teachers, the ethos of the Head Teacher ... as opposed to it's too easy to be doom and gloom.

School 4

P1: …if someone, for example, isn't willing to change in the first place, just working alongside them, eventually they see that change is a good thing and they're willing to move forward with you.

INT: It rubs off.

P1: Yeah.

INT: What examples can you give of those conditions, particularly the conditions around optimistic behaviour?

P1: It's an optimistic school. First of all you've got to lead by example, so you've got to be an optimistic person yourself. Relationships have got to be good.

INT: Do you think optimism can be taught? Clearly you think it can be fostered by sharing values.

P1: Fostered, yes.

INT: But do you think you can teach people to be optimistic?

P1: Yes, I think you can ... if you don't think that something's going to work … then you're not going to lead from the front, you're not going to be an optimistic person, you're not going to set the right standards or values, are you?

School 5

INT: Do you think optimism can be fostered or taught?

P1: I think optimism can be … I think it can be both … I think it can be fostered and I think it can be taught. I think you can teach optimism by leading from the front. I think you can teach optimism by telling people to be optimistic. I can create optimism through my optimism as a head teacher, and it becomes infectious.

School 6

P1:…we have always set performance management targets for all our staff, including support assistants, and if you know a support assistant has got strengths in an area and you ask them to do that and they achieve, then I think you can get them to be more optimistic. It's building their self-esteem.

P1: So I think you can foster it by praise, by success, by creating success for them, as well as trying to stretch them.

School 7

INT: So do you think that you can teach optimism to people?

P1: Yeah, I would have thought so.

School 8

INT: So how do you do that? How do you enable optimism in your school? What do you do?

P1: I model good behaviour, I model an optimistic approach, I don't accept things that are … so things like that are challenged - pessimistic behaviour and "can't do" attitudes. "Can do" attitudes are cultivated in the children and staff.

School 9

P1: The first thing is to be very optimistic – whatever we talk about, try and put an optimistic side to it, rather than come in on the doom and gloom – just be fairly optimistic ourselves … if somebody's done something well, give them a pat on the back.

School 10

P1: I think you can demonstrate an optimistic outlook. I am not sure you can teach someone to be optimistic … you feel optimistic … you can model it or create conditions to make optimism a feeling in the school … how can you teach a mood?

Summary

Around half of the response indicates that optimism can be fostered, and around half, taught. This is critical in that the literature identifies that optimism can be learned at an individual (teacher) and group (school) level. This research pursues the idea that AO will be impacted on by organisational commitment. This is a particularly important aspect of this thesis. Current educational curriculum reform and OECD 2017 recommendations around schools developing as learning organisations need to have commitment at all levels to ensure the implementation of new ideas and initiatives. The literature identifies three distinct types of commitment; affective, continuance and normative commitment; all three influence work performance and staff well-being. There are a range of identified factors that impacts on staff commitment to a school organisation. These are: belief in goals, optimistic cultures, support, culture and norms and age. In this research on AO time served was identified as an

important value to capture in the analysis. In this research 35% of the staff had over 15+ years of service in the same school, whilst 31 % had between 5-10 years of service. A majority of the staff surveyed have spent a considerable amount of time in the same organisational culture, an important aspect to consider when the literature identifies commitment as the psychological state that binds individuals to an organisation. Personality traits like optimism and organisational commitment are correlated. I have served as a teacher, deputy head, and head teacher for 23 years and not once in the five schools that I have worked in have any of these aspects been considered.

Theme 5: Collective Efficacy, Head teacher perspective of the group attribute

School 1

P1: The collective belief, the message I'm sending out, is that of the mission statement of the school, basically.

School 2

P1: Our collective belief, basically, is in our motto "Reach for the Stars".

INT: Motto, OK.

INT: So again, that's shaping a group belief, isn't it?

P1: Yes.

INT: Amongst the children and parents and in the community.

P1: Yes.

INT: OK. So the motto "Reach for the Stars" is the collective belief around that?

P1: Yes.

INT: Question 6 – How do you build and shape the collective belief, in view of your dealing with different groups within your school? I suppose it's based on the fact that it's a simple motto, isn't it?

P1: It is. It's not rocket science.

School 3

P1: I think a motto is as good as the piece of paper it's written on. You can have a motto, but it's what you're doing about it is the most important bit, or the vision which is being bandied around these days. I think collectively, as a staff, it's trying to incorporate everybody and it's difficult sometimes, because you're incorporating teaching assistants.

INT: OK. Do you think the collective belief amongst the LSAs is different to the teachers?

P1: With some … I'd say some are very, very enthusiastic … others, I think it's seen as a job and being involved in education – it's a vocation, it's not a job.

School 4

P1: The collective belief here is that the children are central to everything that we do… we believe it's our role as the staff within the school to work with parents, in partnership with parents, and each other, to make sure that our children thrive in this environment.

School 5

P1: Is it me, as the Head? I don't know. I think, to a certain extent, you've got have a leadership style that does create … leadership style creates an atmosphere in the school – it creates a level from which everybody looks up to,

it creates a very good (pause) place to work, basically. You can create that as a leader.

School 6

P1: I think the collective belief in this school is that we know that we do, the majority of the time, all work together. We get on with each other … that we all aim for the same thing.

School 7

INT: OK. I'm looking interested in this collective belief that there's a collective efficacy at whole school level. What do you think it might mean in your school? You mentioned motto – that's your motto there, is it?

P1: Yeah.

INT: Is that your motto?

P1: Yes, it is. All members of (unclear speech – sounds like "group") Primary School Community work together with great optimism and belief that all people can achieve great things in life, and that's key.

School 8

P1: So as I said, yes, I do think there is a collective belief and that is that we shall respect each other and others.

INT: Very interesting point – so respect others and yourselves, yeah? OK. And you'll deal with that robustly if that's not the case, then?

P1: Yes.

School 9

P1: I would have thought the most important collective belief for us is the school is a safe haven for pupils.

School 10

P1: Our collective belief is based on our motto … although I think the demands of the day to day make it difficult to enact … maybe we should revisit it more often … make it more prominent in our thinking.

Summary

The participants' responses are varied and are expressed around individual and group level characteristics. Pupils and mottos feature in these responses for several of the head teachers' thinking.

The literature ascertains that people work together around organisational goals interacting with one another. This process will involve sharing beliefs about the collective and its ability to perform well. This research will establish how head teachers impact on collective efficacy which is relevant in view of the current changes schools are expected to deliver across Wales. The construct of collective efficacy is important to understand when considering organisational performance and collective work engagement.

<u>Theme 6: Trust</u>

School 1

P1: For me, I have to trust my staff because they perform within the classroom every single day … they're professionals as far as I'm concerned and they're

here to do a day’s work and there’s that trust element. So it’s all about trusting them in the day, because I’m not able to follow every single one on a day to day basis.

INT: Generally, as a group, then, your staff trusts each other?

P1: I think so, yes.

School 2

INT: So what do you think the difference between trust and respect is, because you’ve just said two things that are known to be key components of trust.

P1: I think they all build on each other.

P1: No, and you can’t have trust instantaneously. Trust is something that’s built on over the years, because once someone trusts you, it means that you haven’t let them down and they haven’t let you down … very often if the trust has been broken you can build a bridge which is a stronger bridge than was there before because we’ve understood, perhaps, the weakness in each other.

School 3

INT: Think of yourself now, which one are you?

P1: (Pause, sigh). I think probably honest and open.

INT: Yes.

P1: Sometimes a little bit too much, but I try to involve the staff so that they know what’s going on in the school as far as budgets and things like that.

INT: Can you think of an example when you’ve been benevolent?

P1: (Pause). No.

School 4

P1: It's trust, yes, and I think you get that sense of satisfaction at the end of it, as well. I couldn't have done it without them and they knew that, and I told them that, each and every one of them.

P1: For me as a person I am reliable, honest and open, really.

INT: OK. What about benevolent? Have you ever been benevolent?

P1: (Pause) I wouldn't say it was one of my strengths, no. I'm more of a … no, I'm probably not benevolent, no.

School 5

P1: Yeah, that hasn't happened yet, but the trust has been broken with a couple of members of staff, but it's been re-built.

INT: As the Head, do you still invest the same amount of trust in that person, or are you a little cautious round them?

P1: I'm a little cautious, but I'll stick to my guns. I always say to my staff that I work on give and take. I work on trust, and you know … well, I would say honest and open – that would describe me. Honest and open, because that's what I am with my school, with my teachers.

School 6

P1: I think it's trust in each other. Looking at the data as well, everybody trusts each other, then they talk to each other. We share information; we've got the same aims … so I think that if we trust each other and we can rely on each other, then we become reliable ourselves, because we will make sure that we're reliable and we're honest and we're competent, because everybody else is.

P1: I would hope that I'm as benevolent with one as the other as and when it's needed. I would hope that I don't treat teaching assistants and teachers differently when it comes down to the nitty gritty.

INT: So as a head, then, you said trust is the key in terms of what we're discussing. Can you think of an example of when your trust has been completely shattered by somebody? How you've dealt with that at a personal level?

P1: Yes, it's a past episode whereby there was a question of competency, there was a question of honesty, there was a question of openness … I think that they did resent it and I know that the atmosphere within the school definitely changed when that person left.

School 7

I feel I'm very open and honest with them and when there's issues that need … yeah, I would say between those … open and honest.

INT: OK.

P1: Which I am and as I say, I bring staff in and explain what the issue is and what I expect.

INT: That's fine – open and honest.

P1: Yeah, and I think I'd be reliable. I think they know if anybody comes to me with an issue, it would be dealt with.

INT: Can you think of an example where your trust has been completely broken in this school? Where you've trusted someone to do something – you don't have to tell me who it is – but you've invested a lot of trust. Do you invest trust in people?

P1: Yes.

INT: Do you trust your staff?

P1: I feel I can say I've invested a lot of trust…

INT: What about the other way?

P1: Yeah, the other way – I just sometimes – I decide whether or not I'm going to be able to step back and let it happen and if I decide that this person hasn't proved to me that they're going to be able to do this, then I just have to keep checking … a few years ago, realised that she hadn't marked a bunch of the books that were going into it, and I was mortified.

INT: It's interesting you should say that, because the research says that you can have your trust violated twice, so that's a professional trust, isn't it?

P1: Yes.

INT: That's very untrustworthy, isn't it?

P1: It's artful.

I told her I had an issue with the marking I wanted to discuss, she came in with a confused expression, we looked through the books, everything was marked, so I sat down and I showed her photos of the books the day before which hadn't been marked for like, nine, ten, weeks and I said "can you explain this" and she just … tears and all the rest of it …

INT: But you had to take photographs of her work.

P1: I took photos of all the work unmarked, because I knew that when she knew that I wanted to talk to her about it, it would be back-marked, and I had to sit down and show her.

INT: Do you trust that person?

P1: Oh no, not at all.

School 8:

INT: Trust and school performance – so high levels of trust, high performance schools, or low levels of trust, low performance schools, or none of the above. What do you think?

P1: None of the above. I think it depends on the quality of the staff and sometimes you inherit staff that you wouldn't have appointed yourself and are not of the right calibre.

INT: Do you still trust them?

P1: Sorry?

INT: Do you still trust them if they're not of the right calibre? They're not competent?

P1: You trust them to identify their needs. You show them what levels you expect, and then you hope that they will float to the top with training. If not, with negative behaviour, then that has to be addressed.

P1: Yes. Trust will be broken if somebody wasn't working for the whole. They know the expectations.

INT: Does that build trust in the school?

P1: Because people know what is expected.

INT: OK. So you're suggesting that trust and standard and expectations are related?

P1: They are.

INT: OK, so there are no examples in your headship here where your trust has been broken?

P1: Yes. I was absolutely gutted

INT: Did you feel vulnerable when that person came in and dropped that in your …?

P1: I was feeling most aggrieved and totally pissed off, to be honest.

P1: Yes, as did this person, but what she has done has weakened my trust between me and her ... so being challenged on something that is beyond my control is rather unfair.

INT: Are you suggesting that, by investing your trust … it's a huge thing to give away …?

P1: It is.

INT: You're expecting a reciprocal …

P1: Yes, I am.

School 9

OK. You've mentioned trust in your school and school performance, have you?

P1: Hmmm hmmm.

INT: What do you do to build trust? You've mentioned investing in people, and you've given an example of this broken - when your trust was broken by those two people.

INT: So in terms of going back to the definition of trust – benevolent, reliable, competent, honest – which one are you of those five that's your kind of preferred style?

P1: (Pause) … I like to be honest with everyone. If it means tearing them apart to be honest, then I won't do that, so there's a benevolent bit there. I always try – if I've said I'll do something – then I try and do it.

INT: Do you have a group of highly trusted individuals in your school?

P1: Yes.

INT: Then you go them to discuss difficult trust issues, then?

P1: Yes.

INT: So they're actually, in a way, protecting your faculty trust, aren't they?

P1: Yes.

INT: But you've never become vulnerable to elicit trust?

P1: I've got it wrong.

INT: Well, yes, I always say … I get it wrong … and I do get it wrong.

INT: OK. Another thing I wanted to talk about – so high levels of trust, high levels of student achievement – OK?

P1: Yes, they feel trusted…

INT: They trust each other (unclear speech).

P1: Yes, that makes sense.

INT: So you would agree with that statement?

P1: Yes.

School 10

P1: Generally, I trust my staff … I cannot be all things to all men … and I cannot teach every one myself … they are trusted to do their jobs. There are those I trust more than others based on my time with them. A school cannot function without professional behaviour and trusting each other. It's when you don't have trust that things get difficult.

Summary

The participants' responses on trust, trust violations and actions are rich and descriptive and reflect the literature which is also rich and descriptive. Overall, the head teachers clearly identify with the construct and its antecedents. Reduction of control, intentionality and risk reduction, effectiveness of the faculty, trust violations, and resonance with the adopted definition of trust in

schools in this research is evidenced. The relational aspect of trustor/trustee and the processes involved are complex. Again group level and individual characteristics of trust emerge. There is clear evidence of trust types in these transcripts which will be explored with the literature in Chapter 5. For clarity Stappenen et al. (2007) model of inter-organisational trust will be referenced to identify how faculty trust impacts on AO and how the head teachers need to be mindful of the constituent parts of inter-organisational trust, i.e. beliefs, decisions and actions they demonstrate in school.

Theme 7: Academic Emphasis. Head teacher views on the construct which is the collective drive for school improvement

School 1

INT: It's the lowest in the range, so why do you think that is?

P1: Well, for me, again it's to do with the change, making sure that everybody is on board and appreciates their role within the school. Everyone has a clear goal.

School 2

P1: I think that we possibly have our expectations too low. I think we need to raise our expectations. We're not pushing the children hard enough … I think change is not helping. That doesn't help, because so many things have been thrown at schools to deliver… you name it, we have to do it … as a school.

School 3

P1: I don't know, because it's really important to us to drive standards. It's the core thing.

INT: Is it more important than these two?

School 4

P1: No, I think probably you're right. From my point of view, those are the two things that I've concentrated on mostly in the first few years of headship, getting those things right so that we can build (unclear speech – sounds like "a class and improve") on standards then.

P1: Standards are important, obviously – everything's got to lead to raising standards, but I don't think you're going to get high standards without the other two being in place.

INT: Yeah, I see your faculty trust was very high, your scores are very high, and your collective efficacy was very high. You're alluding, perhaps, to your faculty trust being the most important …

P1: Yeah, possible …

School 5

INT: Is one of those more dominant in your school, or are all three about the same and have … do you think anyone is more important …?

P1: I would think that …

INT: In rank or order.

P1: I think that's a very difficult question because situations and atmosphere, perhaps, or pressures in the school are not always on the same level playing field, so all the situations are different ... they just pop their heads up when need be.

School 6

P1: Personally, I think a lot of questions such as that and looking at the background of the children, coming from deprived backgrounds to the school and therefore, our expectations of the children, the children we know, I think that's got an impact on those low scores.

School 7

P1: I've got a feeling we were fighting for survival, fighting future cuts was possibly an issue. It's difficult, and just keeping morale up.

School 8

P1: School improvement, that's what this is? I think it's a bit more complex than the drive for standards. The point being it usually rests on the head teacher to account for performance of the school yet it's everyone's responsibility to drive those improvements.

School 9

P1: I think it's a bit low because we are all feeling a bit flat after our recent core visit review … always being told to do more, improve this … look at that … it's tiring.

School 10

P1: We have a low score? OK, we need to improve then ... simple.

Summary

The literature defines academic emphasis (AE) as a collective belief that teaching and learning is the core purpose of a school. It is the extent a school is driven by academic performance. The literature notes that high levels of AE equate with effective learning environments and teachers have confidence in the ability of all staff. For AE to be an effective construct the literature posits that the head teacher must be optimistic and promote a serious and ordered school with high goals and expectations. AE reinforces collective belief that benefits the school. High levels of AE define a purposeful school that enhances learning. The response to the question posed is diverse and suggestive of difference in the OCB in these schools specifically around engagement and external factors that impact on the OCB. This will be addressed in Chapter 5. Change, clarity of goals; expectations apply rules and regulations; expectations, time catchment and external factors, e.g. cuts, are offered by these head teachers for their academic emphasis scores. The literature on job motivation and commitment recognises that people who are engaged in their jobs are committed to their organisation. However, organisational commitment is different from engagement in that it references a person’s attitude to the organisation. Engagement is not an attitude; it is a choice.

CHAPTER 5

Discussion

Introduction

Research context and question:

The research question is:

What are the aspects that influence the second order latent construct termed AO, and its antecedents in a sample of primary schools in a specific geographical area, Llanelli?

5.1 Aims

The aim of this research is to generate an understanding of the construct termed academic optimism and how the utility of this second order latent construct can be used to understand the culture within a school; specifically what characteristics of cognitive, affective and behavioural conditions impact on the school from the viewpoint of head teachers as school leaders.

It will also examine the components of academic optimism (A0) through a Likert survey instrument and semi-structured interviews with head teachers across eight sample schools in a specific geographical region of West Wales. I will capture their views on the antecedents and conditions in their school that specifically influence this construct. This thesis aims to explore the subtle nuances that exist in the relationships in schools between the staff. It also will examine emergent themes through semi-structured interviews with head teachers. Academic optimism has been identified as having an impact on the norms in a school (Guvercin, 2013; Smith and Hoy 2007), and as such head teachers "may be able to replicate success by facilitating beliefs in student excellence and the resilience to persevere through

setbacks" (Ruyle, 2014, p.35). Malloy (2012) develops this theme, stating that AO can be utilised to shape the culture of any school leading to improved student success.

Conclusions from the findings in Chapter 4 are explored and four emergent themes detailed and are offered to explain the influences on the construct termed AO in the literature. A reflection and implications of the work are considered against the current WG policy strategy of developing schools as learning organisations in Wales. The limitations of the study are then considered and future research opportunities are identified.

In deliberation of the results chapter, four reference will be made to the discussions on optimism, organisational commitment, organisational citizenship behaviour, leadership and collective efficacy and trust will be used to frame the interview responses. This will contribute to knowledge in that it will provide a lens through which schools can be viewed as the school develops into learning organisations.

The thesis purpose was to apply the sample survey instrument in eight different primary schools to establish if the construct could be identified. The study seeks to identify through quantitative and qualitative research methods not only the existence of AO but to move beyond into the antecedents of the construct.

The objectives of the study are:

To examine the three elements of the construct interaction and to establish if there is a developing dominance or bi-directional relationship evident from the results.

- What factors emerge and underlie the construct?
- What are the views on AO and its principle components from the head teachers of the schools in this research?
- To evaluate the antecedents of AO and the interplay of these factors on a school.

In this thesis it is acknowledged that as a second order latent construct, AO is difficult to measure. Concepts based on trust, optimism and beliefs are cognitive and affective components of AO and are not easily malleable. Collective efficacy is a group level dynamic that affects all aspects of a school but as a cognitive agent it is difficult to label and identify. Academic emphasis has tangibility about it and in schools, interventions that remediate this are evident and measurable.

This section will seek to offer meaning to the quantitative aspects of the findings. Additionally the comparative case study interviews with the head teachers will offer insight into the components of AO and associated antecedents. This will form the structure of this chapter.

5.2 Quantitative Findings

The utility of the construct AO that was being tested in this aspect of the thesis was centred on the application of the survey instrument across three distinct groups, specifically head teachers, teachers and LSAs in the sample schools. This has not been investigated before. Academic optimism is part of the culture of the school

(Hoy and Miskel 2008; Woolfolk Hoy, Hoy and Kurz 2008). At a collective level the construct has been examined across teachers and principals. In this research I have included learning support assistants (LSAs) primarily because they represent 34% of the sample population in this study. They too will be influenced by those affective components of academic optimism. This research offers a contribution to knowledge by including all those involved in a school that are able to effect academic emphasis, ultimately influencing school performance. Hoy, Tarter, and Woolfolk Hoy (2006a) indicate that to increase school academic optimism, there needs to be an associated improvement in those factors that influence the collective property of the construct. Barth (1990) identified the principal (head teacher) as a pivotal factor in a good school. Quality of teaching, ethos, professional development of teachers and staff depend on the head teacher. Head teachers have direct influence on school academic optimism.

In the quantitative analysis of the survey data, Principle Factor Analysis (PFA) was used to determine if one of the components of AO could be determined as more dominant than the other components. In the PFA returns there emerged a loading of significance on one of the factors relating to trust in schools. The rationale for this was based on the literature which consistently identifies that intra-organisational trust is a significant and reliable variable in building relationships, performance and organisational performance. Trust is keystone behaviour in a school. This research acknowledges this previous research and seeks to gain new knowledge by asking head teachers about the results and their understanding of the three components of AO as they are presented through the survey instrument results.

This research's aim in gaining a greater understating of the AO construct and its utility in understating the culture of a school sought the views on head teachers' optimism. Optimism is described in the development of AO as a unifying concept. At a theoretical level optimism is identified as a strategy for improvement. Optimism was an additional factor in successful outcomes; conversely, pessimism is defined as an inhibitor and leads to a sense of futility. In a school a pessimistic view could be damaging to the performance of the staff and impact on standards.

AO as a construct views staff as capable, learners as willing, and supportive parents are relevant. In the interviews, the head teachers are asked for their view on optimism, behaviours around optimism and whether it could be fostered or taught. The explanation of their responses referenced the literature on optimism, organisational commitment, and organisational citizenship behaviour. In the transcripts all except one head teacher describes their schools as being optimistic and related the construct to performance. This is a key finding in that the school leader influences the culture and ethos. Head teachers are highly influential in getting staff to emotionally commit to the school. This transaction is pivotal in aligning individuals to the goals of the school and their belief in their own capabilities to reach these goals as an individual and collectively. Head teachers need to be positive thinkers and may have to prescribe optimism.

If head teachers prescribe optimism because they believe it can improve performance, then they would be most likely to prescribe optimism in the presence of goals to perform. In a school, goals are explicitly identified as priorities in an annual statutory School Development Plan (SDP). Performance becomes prominent when implementing a decision. In a school the head teacher is the

principle decision maker. Hoy (2012) identifies the principal, “as the intellectual leader of the school … in which academic success is the dominant goal.” Establishing what optimism is like in a school from the head teacher point of view is crucial. There are two specific aspects of prescribed optimism which are important in the school context because head teachers are directly responsible for both aspects, termed organisational commitment and self-efficacy.

5.3 Organisational Commitment

Researchers have noted the effect that commitment has on the successful performance of an organisation (Nehmeh, 2009). Givens (2008), for developing organisational commitment among employees; head teachers should try to develop motivation of their staff to do something, and nurture the thinking that they do have the capability to realise the goals. There are three types of organisational commitment: (Mowday et al., 1997; and Meyer and Allen, 1993) identify affective commitment as the emotional attachment, identification, and involvement of employees with organisation and goals; secondly, (Reichers, 1985) identifies continuance commitment as the willingness to remain in an organisation and normative commitment is the feeling of a person’s obligation to organisation (Bolon, 1993). Each one of these three identified characteristics resonates with the school as the organisational form in this thesis and would be important antecedents to collective efficacy as a component of AO. The three types of organisational commitment are foundational antecedents of collective efficacy.

Luthans and Youssef (2007) identify that organisational commitment is positively related with hope, optimism, and resilience; conversely Hurter (2008) and Sinha, Talwar, and Rajpal (2002) found self-efficacy as a positive correlate of

organisational commitment. Self-efficacy has an influence on each aspect of organisational commitment which, in turn, will influence the collective efficacy measured within the school.

Cetin (2011) confirmed the effect of positive psychological capital (hope, self-efficacy, optimism, resilience) on the attitude of organisational commitment and job satisfaction. Self-efficacy is a person's feeling about himself that he can perform any work by utilising his abilities or actions. Bandura (1995); self-efficacy is the belief in one's capabilities in order to perform work. Low self-efficacy promotes undesirable feelings about one's abilities and responsibility for one's own performance. This would be unwanted in a school in which it is individual and collective attitudes that make schools function effectively.

5.4 Self-efficacy and Optimism are Predictors of Organisational Commitment

The literature identifies a relationship between self-efficacy and organisational commitment and supports the concept of self-efficacy as a significant factor of organisational commitment. Sinha, Talwar, and Rajpal (2002) explored the relationship between organisational commitment and self-efficacy and organisational commitment was positively related with self-efficacy. Hurter (2008) identified that professional commitment of teachers and LSAs, for example, (which is conceptually similar to the organisational commitment) was positively related with self-efficacy.

Shahnawaz and Jafri (2009) researched psychological capital (which includes psychological capacities of self-efficacy, optimism, resilience, and hope) as a predictor of organisational commitment amongst public and private sector

organisation. This is suggestive of a controlling role of optimism or optimistic head teachers in the relationship of self-efficacy and organisational commitment. By modelling optimistic behaviour head teachers reinforce organisational commitment, even if they are not internally optimistic. This is evidenced strongly in the transcripts in Chapter 4 in Theme 1, Theme 3, and Theme 4

Lai et al. (2004) identifies that a positive relationship exists between types of qualification and organisational commitment, where professionally qualified employees exhibited higher levels of organisational commitment. This is also reflected in the transcripts commentary and could explain the majority of responses from the head teachers about being optimistic. Head teachers are mandated to achieve the professionally recognised National Professional Qualification for Headship and this supports Lai et al. (2004) relationship between this qualification and head teachers' organisational commitment.

Bogler and Somech's research (2004) acknowledged self-efficacy as an important predictor of organisational and professional commitment. Hurter (2008) acknowledged professional commitment that is conceptually similar to the organisational commitment was positively related with self-efficacy. This research revealed that the employees who have a higher level of self-efficacy have a higher level of employee commitment.

Givens (2008) proposes that leaders should try to increase employees' self-efficacy for the enhancement of their organisational commitment. In the interviews, the views of optimism from the head teachers were sought to see if they demonstrated approaches that built or enhanced self-efficacy. Several responses stated that

optimism is transferable (rubs off) or can be experienced by being immersed in optimism. Roux (2010) found a significant relationship between optimism and self-efficacy, and self-efficacy and work engagement. Karademas, Kafetsios and Sideridis (2007) identified that optimism and self-efficacy were positively related with each other. This thesis identified and confirmed this relationship at school level.

There is noteworthy relationship between optimism and self-efficacy because optimism is the general expectancy in which good consequences opposed to bad consequences happen when faced with problems, whereas self-efficacy is the belief that one can overcome the obstacles in one's way. According to Seligman (1990), self-efficacy leads towards optimism because both can be learned. Head teachers need to focus on increasing the level of their self-efficacy and optimism because both of these aspects lead toward improved group properties and high achieving schools.

Carver and Scheier (1985) emphasise the motivational role of optimism. Optimism is perceived as a constant, functional feature defining a subject's attitude to the world and his or her position in this world (Czerw, 2010). Optimism is associated with self-efficacy, generating optimistic views of the future, with particular behaviours directed at a goal. An optimistic view is a balanced weighing up of the latent cost resulting from the risk-taking involved in their actions. This was the rationale for asking for views on optimism from the head teachers.

5.5 Self-Efficacy

Bandura (1989) believes self-efficacy makes a difference to how people think, feel, and act. Described as applying to a specific domain of activity, there is increasing recognition that individuals can also have a "generalised" level of self-efficacy across a common domain of challenges and tasks, such as the workplace (Parker, 1998). This is important in this research on schools. Self-efficacy can be viewed as a concept of perceived competence (Bandura, 1997). Bosscher and Smit (1998) argue that numerous experiences of failure and success in various domains of an individual's life may also be important to understand how an individual may generate general beliefs about self-efficacy. Generalised self-efficacy is defined by Judge, Erez, Bono, and Thoreson (2002, p.96) as a "judgement of how well one can perform across a variety of situations." Kanfer and Heggestad (1997) suggest that self-efficacy is a motivational state involving the individual's beliefs regarding his/her abilities to perform and succeed at tasks and self-select into challenging tasks across diverse situations which generally reflects how a school functions daily.

The next section, Table 12, takes aspects of the head teacher transcripts and using Bandura, (1997, p3) definition as "beliefs in one's capabilities to organise and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments" and identifies key self-efficacy statements and their primary aspect of that definition. The purpose of classifying the transcript responses was to ascertain if there was a common antecedent to developing individual self-efficacy at school level that is recognised by the head teachers. This is a new and novel approach. Phrases have been identified using key words from the definition: action, belief, and competence. The bold sections are the identified key phrases.

Table 12: An analysis of the self-efficacy statements from head teachers based on Bandura (1997) definition of the concept

P1: Everyone knows that their job is safe…that then obviously impacts on perhaps their performance within the school, **they don't have to perform** as much improve things within school setting. (Action)
P1: **You have to support people in different way**. (Action)
P1: **Yes. You set your targets high; I tell my staff they can do great things** and it just makes everyone succeed. (Action to produce attainments)
P1: If they feel that there's **something not quite working**, they come and speak to me and confidently speak to me you have to have this **openness** going on between the staff. (Belief and organise)
P1: I'm always there to listen to them and that **if I'm wrong I'll admit I'm wrong** and move forward (Perceived competence) …
P1: I think it's important that **they have confidence in themselves.** (Belief)
P1: I think you've got to know your school, **your aims, your visions, your values**. (Belief)
P1: You have to **understand people within school, their beliefs** – some people are going to come with you straight away, some people are going to initiate change, aren't they? (Organise and execute a course of action)
P1: I chose them **because they're good at their job**, not because of optimism. (Competence)
P1: **I go round the school and cover the whole school virtually, and I say good morning to my staff, I always have a smile on my face, I'm always bubbly, I'm always chatty, and I create that atmosphere and it's my mission to do tha**t. (Course of action)
INT: What do you do if you walk round school in the morning and people are being pessimistic, or not mirroring your behaviour?
P1: Even if I know they're **under-performing,** I try and heap praise on them. (Competence)
P1 : I think it raises **their level of understanding** of what is expected (Competence)
P1: **I think it is that if they feel that they have knowledge and understanding of what they're doing, it increases their self-esteem** (Belief)

P1: With the staff, it's really, really difficult, I find it hard to do the same with the staff, to praise tiny little things if staff **are working at such a low level** – do you know what I mean? (Competence).
P1 :**Well … you try and encourage them … it's all too easy to be doom and gloom**, (Belief)
P1: **I tend to praise good work, good attitudes, good behaviour, good learning**. (Competence)
P1 : **They realise what they have to say is valued – not always agreed with – not able and not always doable, but as long as they know they've got a view, I think people are willing to go along with it.** (Belief)

In 2 belief and competence are the dominant antecedents. Table 12 identifies the head teachers' view on how the generalised efficacy manifests itself in their schools. In doing so they are commenting on a collective property which they directly influence. In these comments there are references to praise, being valued, and setting targets high. Head teachers with high efficacy do not defer from the challenge of goals being set for them, referred to as "discrepancy reduction" (Luthans et al., 2007). In schools this is part of the annual performance review process and is mandatory. Bandura and Locke, 2003) also note that self-doubt, scepticism, negative feedback, social criticism can be overwhelming for people with low efficacy, but have minimal impact on successful individuals. Head teachers are regarded as successful in their sphere of influence. (Luthans et al., 2005), optimism was also found to have a significant relationship with performance. Youssef and Luthans (2007) found employees' optimism to be associated to their performance, satisfaction, and happiness. The lack of a significant relationship between optimism and work engagement could be due to the need for optimism to work through the positive construct self-efficacy in order to have an influence on work commitment. This would be a critical organisational role for the head teacher in that they need to cultivate self-efficacy first before they focus on collective efficacy.

School leadership involves the head teachers forming trusting relationships with teachers and support staff. School leadership improvement involves the planned and unplanned processes whereby individuals come to identify the leader role as part of their core self-concept (Chan et al., 2005; Gardner, 1993) and achieve self-awareness, balanced processing, relational transparency, and authentic behaviour when enacting that role with teachers and staff (Gardner, Avolio, and Walumbwa, 2005; Ilies et al., 2005). The comments made and identified in Table 12 demonstrate how important it is for head teachers to understand the generalised efficacy in their schools and become part of the self-concept of the staff in those schools.

5.6 A Typology of School-based Optimism

The transcripts from the interviews were analysed so that they could be categorised by optimism types which are identified in the research of positive organisational behaviour (POB). The results are presented with examples from the HT transcripts that align with the typology suggested in the positive organisational behaviour domain. The purpose of this matching was to establish if there is a dominant optimism type in these sample schools.

Dispositional optimism, (Scheier and Carver, 1985) as a global expectation that more desirable things than undesirable will happen in the future. As a personality trait, it is presumed to be stable with and unchanging (Peterson, 2000). For example, one respondent stated:

> … everybody is as optimistic as I am …

Unrealistic optimism (Weinstein, 1989) describes the objective mismatch between the expectations of dispositional optimism and evidence about probability of life events occurring. In a school this would be evidenced as from one head teacher:

> … optimism in my school is VERY good.

The head teacher stresses the VERY with sarcasm. Buchanan and Seligman, (1995) referred to the supposed non-congruence between the certainty of difficulty and the anticipation of experiencing life as more good than bad. Optimism as attributional style views optimism as a style of reasoning about cause. In this study this is demonstrated as by one respondent as:

> … they are very aware of all the problems the children have coming into school … or … it's very important to be optimistic despite the challenges each day.

In this example the reasoning about cause is identified by the HT as the external problems the children experienced outside the school community. Comparative optimism (Radcliffe and Klein, 2002) introduces the expectation of good outcomes for the self-compared with a similar other. Situational optimism refers to the general expectations of a good outcome in a specific context, for example, one response noted was:

> … they're pretty optimistic … to be able to raise academic levels and a good atmosphere across the school.

In that example the good outcomes are twofold. The atmosphere of the school and academic levels; clearly situational optimism.

Strategic optimism (Ruthig et al., 2007) is a denial of risk based on a belief in having control. HT exercises significant control and in the commentary, this was exemplified as:

> … it is important to be as optimistic as possible and to be resilient … running a school can turn from being enjoyable to very difficult quickly … but you must always be professional and explore the next steps with a positive attitude … going forward.

There would be reference to the literature on trait and state optimism, which distinguishes from job related outputs and the latent malleability of an organisational construct termed state. As an example of strategic optimism this head teacher is acknowledging that being as optimistic as possible to influence the state optimism will, in turn, influence outcomes at a future point.

Realistic optimism is defined by Sneider (2001) with reference to Degrandpre (2000) as: 'tendency to maintain a positive outlook within the constraints of the available measurable phenomena situated in the physical and social world'. Exemplified in this HT statement:

> … I always try to promote an optimistic feel in the school … and be as cheerful as possible … if you have an optimistic outlook on life, you are more ready to give it a go … to succeed.

Flyvbjerg (2006) refers to optimism bias as the way evaluation has been shown to be skewed in predictable, positive and egotistical ways. More weight is given to information if it favours the self or it supports a desired conclusion. This HT statement identified very optimistic staff after the realisation that the previous comments are all negative about the staff. The statement was biased to what the HT thought was what the interviewer was expecting to hear.

> …we've got five teachers here that are actually very optimistic and very eager.

Defining optimism is not straightforward and it manifests itself in varying degrees (Peterson, 2000). In this participant response there is an interesting contrast in the comment:

> … I think we're a very optimistic school … I think they're pretty optimistic.

The school is very optimistic as a form and then they (the staff) are pretty optimistic; a difference in that the HT regards the school as being more optimistic than the staff. This suggests the consideration of optimism as an organisational property in this head teacher's thinking and includes other aspects of behaviour outside the staff surveyed, i.e. the pupils or the parents and may be dependent on faculty trust.

Optimism is described in the literature as a 'velcro construct, to which everything sticks' (Peterson, 2000, p.47). Optimism is associated with specific coping styles, goal framing and positive affect. Optimists exhibit attention to positive information and show active engagement; positive reframing and problem solving type behaviours (Carr, 2004). For example,

> … I've got a good team here and the team are particularly bubbly, happy, well-organised in the main …

Conversely, pessimists give more attention to negative information, and show passivity, denial and avoidance. In this interview summary only one head teacher reflected pessimistic traits exemplified as:

> … I'd say we are lacking in optimism, is possibly one or two HLTAs that tend to take a more pessimistic view of lots of things … two of our higher level LSAs actually - that are more pessimistic than I'd wish for.

This participant's comment is unique in that this head teacher offers HLTAs as a feature of the school's staff that influences the optimism throughout the school. The fact that these identified staff as pessimistic are higher level teaching assistants suggests a hierarchy of influence. This influence of a person or person in a negative manner impacting on optimism is also exemplified by:

> … But, I do know that I have one member of staff that has a black cloud over their head … change can have a detrimental effect on her optimism.

The research question seeks to understand the antecedents to the three sub-scales of AO and in doing so will identify the subtlety that the participants recognise as beneficial in being predominantly optimistic as head teachers. Specifically in this discussion and analysis the interviews line by line were conducted and passages of text assigned to corresponding themes from the head teacher responses. The essences of those discussions are used as a contribution to knowledge since qualitative research for interpreting academic optimism is very sparse. (Hoy, Tarter and Woolfolk, 2006). This research aims to fill the gap in understanding the creation of academically optimistic cultures. Schools that function with hope and optimism are successful in reducing the attainment gap between economically diverse pupil populations, (Harris, 2009, Jensen, 2009, and Muhammad, 2015); then a broader understanding of this knowledge is vital for school improvement and pupil achievement.

A review of the head teachers' comments indicates that all of the participants recognised that their schools are optimistic or acknowledged optimism. There are two distinct themes emerging from the narratives. Firstly, the expression of head teachers being optimistic themselves, use of I, a leader, you have to, I always. Secondly, the emergence of optimism as a collective property, e.g. the staff, we

are, all staff, we've got. AO is a second order latent construct and a group property. Optimism is an underlying latent factor of this construct and in these participant narratives distinctly defined at an individual level and group property.

There are wide-ranging definitions of dispositional optimism and pessimism (Chang, Maydeu-Olivares, and D'Zurilla, 1997). Optimism has been defined as (a) the tendency to expect positive outcomes (Kassinove and Sukhodolsky, 1995), (b) the belief that positive events exceed negative ones (Yates, Yates, and Lippett, 1995), or a tendency to look on the bright side of things (Silva, Pais-Ribeiro, and Cardoso, 2004). Pessimism has been defined as failure expectancy (Kassinove and Sukhodolsky, 1995).

The OECD review 2017 Developing Schools as Learning Organisations recognised that a change in mindset from the 2014 OECD review has not transferred into a culture of enquiry, innovation and exploration, 41% of schools from the same sample have not established such a culture to date. The report proposes this is, in part, due to accountability and high stakes assessments leading to a loss of confidence to innovate their teaching practice. Only 63% of Primary Schools reported they had established a culture of enquiry and innovation. A conclusion can be inferred that schools in Wales are not AO; in fact, a majority are pessimistic and expecting to fail.

The changes in attitudes suggest that optimism as a condition for adaption and problem solving is being diminished in schools across Wales. The utility of AO can be used to establish why. In view of the curriculum reform, the National Mission and

Additional Learning Needs legislative reforms 2021, the time is suitable to test AO across Wales as a baseline of organisational commitment to these changes.
Alice (2001) identifies that a positive approach toward problem solving and a variety of decision making will result in innovative and creative results for the organisation. Suresh and Venkatammal (2010) note that climate of an organisation creates conditions which explain behaviour in various roles and responsibilities. They imply that in any organisation, the co-operation, willingness to help colleagues and supporting the employer in that organisation augments the ability of the company to have a positive climate and adapt to demands placed on it. The HT has a responsibility to influence the climate of the school to create that academically optimistic ethos. This is difficult and challenging in which optimistic thinking is a core attribute.

Magnano et al. (2015) states that challenges are faced by a leader to finalise a decision, whilst considering many elements that impact on the organisation. Optimism plays a role in active decision making by the leaders. The optimistic attitude of a leader impacts directly on the decision making capabilities and effectiveness of a leader. Optimistic leaders are adaptive and with restricted resources they have to have the ability to think and get results. This is especially pertinent to the role of the head teacher who needs to be custodian of the school based social processes that develop positive organisational citizen behaviours in all staff groups. Organisational citizenship behaviour is a key concept to be explored, as it is an antecedent to AE.

5.7 Organisation Citizenship Behaviour (O.C.B.)

Tschannen-Moran (2003) described these behaviours as those which help create a school organisation where teachers and administrators “go beyond minimum expected performance” (p.160). For example, a low performing school whose teachers and administrators go above their normal work requirements to construct a system that helps pupils become effective, has a considerable effect in that the school may become high performing when judged by regional consortia, Estyn or peer review.

Identifying which factors nurture OCB could support head teachers to be more cognisant of these specific behaviours and therefore enact them to ensure that they are present or developing in their school. A strategy that directly has OCB impact could lead to the creation of an atmosphere that contributes to increased levels of student success because it goes beyond the minimum expectation. This strategy clearly would directly impact the academic emphasis component of AO

Citizenship behaviours are important because they “lubricate the social machinery of the organisation” (Bateman and Organ, 1983, p.588). These behaviours help provide the flexibility needed to work through challenges which organisations face and enable participants to cope with them as a team. Citizenship behaviours influence organisational performance since they provide an effective means of managing the interdependencies between members of a work unit and, as a result, increase the collective outcomes achieved (DiPaola and Hoy, 2005).

Organ and Ryan (1995) noted that individuals contribute to organisational effectiveness by doing things that are not main task functions but are important

because they shape the organisation and define the social “context” that supports task activities. This is particularly relevant to LSAs who represented over 30% of this research sample in the Likert survey and as a group have a significant influence on the social fabric of a school and are usually responsible for specific discreet learning tasks in the classroom under the direction of the teacher.

Successful organisations have employees who go beyond their formal job responsibilities and give of their time and energy to succeed at the task in hand (DiPaola and Hoy 2005). Van Dyne, Cummings, and Parks (1995) described OCB as work behaviour that holds the potential for long-term organisational achievement. DiPaola and Hoy (2005) wrote that cultivating OCB in schools is like changing the culture of the schools; it is slow and not a simple process. Altering the culture of the school not only depends on defining a need for change, but on how enthused the staff are in accepting the requirement for change. This is the utility of AO in assessing the current status in a school. If staff do not exhibit OCB behaviour within the organisation, then they may not be willing to do what it takes to make the changes to the organisation that are necessary for it to move forward. This will directly impact on the AE of the school and its judged performance from external and internal evaluations of the school’s culture.

DiPaola and Tschannen-Moran (2001) stated that organisational citizenship behaviour is a one-dimensional construct when applied to schools. DiPaola and Tschannen-Moran (2001) also stated that at the elementary and secondary school levels, if the individual OCB level is affected, so is the organisational level OCB. Burns and Carpenter (2008) state that a benefit to the individual is a benefit to the organisation and vice-versa.

DiPaola and Hoy (2005) defined OCB as a bipolar construct. They state: "In other words, both benefits to the organisation (helping the organisation) and benefits to the individual (helping individuals) combine into a single, bipolar construct. The single bipolar construct being that both the organisation and the individual are working together towards the same goal." In service organisations such as schools, both the teachers, LSAs and ancillary staff are committed to what is in the best interest of the client - the students (DiPaola and Hoy, 2005, p.37).

Leaders play an important role in manipulating citizenship behaviour. Podsakoff et al. (2000) noted that "supportive behaviour on the part of the leader was strongly related to organisational citizenship behaviour and may even underlie the effects of perceived organisational support on OCB" (p.532). Somech and Ron (2007) identified that school success depends upon teachers' willingness to give more than expected. Burns and Carpenter (2008) stated that "because citizenship behaviours contribute to the organisation's effectiveness, it is imperative that leaders understand this construct and how to evoke these behaviours" (p.54). School improvement depends on head teachers who can foster the conditions necessary for sustained education reform. Once individual OCB levels increase within an organisation, teachers are more likely to spend additional time and effort in forming structures which help themselves and the school.

Somech and Drach-Zahavy (2000) examined the relationships between extra-role behaviour and three factors: job satisfaction, self-efficacy, and collective efficacy. This research hypothesised that teachers' extra-role behaviours were separated into three levels: the student, the team (their department or grade level colleagues)

and the school as a unit. They also detailed the existence of a relationship between job satisfaction and extra role behaviour as well as a relationship between self-efficacy and extra role behaviour at all three levels. Individuals with high self-efficacy would seek opportunities to enhance their positive self-perception by engaging in extra-role behaviours. It was noted that there was an association between collective efficacy and additional role behaviour. Collective efficacy refers to the individual's calculation of his or her work-team aptitude. Collective efficacy is a collective property of the construct termed AO.

5.8 O.C.B. and Schools

Schools need to develop a culture of working together towards the goal of providing the best education for students. Vigoda-Gadot, Beeri, Birman-Shemesh, and Somech (2007) state that specific types of organisational climate lead to high levels of group OCB; "Schools that encourage norms of mutual-help, voluntarism and social reciprocity may be characterised by higher levels of group OCB" (p.485). An organisational climate measured using AO that encourages collective OCB may increase the number of teachers engaging in individual OCB extra role behaviours to the benefit of the school.

Vigoda-Gadot et al. (2007) suggests that the attainment of schools depends on teachers willing to go above and beyond normal duties to reach the school's objectives and goals. Christ, van Dick, Wagner and Stellmacher (2003) identifies that "for functioning of organisations like schools it is extremely important that teachers engage in extra role behaviours. Such behaviours can provide the organisation with additional resources and help the organisation improve its performance" (p.330). OCB intensifies within a school, when teachers identify

themselves with their teams and schools. Oplatka (2006, 2009) notes that the personal and contextual determinants considered by the teacher group to have some influence on teacher OCB were characterised into three groups; personal, organisational school climate, and leadership.

Oplatka (2006) identified several reasons that influence teachers' OCB. Teachers stated that their personal level of commitment depended on the personal association to their teaching. Teachers that are highly committed reported that a moral responsibility to achieve in the best way they can. A second factor that influences teacher OCB was organisational school climate. Oplatka (2006) postulates that a positive atmosphere, positive collegial interaction, a sense of belonging, established norms in favour of extra-role activities and supportive relationships among staff all positively influenced teachers' OCB level, an AO school.

Oplatka (2006) revealed leadership influences teachers' OCB levels. Leaders that initiate changes and innovation and involve teachers in school decision making are perceived by teachers as implicitly improving teacher OCB. This was clearly evident in several transcript quotations from the head teachers where they stated that they daily check teachers' OCB in school walks and conversations. Several transcripts indicate that the head teacher will challenge negative OCB directly.

AO as a measure would bolster the efforts of head teachers in developing a school culture that is open, honest and benevolent i.e. trusting teachers to enact decisions collectively and as a consequence, stimulating teacher levels of OCB.

DiPaola and Hoy (2005) indicated that a few organisational properties seem to make a difference in school achievement beyond socio-economic status: faculty trust in students and parents, organisational collective efficacy (both teacher and administration), academic emphasis and OCB. “OCB impacts student achievement because teachers reach out to students and colleagues, exert extra effort and are more willing try new approaches to curriculum and instruction” (DiPaola and Hoy, 2005, p.41). DiPaola and Hoy (2005) states that:

> “Teachers who are willing to go the extra mile with students by working with students on their own time and staying after school to help students demonstrates personal responsibility for student achievement and persists in their teaching effort. Such teachers are also more likely to be resilient and to try different curricular approaches and teaching strategies when their regular teaching strategies are not effective” (p.39).

OCB behaviour develops the personal and professional accountability that teachers experience through their students’ success. DiPaola and Hoy (2005) state that:

> “When a critical mass of teachers is engaged in OCB, then the rest will follow” (p.42).

Tschannen-Moran (2003) states: “by delineating and defining these behaviours we can hope to structure an organisation so as to invoke them. Citizenship behaviours contribute to organisational performance because these behaviours provide an effective means of managing the interdependencies between members of a work unit and as a result, increase the collective outcomes.” (p.165).

5.9 OCB’s Effects on Teachers and Learners

DiPaola and Hoy (2005) states:

> “Faculty organisational citizenship behaviour is positively associated with student achievement” (p.39).

DiPaola and Hoy (2005) results of the study reinforced their hypothesis that high levels of OCB increase student achievement. The greater quantity of faculty OCB the higher the level of student achievement.

This conclusion echoes the drive for academic emphasis in that the consequences of greater OCB at school level is a school that innovates, evaluates and adapts the curriculum to meet the needs of all learners. It is a school culture that builds OCB through consensus and trust in the staff. Bogler and Somech, (2005, p.432) identified that, “involvement in decision making processes induces teachers to take on new roles and ‘go the extra mile”

5.10 Positive Organisational Behaviour- a Precursor to School Optimism

The concept termed Positive Organisational Behaviour (POB) (Luthans, 2002a) needs consideration in this chapter. POB focuses on positively oriented human resource strengths that can be measured, developed, and effectively managed towards performance improvement. (Luthans, 2002a, b, 2003; Luthans and Youssef, 2007; Nelson and Cooper, 2007; Wright, 2003). Clearly head teachers should pay due attention to POB in their schools.

Luthans (2002) identifies positive states in relation to work outcomes; they are variable and measurable and have important implications for head teachers. The effects of optimism as a malleable construct (state optimism) contrasted with the effects of the general construct (trait optimism) on job-related outcomes has resonance with schools. Tiger (1979) defines optimism as ‘‘a mood or attitude associated with an expectation about the social or material future—one which the evaluator regards as socially desirable, to his advantage or his pleasure’’ (p.18). Consideration to this HT comment:

… who have I still not bought into yet … I found myself telling staff "you have to be optimistic, that's what the school expects of you" because I'm at the point now, with certain people, I don't feel I'm going to persuade them …

INT: Are you generally optimistic as a person?

P1: (Slight pause) … No. I don't think I am.

The view expressed here counters others offered, in that there is no definitive identification of the school being optimistic - an interesting comment - not buying into yet. This school has the highest proportion of LSAs versus teachers in the study. There are clearly key players in this school that impact on the general levels of optimism which manifests itself as a behaviour issue. There is a compliance approach used to get collective buy in using school policies; this reflects the affective element because the evaluator, HT, determines what is desirable. This self-determining style sets a desired goal, vision and becomes intertwined with motivation. HT acknowledges frustration at aims not being fulfilled and identifies optimism and achievement. This issue is reflected in the collective efficacy scores for the sub-groups in this school. One LSA of 10 -15 years' experience had a score of 3.83. In the transcripts she is identified as a powerful shaper of collective beliefs. Efficacy beliefs influence whether people think erratically or strategically, optimistically or pessimistically. In this quote the HT acknowledges that some staff are not going to be persuaded to adopt the policy aims of being optimistic. Later on the HT goes on to describe this in the following way:

INT: Do you think (name of P1) these people are just generally pessimistic or are they just being difficult, because you're the first person to state in a policy that the expectation is to be optimistic.

P1: Yes, and they sign a code of conduct abiding by the aims – "all staff will be positive and optimistic about what children can achieve."

I'm not asking you to be positive, I'm telling you have to be otherwise, you know … but I still don't want to take away from the day by threatening them and saying, therefore … because that doesn't feel right either, you know what I mean?

This example is reflected in the literature when people choose to shift from optimism for a range of reasons when they are collecting information about the accuracy of their beliefs or responding to undesired outcomes. It also reflects elements of expectancy theory in which people's behaviours align to the identification and adoption of goals across a group. Another HT referred to this shift adding:

> P1: Having had lots and lots of redundancies, obviously we've had a real problem with keeping staff morale high.

The view offered in this quote is that restructuring has an impact on organisational optimism. Luthans (2002) noted that optimism has been referred as both positive emotion and motivation. Luthans, Avolio, Avey and Norman (2007) refers to an individual's competency and positive psychological developmental state towards having an acknowledgment of being successful, now and in the future. In this response the school has had to make staff redundant and this has impacted on the school's view of being successful. Noted is the comment that keeping staff morale high has been difficult. Optimism as a group property is also identified.

> … I've got a good team working here and the team are particularly bubbly, happy, well-organised, in the main, and I think they're pretty optimistic.

This HT associates optimistic character of the school with happy staff, but acknowledges it has pitfalls. This respondent also actively seeks to encourage optimism. The literature identifies that optimistic people are expecting success in their actions, with high self-efficacy and organisational commitment.

> … I create optimism myself, as my role as Head. That's how I do it. I come in, I'm the first in every day, I'm the last to leave at the end of the day, and every day I go round the school and cover the whole school virtually, and I say good morning to my staff, I always have a smile on my face, I'm always bubbly.

This HT suggests he has a regulating role in this school. This HT also links optimism explicitly with performance, the association between being optimistic and trying new approaches equates with achievement. This comment also suggests that if people expect failure they will put less effort into a task. In essence it's in the HT's interests to model optimism. Krizan and Sweeny, (2013); McGraw, Mellers, and Ritov, (2004) identified that the more optimistic people are, the more likely they are to be disappointed when reality falls short of their expectations. Conversely, Wrosch, Scheier, Carver, and Schulz, (2003) acknowledged giving up on an inaccessible goal is good for well-being. This HT's actions are balancing expectations by being optimistic and visibly demonstrating their mood.

In the next section quotations from the interviews are classified by D = Deliberation and I = Implementation based on Gollwitzer, Heckhausen, and Steller, (1990) pre and post-decision phase: deliberation and implementation.Deliberation defines considering several options, and implementation occurs when a head teacher has decided on a sequence of actions and focuses on it. This is an important finding in that it reflects the literature on trustworthy ability of staff and the trusting action/decision of the head teacher. It represents the school culture at the time when the threshold to fully trust is crossed. Knowing at which point the school is on the continuum of intra-organisational trust is useful for head teachers in terms of school strategy.

5.11 Optimism and Performance (Deliberation, D and Implementation, I Phases)

Table 13: Exemplification of the deliberation and implementation phase of optimism from the HT interviews, predominantly exemplifying deliberation phase

A … they can relax a little bit and be optimistic … obviously impacts on perhaps their performance within the school, thinking that perhaps they don't have to perform as much or strive to improve things**.(D)**
B. INT: So do you agree with the statement that optimism is an underlying characteristic of school performance?
P1: Definitely…Yes. I think that when you're optimistic, you set the tone for the school. **You set your targets high.** If it's an optimistic school, I'll guarantee it's a happy school. Happy children enjoy their learning, and happy learning moves to better standards, higher standards. **(D)**
C. I think it does. We **could be doing better**, possibly trying **to push harder**, but we've got a good solid, average standard. **(D)**
D. INT: Quite right. So do you think an optimistic school is a successful school?
P1: Yes, absolutely.
E. Yeah, I think it helps to be optimistic. It does bring people down if you're always moaning all the time, and you're moaning about this, moaning about that. That is pessimism, and it doesn't help – so, optimism, yes – it does help.
F. I believe it is, because if you've got staff who … OK, **we'll give it a go,** we'll give it a try… you've really got to be optimistic about giving something a go, willing to try. **(D)**
G. Absolutely. As a Head I would I just want to have a team of people who are just willing to give things a go and believe … **come on, we can do this**… there are only a few of them. (D)
INT: Optimistic schools are successful schools?
P1: Yes, definitely.
I…I always try and promote an optimistic feel in the school … as regards optimism being linked to school performance, I think that the two are tied, because if you have an optimistic outlook on life, y**ou are more ready to give it a go** and therefore more likely to succeed … Yes. I do think optimism is an underlying characteristic. **(D)**

Table 13 indicates that the HT in this research are predominantly in the deliberation phase based on their responses. This suggests that these HT are mainly

considering several aspects of the school's optimistic culture and its importance in performing well. It is clear that optimistic schools are acknowledged as important. Optimism has important implications for the way in which people explain the causes of events as well as regulate their actions (Scheier and Carver, 1985; Seligman, 1998).

> I consider myself to be a positive person. I try to be on an even keel.

Optimists develop external, varied, and precise reasons for failures; however pessimists' attributions are internal, stable, and general when things go wrong (Seligman, 1998). In this example;

> I'm still struggling a bit with how to, that's why I've said I … it's written in the policy, it's written in the code of conduct … we've now had training that says you must try this many positive statements before you do a negative one … when I'm near and they know that I'm there and they kind of put on an act.

Optimism is ''created, motivated, and developed in relation to the pursuit of personally valuable goals'' (Luthans and Youssef, 2007, p.331). Optimism leads to persistence in goal-directed, including expectancies about outcomes obtained through others, and forces outside the individual (Carver and Scheier, 2002; Luthans and Jensen, 2002). In this extract the HT stated:

> … We all meet together. We all talk together … I think it raises their level of understanding of what is expected and because then they achieve what is expected, they become more and more optimistic, that they are contributing to raising our standards …

Another HT commented:

> …Through performance management. All staff are able to identify things that they feel they are low at or that they don't know. They identify their training needs … optimism is expected in my school, so I think by having an opportunity to have your say …

Staff are able to, through this process, establish and set personal goals. The previous comment also reflects an explanatory mechanism and goal orientation; it is the cognitive and motivational component of optimism that distinguishes it from affect.

> I create optimism myself, as my role as Head. That's how I do it … I create that atmosphere and it's my mission to do that. That's what I like to do, and it rubs off.

Billings, Folkman, Acree, and Moskowitz (2000); Erez and Isen (2002) research indicates state/trait, positive and negative effects. Peterson (2000); Salovey et al. (2000) proposed that the relationship between optimism and performance can be linked to personality. Optimistic individuals believe they have the skills and abilities to cause positive events in their future. The head teacher can be the primary influencer of organisational commitment. One transcript comment noted the HT stating that optimism is a transferable property … *it rubs off*.

5.12 Optimism Promotes Organisational Commitment

In an analysis of the response to the question - could optimism be fostered or taught - a 50/50 response rate was noted. The literature on organisational commitment was explored to see if there are evident antecedents to AO in this construct. Meyer and Allan (1991) in their component model Conceptualisation of Organisational Commitment, proposes that there are three aspects to organisational commitment that are relevant in the context of schools in this research.

Affective commitment is the employee's emotional attachment towards the organisation. The same affective commitment would apply in school across the staff. In this research the views explored with the head teachers on optimism and their school is important. It is important because levels of affective commitment

assume that the employee enjoys the relationship with the organisation and is probably staying with the organisation. This suggests that there would be a link between affective commitment, collective efficacy and academic emphasis. Continuance commitment is the point at which the employee believes that leaving the organisation would be detrimental. Continuance commitment implies the employee will stay with the organisation - obligated to stay. This research identifies this with faculty trust and trust, both of which have intra-organisational facets of trust characterised by belief, decision making and actions.

Normative commitment identified as the degree to which the employee feels obliged to the organisation. The employee believes that they ought to stay. Organisational commitment is the interaction between these three characteristics. Boxall and Macky (2009) state this is experienced in numerous ways and can be accompanied by diverse mindsets including: an affective attachment and connection with the learner, an obligation to the learner, and an awareness of the costs associated with ceasing connection with the learner. In a school this exhibits itself as AO. The importance of organisational commitment is relevant to schools which historically have very static turnover of staff in the primary sector. HT need to understand the complexity of the collective group's commitment to the goals and ambitions of the HT. Organisational commitment influences behaviour at an individual and group level and this, in turn, impacts on school performance.

5.13 Optimism and Performance and Behaviours

Reddy et al. (2000) examination of organisational climate and dual commitment in private and public sector enterprise; this research established that organisational climate has a significant role in determining organisational commitment. AO is a

measure of the school climate and clearly has utility in establishing levels of optimism and commitment to school goals.

Sharma and Joshi (2001) research established that performance appraisal and job content have emerged as the predictors of organisational commitment. In schools, performance management is a statutory annual review in which HT could offer staff views on performance and suggestions on going forward. This, usually, is focused on whole school targets that will impact on academic emphasis and collective efficacy.

Goulet and Frank (2002) investigated organisational commitment across public and private sectors. This research established that private sector workers are more committed ones than public sector employees, who demonstrated lower levels of organisational commitment to their organisations. This is a salient point in that schools are public sector employees and according to Goulet et al. (2002) may already exhibit lower organisational commitment. The role of the HT who models and develops organisational commitment is notable and their actions reflect the school's organisational commitment.

Poon et al. (2006) confirmed a model of trust-in-supervisor including the propensity to trust, supervisor attributes as antecedents, and affective organisational commitment. This is an interesting consideration for a school. Poon et al. (2006) research implies that staff in a school can be loyal to each other but not the school itself. This was apparent in one case study school in which a very high group FT score was recorded in an LSA group. The interview with the HT revealed that this group effectively did what it wanted. There was high trust in group and low affective

commitment to the aims and values of the HT. This creates a tension in which the HT and the group's optimism are opposed to each other.

Lifeng (2007) identified that employees' hope, optimism, and resilience had positive impact on their job performance, organisational commitment and organisational citizenship behaviour. Kyle, Luthans, Sandra, Lebsack, Richared and Lebsack (2008) researched the link between nurses' levels of optimism and performance outcomes, a highly significant positive relationship between the nurses' state of optimism and their supervisors' assessments of their commitment. In a school, annual performance measures are not linked to optimistic states of teachers and are currently linked to external review and scrutiny which does not include the head teacher assessments of teachers' commitment. Head teachers could use AO as an additional measure of the potential for a school to improve by gauging its capacity to commit to improvement. AO would also acknowledge and provide a measure of low affective commitment as exhibited in the school outlined above.

The school example above reflects Luthans et al. (2008) research on the construct termed positive psychological capital (comprising of hope, resilience, optimism, and efficacy) which has a role facilitating a supportive organisational climate with positive employee outcomes. Results showed that employees' psychological capital is positively related to their performance, satisfaction and commitment, and a supportive climate is related to employees' satisfaction and commitment. It could be proposed that CE is a collective measure of psychological capital in the group belief in achievement in a school. Teachers' collective efficacy is linked to a caring culture and will influence their individual and collective commitment to the school.

Nammi and Nezhad (2009) identified the existence of relationships between psychological climate and teachers' commitment. They highlighted that teachers' perception of psychological climate such as trust, support, and fairness effects the commitment to school and commitment to work group. AO could be used to identify which elements of the psychological climate are weak using the three sub-constructs of AO disaggregating the gender specific differences in the individual responses to the survey instrument. Aydin et al. (2011) identified that male teachers can implement the norms and values of the organisation more easily than female teachers. Most primary school teachers in Wales are female and AO survey instrument would provide HT with information on how to develop norms and values to appeal to this group.

Khalili and Asmawi (2012) evaluated the influence of gender differences on organisational commitment. They established men and women have the same level of affective commitment, continuance commitment and overall organisational commitment, but women have a greater level of normative commitment than men. Such evidence clearly fits this research, in which most of the participants in the survey are female.

Shahnawaz and Jafri (2009) related optimism with normative commitment. Regardless of gender, optimistic people exhibit high levels of self-efficacy, which equates with high commitment levels. There are two theoretical mechanisms that have been used to describe optimism and to explain the impact of optimism on attitudes and behaviours (Peterson, 2000); Seligman's (1998) explanatory style model and Carver and Scheier's (1981) self-regulatory model. Buchanan and Seligman (1995) posit that optimism has been theorised as an explanatory style

and how an individual explains the causes of both positive and negative events. Individuals who attribute the causes of bad events to external, unstable, and specific causes and attribute the causes of good events to personal and pervasive causes are optimistic. Those who attribute the causes of bad events to internal, stable, and global causes and the causes of good events to unstable causes are pessimistic. Seligman (1998) defines ‘‘learned optimism’’ as opposed to ‘‘learned helplessness’’ individuals who are able to learn that setbacks attributed to one-off reasons rather than a disconnect between personal actions and outcomes. Successes that are due to personal causes will initiate motivation to work to future goals. Carver and Scheier (1981) contend that optimism influences outcomes through its self-regulatory nature. For example,

> … you are trying to develop a school that has an optimistic nature … I think if the staff are all immersed in that, it’s bound to happen.

Lee, Ashford, and Jamieson (1993); Scheier and Carver (1987); Scheier et al. (1989) contend that it is anticipated that optimists continue to strive, work hard, and cope actively with the problems they encounter, while pessimists give up. This explains why optimism should relate to positive outcomes; individuals use their positive explanatory style to avoid allowing barriers to discourage them and use success as a measure that they are able to face situations that occur in their life positively. Positive explanatory style allows individuals to work harder and strive to reach their goals because they believe they have the skills to overcome the differences between their current situation and their goals.

This resonates with collective efficacy and academic emphasis. Optimism includes cognitive and emotional components as well as motivational and influences a range of attitudes and behaviours. Optimism is examined as a trait, the literature evidences

this and empirically demonstrated that individuals can be trained to be optimistic (Seligman, 1998). For example:

> INT: So do you think that you can teach optimism to people?
> P1: Yeah, I would have thought so.

Individuals who are generally optimistic can be pessimistic and vice-versa. Researchers have established that optimism mutually exists as a trait and a state component (Luthans, 2002a; Luthans and Youssef, 2007). Trait optimism represents individual differences in the level of optimism generally experienced, while state optimism captures the optimism based on situation or contextual factors. For example, encouragement from a head teacher who creates a situation in which reaching goals seems possible can cause an individual with optimism in general to experience high levels of optimism at work. In this quote it is exemplified as:

> **…** the first thing is to be very optimistic – whatever we talk about, try and put an optimistic side to it, rather than come in on the doom and gloom – just be fairly optimistic ourselves … I think probably a bit of praise and just checking on them fairly often.

The difference between affect and optimism is that affect is about feeling positively (or negatively) while optimism is about positive instructive mechanisms and opportunities about meeting one's goals. In a school these goals are clearly articulated by the annual SDP and identifying why and how these goals will be achieved. The instructive mechanism is the HT who must be optimistic in these goals being achieved.

5.14 Antecedents to Academic Emphasis

Lepine and Crawford (2010); Christian, Garza, and Slaughter (2011) contend that engagement, as a motivational variable, would lead to high levels of job performance. Engagement is a motivational construct that is a collective process

by employees in the workplace. (Christian et al., 2011) suggests employee engagement is a motivational concept that represents the sharing of personal resources toward the task associated with a work role. Kahn (1990) defined engagement as “the simultaneous employment and expression of a person’s preferred self in task behaviours that promote connections to work and to others, personal presence (physical, cognitive, emotional) and active, full performances”.

Rotundo and Sackett (2002) and Viswesvaran and Ones (2000) identified job performance is a function not only of task performance but also of contextual behaviour such as organisational citizenship behaviours (OCB) and counter-productive behaviour (CWB).

Bennet and Stamper (2001), Organ and Paine (1999) argue these constructs are negatively related and may be considered “opposites” (OCB will be increased when CWB is decreased, and vice-versa). This thesis contends that these OCB and CWB will influence AE in the quest for excellence in a school’s performance in that they both influence CE and arguably are the result of violations in trust behaviours.

Employees who are highly engaged in their work roles not only focus their effort on the pursuit of goals but are also cognitively attentive and emotionally connected to the enterprise (Kahn, 1990; Ashforth and Humprey, 1995). In contrast, employees who are highly disengaged in their work roles withhold their physical, cognitive, and emotional energies. Engagement is a persistent and positive affective – motivational state of fulfilment in employees, characterised by vigour, dedication, and absorption (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004).

Employee engagement is associated with organisational commitment, but the two have important differences (Robert and Davenport, 2002). Job commitment is defined in terms of an individual's identification with the organisation's goals and values, inclination to exert effort for the organisation and aspiration to continue as part of the organisation. People who are engaged in their professions tend to be committed to their organisations, and vice-versa. Organisational commitment differs from engagement in that it refers to a person's attitudes and attachment towards their organisation.

Hakanen, Baker, and Schaufeli (2006) advocate that employee engagement is related to increased job performance. Contextual performance are "emergent" behaviours that contribute to organisations subtly (Motowidlo, Borman, and Schmitt, 1997). These behaviours do not contribute directly to organisations, but they contribute to the organisation by nurturing a psychological environment beneficial to engagement as an indicator of employee willingness to go the extra mile to support the employer.

OCB can benefit the organisation's efficiency by influencing the social and psychological commitment of the organisation. This collective commitment would be influenced by faculty trust and collective efficacy at school level. OCB is reflective of the school climate and it can flourish as a desired behaviour in the teachers and LSAs of those schools.

Rotundo and Sackett (2002) suggest that OCB is behaviour that adds to goals of the organisation. OCB adds incidentally to the organisation through the organisation's social system that supports task performance (Organ, 1997).

Podsakoff and MacKenzie (1997); Borman and Motowidlo (1997); Smith, Organ, and Near (1983) identify that OCB has been recognised as an organisation's effectiveness, by reducing relationship friction and increasing efficiency. Konovsky and Organ (1996) have identified five dimensions of OCB: altruism, courtesy, sportsmanship, civic virtue, and generalised compliance.

Employee engagement has a predictive quality (Rich et al., 2010). Employees implement OCB because it contains an emotional element (Bennett and Robinson, 2000). Social exchanges and the emotion-based explanations, it is suggested, are related, because of the need to reciprocate the result of positive action from one's organisation (Rhoades and Eisenberger, 2002), which will indirectly influence academic emphasis and collective efficacy in a school. Positive OCBs at an individual level are predicated on the expectation that behaviour will receive positive recognition from the head teacher of the school.

In the transcripts a head teacher referred to an LSA as a *dark cloud*, whose CWB had a profound impact on the school's collective efficacy. In another example, a HT trust was breached in an inspection by a senior teacher who deliberately hid books. This CWB was never forgiven due to the potential risks its actions placed the school's academic emphasis (standards) under and the breach of trust during a time of school external scrutiny.

CWB refers to intentional behaviour in that employees become motivated to violate. In the transcript section on trust there are numerous examples of staff exhibiting CWB in several schools with the associated head teacher response. CWB also means that the employee is motivated to act against acknowledged organisational

norms which directly impact on academic emphasis and collective efficacy of the staff.

CWB take different forms, for example, absenteeism, and verbal aggression. Robinson and Bennett (1995) argued that an important distinction between types of deviance was whether the deviance was directed or targeted at either the organisation (organisational deviance) or at members of the organisation (interpersonal deviance). Both types of deviance will have impact. In one transcript an event in a school influenced both types of deviance proposed by Robinson and Bennett (1995) and the head teacher stated that person never returned to the school.

(Sacket, 2002; Bennett and Robinson, 2000) state that CWB is coincided with antisocial behaviour, counterproductive behaviour, dysfunctional behaviour, and organisational misbehaviour. Employees who are low in employee engagement care little about losing their jobs and are willing to engage in behaviours that could potentially risk their employment.

5.15 Academic Emphasis

Academic emphasis is the behavioural component of the construct AO. Academic emphasis is defined as the academic momentum for excellent student achievement (Goddard et al., 2000). This concept can be thought of as a drive and “quest for excellence” that reflect teachers setting high, but attainable goals; supporting a school setting characterised by order and seriousness; believing in the ability and potential for students to achieve those high goals, and having students responding positively to the challenge of such goals (Hoy and Tarter, 1992, p.76). Schools that

establish academic emphasis include all stakeholders' exploration and respect of academic success. In this research all stakeholders are included. This is a contribution to the knowledge in that this measure has not been applied before to all those in a school that are responsible for pupils outcomes. These stakeholders include the head teacher, aligning resources and power to achieve these goals (Tschannen-Moran and Hoy, 1998; Goddard, Sweetland, and Hoy, 2000).

Academic emphasis embodies the focused norms and culture that at the same time drive and limit any school's behavioural choices; any instructional head teacher and faculty's collective norms could serve as a positive and negative influence, focusing on the importance and value of exceptional student achievement. Academic emphasis relationship with agentic thinking links with an intentional pursuit of these academic goals of excellence. As the principle element of organisational agency, academic emphasis:

> "…suggests that schools may choose, through a number of individual and collective efforts, to pursue student achievement, and likewise they may act purposefully to strengthen member perceptions of the import of student academic success" (R. D. Goddard et al., 2000, p.688).

The school group's norms permit them some control over others' choices if it has penalties for the organisational group. This professional group threshold can serve as a point of reference when rewarding or socially sanctioning one's peers for their efforts or lack of efforts in supporting this academic emphasis (Goddard et al., 2000).

Hoy, et al. (2006) noted four research papers that demonstrated a significant relationship between academic emphasis and increased student achievement - irrespective of methodological approaches across elementary, middle, and high

schools - while even controlling for socio-economic status and previous student achievement. Head teacher leadership is frequently believed to impact student achievement; research suggests that the principal leadership itself does not predict pupil achievement as much as how the head teacher impacts the school's collective academic emphasis. The school's resulting level of academic emphasis permeates much of what the school focuses on. The head teacher targets resources, energy, and efforts around student achievement and regulates the collective efforts to focus only on efforts that support that academic press (Hoy et al., 2006; McGuigan and Hoy, 2006; Smith and Hoy, 2007).

The following excerpts of head teachers' commentary serve to add to the literature by capturing the core perceptions of collective efficacy at school level from the head teachers of those schools.

> P1: I think that perhaps they'd been here a while and about all the changes that …
>
> INT: Changed.
>
> P1: Yeah.
>
> INT: So this person doesn't like change?
>
> P1: No, and the school is changing.
>
> INT: Rapidly.
>
> P1: Yes.

Change has been offered as the reason for the low AE score which suggests that it has disrupted the serious and orderly environment. At an individual level the change is having an effect too … so this person doesn't like change ... which will translate at some point into classroom delivery and a reduction on academic emphasis. The AE for this school score was lower than everyone else. The HT role in stressing AE continually and its subsequent low score has been attributed to rapid change. It also

reflects the research that identifies HT as having impact on the group AE. The changing school with a fluid workforce as it expands suggests that communication of a serious and orderly environment is clearly a challenge, making sure that everybody is on board and appreciates their role within the school.

> … the next for me, the next step is … our mathematics scores have dipped a little bit.

In the above head teacher comment there is clear identification of an attained goal and next goal. In the school development plan these goals are articulated with % targets set by year group. The goals are transparent and attainable based on self-evaluation internally.

AE is a group level characteristic and counters the research in which the HT has little impact on predicting pupil achievement (Hoy, 2006). This school is in flux as it prepares to move.

> INT: Is a period of change because you're developing a new school?
>
> P1: Yes, and I need to develop some of the staff quickly.

This above response implies a new learning environment and an emerging set of new norms and new culture. This raises a question about the bi-directional nature of the model and how this instability in AE will impact on other parts of AO, firstly CE which helps create trust. There is a developmental component here, a pre-stage which is context dependent in this school. The development of a new team supports Brown et al. (2011) research which identifies that student achievement can be influenced by AO when school leaders focus on a teamwork approach, a strong sense of purpose and an unrelenting disposition that all students can achieve at the highest level.

> … I'm saying, we've put structures in place – I said; one, to protect the children and two, to protect you, but now you're going out of that comfort zone and I said, without anybody's knowledge, so how can I support you when you haven't followed procedures in school?

> … I'm finding at the moment, making sure that they stick within the rules and regulations in the realms of the policies that we've put in place.

This comment exemplifies that the HT makes direct reference to a key component of AE which, in the learning environment, is orderly and serious. The school community is changing and rapidly expanding. Its AE is under pressure so procedures and policies are used to keep the school serious and orderly.

> P1: Yes, and that's why the staff that I have in that team need to have the same vision and the same standards, I feel, that **I've got.** That honesty, that communication.

In the above comment, the HT role in emphasising academics is **I've got**; this focus on expectation exemplifies the HT leadership across the school community. It's her stamp. The literature stresses that leadership is second only to teaching as a school related factor that contributes to what students learn at school (Leithwood et al., 2004). In the comment below, again, the learning environment being orderly and serious is identified as a key component of AO at this school. The HT references the use of policy and practice across all groups to ensure that the school community is orderly and supportive .There are consequences to the action of those who move away from these agreed structures and protocols. There are consequences for CE too. Collective efficacy or collective goal is framed by academic emphasis as an exceptional academic press and focus on rigorous student achievement (Goddard et al., 2000; Hoy et al., 2006). In this example:

> P1: I think that we possibly have our expectations too low. I think we need to raise our expectations.

AE is the behavioural component of AO. The literature describes it as "the extent to which a school is driven by the quest for academic excellence - a press for academic

achievement." The HT response is clear and honest. The AE score is lower again for the HT across all groups in this school.

> … think that's being promoted by the LEA, for example, asking us to examine our focus to data from the children, and perhaps we are being too conservative … but then the curriculum is highly overloaded.

The HT explains the result due to external pressures on the school, and accountability in terms of performance data for the low score. The comment suggests that the students are not being set high achievable goals; the expectation from the teachers is conservative, suggesting that the CE in this school for teachers i.e. a group's shared belief in its conjoint capabilities to produce a given level of attainment, is low, weaker than it could be due to curriculum tensions in delivering all subject areas. In this quote this is explicitly identified;

> We've got a mixed catchment … probably one of the strangest in Llanelli, with the exception of one or two other schools … with this middle-class mix with what I would describe as large housing estate mix as well. With us, free school meals is not necessarily an accurate indicator.

A research study identified that AO was higher in a case study school due to the socio-economic characteristics of the catchment. This is a particularly important point. Pupils in poverty do not always have an orderly or serious place to study outside school. AE is a critical element of schools of this type to maximise the opportunities for those pupils. HT cannot readily pinpoint the reason but suggests that eFSM as a proxy indicator of poverty is not accurate. There is an inference that there are poor pupils in this school, or come from deprived backgrounds which in some way accounts for a low CE score. This issue could offer some explanation for the initial comment of setting expectations too low.

The HT clearly articulates that change is a negative influence on AE which is the drive for achievable goals. This response indicates that there is too much to deal with in this school and that change is an inhibitor to school performance. For example:

> I think we need to seriously look – I'm hoping when we review the curriculum with the new changes in addition to the LLF, which is coming in – that the whole curriculum's due for renewal, that they will strip away some of the things that we have to do.

In the next participant response:

> INT: Is it more important than these two?
>
> P1: Well, no, because of these two – unless these two are right, that's not going to come with it, is it?

This is an important recognition of the triadic nature of the three components of AO and the need to get CE, FT right, and there are several links to the literature in this response. Firstly, AE is an important school variable linked with academic achievement.

> … not working with each other, that vision isn't shared.

Secondly the literature identifies that AE has a significant relationship with the school's vision in middle leaders, (Licata and Harper, 2001), resonating with the above quote.

> If everyone's pessimistic and down and out and not taking on new initiatives and not trusting each other.

In the above quote this respondent also identifies that not working with each other is linked directly with trusting each other. In essence they are all linked and bi-directional. In the next response there is more evidence of an emerging dominance in the components of the construct.

> No, I think probably you're right. From my point of view, those are the two things that I've concentrated on mostly in the first few years of headship, getting those things right so that we can build.

The previous response is clear in that the HT identifies the relational element of AO, CE; FT being dominant in the early years of headship. This is indicative that is a temporal aspect to the construct's development and this is indicative of and is evidenced in the survey returns that AO will fluctuate in the school.

> P1: I think those two top ones are …
>
> INT: These two.
>
> P1: Crucial, really.

In the quote above this HT identifies FT, CE as the key components of the construct and since both are foundational in developing a successful school, it would arguably make sense to focus on these two initially. This is significant; the AO concept and triadic nature is bi-directional and equal in terms of each part influencing each other. This reply indicates dominance in this HT view. This contrasts directly with the constructs bi-directional, equal nature of the construct.

Another participant responded:

> INT: Is one of those more dominant in your school, or are all three about the same and have … do you think anyone is more important?
>
> P1: I think that's a very difficult question because situations and atmosphere, perhaps, or pressures in the school are not always on the same level.

This supports the view that situations impact on these collective emergent school properties but their mutual dependence and reinforcement can be skewed.

> P1: Yeah, if you're looking at … personally, I think a lot of questions such as that and looking at those scores … could have something to do with the catchment area that the school's actually in and the background of the children, coming from deprived backgrounds to the school and

> therefore, our expectations of the children, the children we know, I think that's got an impact on those low scores.

This reply acknowledges situations and circumstances as external influences on the AE of the school and expectations of how AE scores are linked to those factors. Although AE is an internal group variable, this HT is referring to the low levels of basic skills these children have, based on their catchment. This is noted previously in another school locally. There is a question that arises that the CE in this example may be counter to the belief that all students can achieve despite social/economic circumstances. This was not the first HT to raise this as an explanation for the low AE scores in their school survey returns. The literature also evidences a research paper in which this view is tested, and despite socio-economic status, students are achieving.

In this response there is evidence again of the perception around the construct being bi-directional and not dominant in any aspect.

> P1: No, I don't think there's one. I don't think there's one that's more important at all. I think they're all …
>
> INT: It's a good mix.
>
> P1: Yeah, there's a mix there, yeah.

In the previous comment above, HT acknowledges the triadic nature of AO and mutual dependency on each other. This is also supported in the literature which posits that the three components shape the norms and behaviours of the school and are all highly correlated and transactional with each other.

> I know that the quality of staff I've got is good, and they know they're good and yet, they select for redundancy.

In the final comment HT has identified internal capacity and experienced staff who can maintain AE regardless of circumstances and sacrificial component to the group in electing for redundancy. The literature recognises this group attribute AE as not just a reflection of how much a school values success but reflects the teachers' work in improving learning. This is the behavioural enactment of AO. This school overcomes obstacles, emphatic acknowledgement of the impact on the other components supporting the transactional flow presented in the literature.

5.16 Collective Efficacy

Kravchenko and Zappala (2017) showed a positive relationship between collective organisational efficacy and collective work engagement. Collective organisational efficacy is the belief of members of an organisation about the organisation's capacity to produce desired outcomes (Bandura, 1997). Heuze, Raimbault, and Fontayne, (2006); Martinez-Santos and Ciruelos, (2013): collective organisational efficacy is determined by successful or unsuccessful patterns of former performance and by internal organisational processes, such as communication and collaboration. A range of effects of collective organisational efficacy has been identified by Borgogni, Dello Russo, Petitta, and Latham, (2009); Borgogni, Petitta, and Mastrorilli, (2010); Petitta and Borgogni, (2011).

Collective work engagement is the judgement of employees about how strongly their work group is involved in everyday jobs (Richardson and West, 2010). This resonates directly with collective efficacy. Collective work engagement occurs when employees work together, communicate with each other, transfer their willingness to work and influence their colleagues (Bakker, van Emmerik, and Euwema, 2006). Bakker et al. (2006) found that team work engagement occurs when employees

share their positive attitudes and effect their colleagues. Salanova et al. (2003) explored the relationship between collective work engagement and performance; collective efficacy determines levels of collective work engagement and acceptable task performance. AO clearly as a measure of a school's collective capacity towards improvement reflects Salanova et al. (2003); determination that collective efficacy and task performance i.e. academic emphasis, are linked to a collective engaged group of staff. How the head teacher drives academic emphasis either through consensus or pressure could be identified by exploring the transactional relationship of the construct AO. In other words, which component of AO predominates in a school? The head teacher can develop the strategies to improve aspects of the construct to strengthen collective work engagement.

Dussault, Payette, and Leroux, (2008) and Kovjanic, Schuh, and Jonas, (2013) identify that leadership behaviour is an important determinant of collective efficacy and work engagement. Research established a positive correlation of transformational leadership style with collective efficacy and work engagement (Bradford, 2011; Ghadi, Fernando, and Caputi, 2013).

Schools are groups of people working together to achieve outcomes that they are not able to attain on their own. This is how schools function as a collective. They accomplish these goals by interacting together. Throughout this process people share beliefs between each other about their collective capabilities and the ability of the whole organisation to perform. Bandura (1997) characterised such beliefs as collective organisational efficacy. Collective organisational efficacy predicts how well work teams can manage their collective effort in order to perform their work activities (Katz-Navon and Erez, 2005; Little and Madigan, 1997). Bandura (1997)

posits patterns of your own or similar organisations' past success (failure) are important determinants of collective organisational efficacy as they lead to development of positive (negative) beliefs about ability and probability to achieve organisational goals in the future.

Head teacher behaviour is a significant determinant of collective organisational efficacy. Bass, (1985); Dussault et al. (2008); Ross and Gray, (2006) posit that theory of transformational leadership identifies that effective leaders encourage others and enhance the perceptions about their capabilities. Bradford (2011) specified that work teams guided by transformational leaders had better levels of collective efficacy.

Collective organisational efficacy is not an objective evaluation of organisational performance based on subjective employees' perceptions and beliefs. Employees who perceive high collective efficacy most likely make additional efforts toward organisational goal accomplishment because it motivates them to do so, which in turn, strengthens collective efficacy and academic standards.

5. 17 Collective Efficacy (of AO)

Collective efficacy is the cognitive component of AO. It is an organisational level construct which influences the whole school and is not the perceptions of individual teachers. Collective efficacy is an emergent group level attribute and is not captured in any sector of education in Wales to date (2019).

Social cognition theory terms self-efficacy as “an individual’s perceived belief about his or her capacity to organise and execute the actions required to produce a given

level of attainment” (Hoy et al., 2006 p.428). Collective efficacy is the perceived belief that other members of a group have the capacity to organise and execute the actions necessary to support the collective goal (Bandura, 2000a; R. D. Goddard, 2001). In AO, the collective goal is bounded by academic emphasis as academic press and focus on demanding student achievement (Goddard et al., 2000); Hoy et al., 2006). A faculty with high levels of perceived collective efficacy believes that their contemporaries have the necessary agency to make the rigorous student achievement a reality (Hoy et al., (2006). Collective efficacy is an influential cognitive element. Collective efficacy explains schools’ student achievement more than the impact of SES, urbanicity, or grade band (Bandura, 2000a; Goddard et al., 2000; Goddard et al., 2004). Collective efficacy describes student performance more than academic emphasis, which is an outcome; academic emphasis is stronger as it works through strong levels of collective efficacy (Goddard et al., 2000; Hoy et al., 2002).

Academic emphasis and collective efficacy “are especially important in motivating achievement among both teachers and students” (Hoy et al., (2006) p.428). Goddard et al. (2004) explain that collective efficacy is similar, but not the same as self-efficacy. Individual perceptions of self-efficacy and collective efficacy are developed through a cognitive processing of two elements: (a) analysis of the difficulty of the educational task and (b) assessment of the perceiver’s educational competence (Goddard et al., 2004). Research indicates a positive correlation between teachers’ perceptions of self-efficacy and their perceptions of collective efficacy (R. D. Goddard, (2001); R. D. Goddard and Goddard, (2001); Goddard et al., (2004); Skaalvik and Skaalvik, (2007). Self-efficacy, collective efficacy are “associated with the tasks, level of effort, persistence, shared thoughts, stress levels, and achievement of groups” (R. D. Goddard, 2002 p.482).

Bandura (2006a) notes "the collective performance of a social system involves interactive, coordinative, and synergistic dynamics that create emergent group-level properties not reducible solely to individual attributes and that these group activities vary in the degree to which attainments require interdependent effort and collaborative contributions." Bandura defines perceived collective efficacy as "the group's shared belief in its conjoint capabilities to organise and execute courses of action required producing given levels of attainment" (R. D. Goddard, 2002, p.482).

Collective perception of efficacy is critical in the performance abilities of the system as a whole. The role and execution of behaviours and actions in an organisation necessarily acknowledges that it is the individual who enacts them, but that perception of collective efficacy is an emergent group-level attribute (Bandura, 2006a). In this thesis the emergence of examples of OCB and CWB as antecedents to collective efficacy are noted in the examples of trust violations listed in the commentary from head teachers. The individuals' enactment of detrimental behaviour can have serious implications across the school and its AO.

Head teachers need to be mindful of the inter-reliant nature of collective efficacy and the role of individuals acting on a shared belief with all of the attendant cognitive, affective, and behavioural influences (Bandura, 2006a; Woolfolk Hoy, Davis, and Pape, 2006). Schools where perceptions of collective efficacy are high "are capable of self-regulation, which helps in the identification, selection, and monitoring of educational efforts that are likely to meet the unique needs of students" (Goddard et al., 2000 p.480); this is probable because these teachers have an improved level of agency and greater likelihood of executing behaviours

that progress student learning and meet the school's planned goals (Goddard et al., 2000; Pressley, 1995; Zimmerman, 1995).

A faculty's capacity for collective efficacy to self-regulate and influence teachers' efforts and practices is difficult to understand unless one acknowledges that teachers' joint beliefs are part of the normative behaviours and culture of schools (Goddard et al., 2000; R. D. Goddard and Goddard, 2001; Goddard et al., 2007). The perception of collective teacher efficacy is a "way of conceptualising the normative environment of a school and its influence on both personal and organisational behaviour. That is, teachers' beliefs about their faculty's capability to educate students constitute a norm that influences the actions and achievements of schools" (Goddard et al., 2000, p.496). AO is a measure of the described normative environment; in Wales, to date, there are no measures of this normative environment and a school's individual and collective behaviour. I would advocate that this is a crucial aspect of schools' performance that is being overlooked in a period of substantial change in schools in Wales.

Quantitative methodologies demonstrate a significant impact on student achievement with an effect stronger than socio-economic status (R. D. Goddard and Goddard, 2001; R. D. Goddard, 2001). Collective efficacy has been associated with an effect over choices impacting on school improvement and to teachers' honesty to assist colleagues beyond the necessary levels of the job (R. D. Goddard, 2002; Ross and Gray, 2006). R. D. Goddard and Goddard (2001) found that mastery experiences – as characterised by previous student achievement – were a significant predictor of collective efficacy. The opposite was not true; the level of a

faculty's perceptions of collective efficacy was not a predictor of student achievement.

> A … I believe that we're all working towards the same aim … We get on with each other ... I think the collective belief in this school is that we know that we do, the majority of the time, all work together … so I think we've got the belief that we are going to try and do the absolute best for our children in the school.

The comment above reflects the judgment of the head teacher on the strength of engagement of the group as a whole. Richardson and West (2010), and Bakker, van Emmerik and Euwema (2006) research also supports this statement of collective work engagement. The use of 'we' indicates that the judgement of this HT is the whole school staff influence the students as a team. It is noted that there is not reference to a specific collective belief, but challenge and improvement at the centre of the belief.

The following respondent indicates that collective efficacy can be a predictor of collective work engagement and communication of organisational goals is critical (Kravchenko and Zappala, 2017).

> P1: The same message. That's why we all meet together, that's why we're all in all the meetings. We do all the training.

This is evidence of a strong response and of a common message with associated structures (meetings and training) to facilitate this. This is referenced in social cognitive theory in which efficacy beliefs are based on future orientated judgements based about capabilities to produce desired results for specific contexts. This HT is indicating that the whole school is part of this decisional making process and without these opportunities there is little incentive to preserve when facing challenges.

The next HT response reflects the research of Bakker et al. (2006) which identifies that team work engagement occurs when there is a sharing of attitudes. This sharing process is identified in the trust literature as a point at which a person's/group trustworthiness becomes a trusting action. This HT identifies that the staff trust each other. In this school the threshold of when to trust has been crossed.

> INT: What is the key characteristic that influences collective belief?
>
> P1: I think it's trust in each other.

The respondent clearly identifies the reciprocal relationship between CE and trust. It is noteworthy that in this response trust is associated with sharing data and communicating around this data which generates future actions (aims). Honesty is a key component of the definition of trust as is openness. Openness is the extent to which relevant information is not withheld. Sharing data is a process in which HT and staff make themselves vulnerable to criticism publicly, but it builds trust.

This response provides a different insight into collective efficacy in this school. The use of 'I' in this statement reflects the influence HT have on their staff. Bradford, (2011) research noted that teams guided by leaders have increased levels of collective efficacy. Kravchenko and Zappala (2017) support this, noting that managers can promote collective efficacy. In this example and in several other transcripts the use of a motto/mission statement is identified as the means to promote the group level aspect, collective efficacy.

> P1: The collective belief, the message I'm sending out, is that of the mission statement of the school, basically.
>
> P1: I want the staff to have that same feeling about that they have made an impact on the children. It's not just the teaching staff, but it could be the support staff, it could be the lunchtime supervisor, because it could be that's the person the child is willing to go and speak to.

> Well, if they can make a difference to that child's life, then great.

This respondent is demonstrating social persuasion which the literature explains as a person (i.e. the head teacher) convinces a group that they have the ability to gain positive results. **I want the staff to have that same feeling that they have made an impact**. The more the individual believes in encouragement the likelihood is that self-efficacy will increase. But, because social persuasion is not based on your own direct experience, it can be weak.

This response is an example of a school which does a bit more. Christ, van Dick, and Stellmacher (2003) identified that "it is extremely important that teachers engage in extra role behaviours … and this helps the organisation improve its performance" (p.330). This research also identified an emotional component in which attachment to the organisation predominates. Oplatka (2006) noted that teachers that are committed often link directly to school climate and a sense of belonging.

> P1: I think it's **team spirit** between the staff ... the input that they have doing things which are **slightly over and above** the day to day things … they always look for more and do it as a team.

This HT has identified the manifestation of a collective group property and references the future context and is termed future orientated, i.e. the HT belief is based on what the individual or in this case, the team, can do in the future, not just on what has been done. This is termed positive organisational behaviour and reflects the third phase model of organisational commitment in that the staff have internalised the values of the organisation which they find rewarding; it is congruent with the group and the school.

The next response illustrates a model identified in the literature as performance related behaviour (Miles, Spector, Borman, and Fox, 2002). This research identified a binary model in which there are positive voluntary behaviours termed OCB and the opposite termed counter-workplace behaviour which is detrimental to the organisation; in this case, the school and learners. This HT directly identifies that negative perceptions of the school will have an impact on the whole school. In other transcripts, black clouds and doom and gloom are also acknowledged as counter-workplace behaviours. The issue for schools is that negativity can quickly develop into internationally destructive counter-workplace behaviours (Lee and Allen, 2002). In schools, this manifests itself as absenteeism, which can be very difficult to resolve especially if the absence is medically endorsed.

> INT: With the team spirit then, what do they have to do around you? What do all these people have to do around you?
>
> P1: Basically, do the job. As long as they're not being negative with the children … as long as they're positive as far as they can be with the children … then I think that reflects across the entire school.

This participant reply indicates that this HT does not get involved with manipulation of CE unless the CE or individual behaviours become negative which it is acknowledged as not desirable. This statement also reflects the contention that the stronger the beliefs people hold about their own capabilities, the more they can achieve.

> P1… there are three generations here of people who haven't gone out to work, who don't know what it is to sort of get up in the morning and spend a day working … I felt, to foster in these children … we can do this, there is a way by doing … boom, boom, boom, by getting some qualifications, by learning about what was out in the world … this is something that you're capable of.

The response evidences the desire for the school to effect change internally and in the community. It acknowledges that CE is held across a range of groups. It is also

the first response to identify a relationship between CE and achievement, **something you're capable of**. The literature indicates that collaborative school processes are linked strongly to CE. This school collaborates across many relationships to improve attainment. In this example it is not only the internal beliefs and competencies that influence the CE and schools success, it is the community it serves, too. This is termed collective agency and is a mechanism in which people work together to achieve desired goals in this school and in the community at a future oriented point.

This participant response is interesting in that it presents the collective efficacy around a place. Borgogoni et al. (2011) suggests that collective organisational efficacy has implications for organisational commitment. This school's commitment to the idea of a safe haven is one that not one staff member would not accept, but it does not focus on the core business of learning. It also counters the definition of collective efficacy which conceptually presents the teachers' group belief about the group capability to educate. No identification of a motto in this quote but an environment - there is reference in the literature to CE being linked to school climate but not a place of safety.

> P1: I would have thought the most important collective belief for us is the school is a **safe haven for pupils.**

Heuze et al. (2006) identified that collective organisational efficacy is determined by organisational process, namely communication, collaboration or cohesion. In this example the HT directly references a visible method of information sharing across this school with staff. Whether or not it builds commitment depends on the frequency of use and if it is read. Sharing knowledge does not always accomplish goals; interaction with colleagues is critical.

> INT: How do you build and shape the collective belief in view of the fact that you're dealing with different groups?
>
> P1: (Pause) … We do have a board up in the staff room where **we put various bits of information, because although we have a staff meeting with the teachers, most information is given out there.** Occasionally, something will come up that the LSAs need to know.

There is a clear distinction between the ways in which structures are enacted to communicate with different groups of people. This could be problematical in establishing goal consensus and vision which has been established in the literature on organisational development and CE.

> P1: The collective belief here is that the children are central to everything that we do. There's got to be mutual respect and trust and confidence … we believe it's our role as the staff within the school to work with parents, in partnership with parents, and each other.

This HT reply is emphatic with additional identification of three other attributes, respect, trust and confidence. There is also a broader view about the CE of the pupils, school and community in collaboration.

Noted was the following comment from a respondent who stated that:

> We've got to sell that belief now and make sure that they jump into our boat and come with us … sell the belief … jump into our boat.

Katz-Navon and Erez, (2005) state that collective efficacy predicts how well teams can manage their collective effort to perform effectively. This is indicative of refocusing the collective efficacy, **jump into our boat,** and suggests the shared belief of the school members' needs to reflect the group's belief in its conjoint capabilities.

> P1: No. I think, principally, everyone is of the **same belief** in this school. I think everyone just works really hard to raise standards.

This reply echoes previous respondents' and view amongst the HT that equity of information sharing and collective belief is the same across all groups.

Bradford (2011) identified that transformational leaders guide teams to increased levels of collective efficacy. In this response the HT offers that he is creating CE and linked to school climate, which is supported in the literature.

> P1: Is it me, as the Head? I don't know. I think, to a certain extent, you've got have a leadership style that does create … **leadership style** creates an atmosphere in the school – it creates a level from which everybody looks up to, it creates a very good (pause) place to work, basically. You can create that as a leader … I've got my leadership team, of which I've got five members, this is what I expect.

This response is indicative of individual efficacy being related directly to collective efficacy. Hoy and Tarter (2011) suggest "positive efficacy beliefs affect whether the individual or organisation is optimistic. Optimistic individuals will persist in their efforts to achieve, and optimistic organisations will actively search to find ways to attain their goals" (p.434). This response differs markedly from previous replies. The HT suggests that CE can be created in an environment with models from the senior leadership team, therefore disseminating the belief that the self-efficacy of the HT is based on trust.

The participant identifies a transactional mechanism associated with CE and trust. I create a lot of trust in my staff – all of them – teachers, teaching assistants – a lot of give and take - I'll do this for you, and I think, you know, you can work on these. This approach is positioned in the research in that a strong sense of collective efficacy in a school creates a set of behavioural norms and expectations that reinforce efficacy beliefs; of the teachers and head teachers. The literature postulates that an organisation can respond to emotions. An affective state at

organisational level will respond positively to challenges, and shared goals (Du Four and Fullan, 2013; Harris, 2011; Hoff, 2012). This HT intentionally models and creates opportunities for CE to grow based on beliefs about capabilities, not the actual ability of the school's staff.

> P1: Yes, it is. That's been here since I got here … "All members of xxxx Primary School Community work together with great optimism and belief that all people can achieve great things in life", and that's key … I was frustrated because I was getting to the point of saying, you have to, I'm not asking you to buy-in to this anymore, I'm telling you this is what the school expects of you at school level.

Collective efficacy built around school mottos which have an historical legacy; it is the only school motto in this research that directly references optimism and belief. This HT also repeatedly reminds all staff of this motto. Telling staff to be optimistic indicates that the climate here might not be and it's an expectation. The researcher would offer this thought. Heuze et al. (2006) state internal organisational processes can determine positively or unproductively collective efficacy at the organisational level. In the above example, the motto has not created cohesion around its core meaning or influenced state optimism across the school. Communicating the collective efficacy and therefore collective engagement is failing in this school.

> P1: I've only got three mainstream staff, the three mainstream teachers have been here for twenty years each, and apart from one really, they're doing it their way a lot of the time. That's why it's a big policy and I bring them in and you're not … so whereas it would be nice to appoint my own teacher and optimism, creativity and all those kind of things would be the first thing I would look for, you could work with the rest.

HT identifies complex staff mix with more support staff than teachers; this is unique in this study. The respondent clearly identifies historical issues with the CE and staff within this school. The catch-all use of policy will not change these beliefs through enforcement or pressure teachers into changing their self-efficacy beliefs.

INT: It might explain why your collective efficacy is so high, because you've got a common group of people from the community in here, and your professional group – your teachers – are the minority.

P1: Yeah, yeah. I've got to say … eight/twelve, probably of the LSAs, three quarters of the LSAs, perhaps even more … are the most optimistic group in the school.

The survey responses for this school clearly identify the LSAs as the most optimistic staff. This response also makes a reference to community collective efficacy coming into the school which might explain why the teaching group score lower, in that the collective external efficacy in the community does not match the conventional expectations of teachers' CE.

INT: So it's the professional group of teachers that are the ones.

P1: Yes.

Agreement that the teachers are the issue, which can be problematical, since teachers' efforts have a strong positive effect on students' outcomes.

The next response from the same head teacher is troubling in that there are direct references to counter-workplace behaviours. The comment indicates that these staff have gone beyond what can be considered volitional, (Dalal, Lam, Weiss, Welch and Hulin, 2009) towards Bennet (1995); identification of interpersonal deviance by ignoring the HT and overriding him. This is important in this aspect of the research in that the FT scores for this school are high but the HT identifies this dysfunctional behaviour violating organisational norms (Sacket, 2002; Bennet and Robinson, 2000). This suggests that the group trust is high and the head teacher has trustworthiness qualities but the group has yet to cross the threshold toward trusting actions. There is a time element in this comment and could be linked to the three phases of organisational citizenship behaviour literature in which this school

is at the compliance stage. Burns and Carpenter (2008) linked citizenship behaviours and organisational effectiveness. In this example the HT needs to try and repair the violations to enact desired behaviours.

> P1: I don't know, I really don't know. They're just both … the four people in this school … two of them are mainstream teachers, two TAs, just been here longer than anyone else and been through so many different head teachers and been asked to do it so many different ways, I suppose, and just have their own … I don't know … not moral or whatever, rules, **are constantly overriding whatever I tell them to do, I suppose.**

Dipola and Hoy (2005) state that cultivating OCB in schools is like changing the culture of that school; in this example there are problems ahead. This HT response is associated to social cognitive theory. As a framework it assumes that humans are generative, creative and proactive, not just reactive. Given the length of time these identified group members have been in the school they are not passive in accepting the CE for the school but have reacted to control the circumstances in their school and act with intent. In effect, they have created their own beliefs which are opposite to the motto, creating a cadre of teachers and LSAs who are disruptive. This head teacher commented on another issue presenting in this school and failing teacher.

> INT: Does the collective know that that person's weak?
>
> P1: Oh yes, and that's a problem as well, because obviously this person, as a teacher, is paid more than half the school and it's difficult for me then to ask others to work hard.

Vigoda-Gadot, Beeri,Birman-Shemesh and Somech (2007) have identified that specific types of organisational climate lead to high levels of group OCB. The isolation of this teacher due to poor performance will not encourage group social reciprocity or support. This reply suggests that the teacher is isolated and known to be underperforming. It could be argued that her self-efficacy is also lower than the

group's. This clearly creates a dilemma and tension for the HT. The group CE is fragile if the judgment of that group is that the faculty as a whole cannot deliver the desired actions to have a positive effect because they are carrying this problem. The literature clearly associates negative emotions with an individual shifting their focus from performing tasks well and self-efficacy decreases. The teacher identified here is clearly in that affective state. Self-efficacy is positively related to OCB positive behaviours, the group and the school. This HT has identified the impact one poorly engaged member of staff can have on the whole group and all of the three aspects of AO. The participant comment below presents a different view on collective organisational efficacy.

> P1: Because we're a small school and because we all know our children and we all know our parents and we all know what levels children are at and what we expect children to be at, we're lucky, because the staff that we do have are experienced and are very good at what they do, on the whole. We have very few people here that are not proficient in what they do.

The collective efficacy of the group in this example demonstrates a mechanism termed collective agency though which a group of people work together to achieve a desired goal. A small school allows the staff to know all the pupils and a time-served team indicates competency and skill.

> P1: Yeah, they are competent, and I do think that the fact that they are competent and they know what they're doing and they work as a team, because people are expected to work together and falling-outs and things like that are dealt with quickly should there be any, but people are expected to join in and do things. **It is just the culture that we've adopted.**

It is interesting to note the phrase "a culture we have adopted" not created or developed. This is termed synergistic group dynamics in which the group property of CE is more than the sum of individual attributes. In this example, it might explain

the use of the phrase in this school and models the behaviours it expects and wants to promote internally and externally.

> P1: People are shown respect, and children see us showing people respect and all members of staff know that it's just done, and that is the way that people act here.

HT identifies the value and respect that influence the CE and it's her interpretation of the group's judgements that the teachers in the school and the efforts of the whole school will have a positive influence and effect. The literature identifies that perceived collective efficacy was a significant and consistent predicator of achievement for pupils.

5. 18 Faculty Trust

Hoy's (2002) trust-achievement hypothesis theorised that trusting others is a fundamental aspect to human learning because it is a co-operative process, and distrust makes co-operation virtually impossible. The objectives of the study are:

- How do the three elements of the construct interact and is there an emerging dominance or bi-directional relationship evident from the survey instrument?
- What factors emerge and underlie the construct?

Principle Factor Analysis revealed a dominant factor in the construct termed AO in the units of study i.e. the case study schools. In this case it was trust that emerged as a dominant factor. The literature supports this as an intra-organisational trust which is characterised by three constituent parts; trust as a belief, trust as a decision and as an action. This section will exemplify how head teachers view trust and the antecedents associated with the literature on trust based on Stappanen et al. (2007

p.256) literature review model on the antecedents, dimensions/components and consequences of trust as proposed by a range of authors. Stappanen et al. (2007) notes that the lack of consistency in inter-organisational trust makes the trust domain complex and difficult to interpret. The researcher acknowledges this problem and used the model to interpret the responses in seeking an answer via PFA analysis and trust dominance in the AO trio in this research study. For this section of the contribution to knowledge, the trustor will be defined as the head teacher and the trustee the staff. Reference will be made to the continuum of intra-organisational trust and how head teachers inspire or inhibit trust in these case study schools.

In this section quotations are chosen with reference to Steppanen et al. (2007) framework model on inter-organisational trust. The research is seeking to find antecedents defined as: **intentionality, past behaviour, relationships, social/group dynamics and similarity**. The consequences identified are centred on: **reduction of risk, deterrent of opportunistic behaviours, reduced hierarchy and organisational glue**. Trust components are identified as: **credibility, benevolence, goodwill, predictability, reciprocity, openness and confidence.**

> P1: For me, I have to trust my staff because they perform within the classroom every single day … they're here to do a day's work and there's that trust element. Similarly with the support staff … and there's that element of trust … doing what they're meant to be doing.

Performance in this domain, i.e. the classroom, indicates giving trust to staff. Intentionality, reduced hierarchy and confidence are evidenced. Notably in these transcripts there is evidence of generalised trust (Rotter 1967), defined as trust in others and trust on organisations such as a school (Kiffin-Peterson and Cordery

2003: p.107). Generalised trust varies at an individual level and impacts on decisions made on whether or not to trust; a threshold between a trustworthy quality and a trusting action. In this example the boundary is crossed. This is relevant in the early interaction phase of a relationship in which interactions build on experience of trust behaviours. In the quantitative element of the study this is evidenced - Table 8, Faculty Trust, changes slightly over time served in school. At the individual level there are distinct outliers in the group data which supports Kiffin-Peterson and Cordery's view that the decision to trust is linked to the experiences that individual has had. The researcher would also note that in the transcripts in this section each HT identifies a breach of trust or counter-workplace behaviour which might explain the variation in the individual returns on the survey instrument. The identification of intentionality and confidence is an indicator that this HT is time served (20 years in this example). This HT is exhibiting knowledge based trust, a positive expectation about the reliability of staff (Lewicki and Bunker, 1996).

> P1 … So it's all about trusting them in the day, because I'm not able to follow every single one on a day to day basis.

Example of institution-based trust with the two dimensions, structural assurance and situational normality, identified in that the HT is reliant on the norms of school to make sure staff are conducting their roles. The HT cannot police this daily.

> P1: There's always that element of that friendship group, do you know what I mean?
>
> P1: So some will trust some of their closer friends, the people that they've worked with longer.

Evidence of group trust (faculty trust), acknowledged with a time element to this, indicating a maturing of trust as friendship groups establish as these interactions develop over time.

> INT: So is there any intensity of trust then, do you give more trust to people that are friends?
>
> P1: No.

This participant response indicates fairness or an example of a threshold of trust in the school, i.e. the same for all termed relational based-trust (Rousseau et al., 1998 p.399). This is an example of stronger trust in that the appraiser, the HT, is making a judgment based on the staff's goodwill by being fair.

> P1: Shakes the pot, shall we say … **it hasn't come from me**, but it's come from the group, and that's what it's all about … I need the team and I need to be able to trust the team to do it**.**

In the above, an example of HT being vulnerable, or calculating as the HT initiates changes and turns to the group for a solution; example of influencing the collective efficacy as a HT wants change. This acknowledges the vulnerability of the role expectation that the trustee, the group, will perform the particular action important to the trustor. It also is an example of the reduced hierarchy identified by Steppanen (2007).

> P1: I'm investing trust in that opportunity for you, I need payback. I need payback, don't you?
>
> P1: Yeah, I need to be able to see that they can do it, do you know what I mean?

This is an example of calculus-based trust based on expectation and motives. It is reflecting a bi-directional aspect; this fits the model of AO and suggests causality flows from each component of AO to the latent variable of academic optimism. This response indicates reciprocity, a trust component/action in Stappenen (2007) analysis of intra-organisational trust.

> P1: I'll never bottle anything up. If I'm not happy with somebody or something that they've done … we'll discuss that later – and I'll ask to see them either straight after the meeting **one-to-one**, and I will tell them

straight that I'm dissatisfied with what they've said or how they've behaved … that they know how I feel …

This HT comment is an example of the HT reducing the deterrent of opportunistic behaviour (Steppanen 2007) and benevolence, which builds. This HT does not want to humiliate the staff member and has concerns about the CE of the group.

INT: So the idea of trust broken?

P1: Yes, I have … I spoke to the individual, told them how I felt, why I was disappointed, why I'd given them the trust in the first place and my expectation back … **but the school will only move forward** if we all work together … co-operation, communication and trusting one another.

This comment strongly evidences a trusting action and a clear message; this acknowledges a mutual dependence, disposition to trust. The HT is protecting the trustor perception that the trustee adheres to a set of principles that is acceptable to the trust; predictability of behaviour, an antecedent to intra-organisational trust.

P1: So **I'll throw it to them**, so I've automatically **thrown my trust away** and say, "what are you going to do?"

This is a very challenging response. It is intentional and reflects Weibel (2003) argument that the difference between interpersonal trust is influenced by the organisation framework, which he argues does not determine the quality of the social interaction. In this example the HT clearly indicates through the commentary there are high levels of knowledge and calculus-based trust to the extent that this comment was made. It is a challenge to the group on their dependable goodwill (Blois 1999) for an expectation of positive response, and arguably an expectation of the HT that the staff will not act in an opportunistic way, that the relationship is characterised by fairness and good intentions. However, there is, in the following comment, an indicator of aspects of calculus-based trust (Lewicki et al., 2006) in that there is an evaluation of the staff's ability to conduct a role based on some past

event; expectation again linked to a trust transaction based on previous encounters/performance demonstrates a calculated approach. Janowics-Panjaitan and Noorderhaven (2006) offer the concept of strategic-level trust existing at the executive level which is focused on organisational objectives. This HT, at the executive level, is giving the trust to achieve the school objectives rather than operational level trust where inter-personal trust predominates on daily interactions. This HT is signalling to staff what type of behaviours are expected and which ones will be reciprocated, both antecedents to intra-organisational trust.

> P1 … give them the trust, but because of perhaps **what they've done in the past**, you need to be a little bit more prescriptive with your expectation of how they run with that.
>
> P1: It is hard to deal with, but being an optimistic person, you move forward from it – perhaps too trusting, in a way – I give people the benefit of the doubt on the way they've manipulated a situation**.**

This exemplifies that the HT has experienced trust violations and breaches in the past. It suggests deficits in structural assurance in this school since the guarantees and structure referring to this HT's beliefs are diminished, hindering the promotion of successful interactions with some staff who have behaved in this way, which supports the counter-workplace behaviour literature.

> P1: I think if you unpick it, obviously there's a link between trust and a good school, you need the children trusting in the teachers, the teachers – up to a point – trusting parents.
>
> P1**: I wouldn't have said that it affected the performance** … first time in my teaching career I experienced anything like that … **but there was definitely a frosty atmosphere between parents and teachers, and I think it affected the school.**

The participant response demonstrates trust and performance are linked and is relational between groups. It is an example of organisational trust among people within the school. Trust was damaged by an incident that impacted on climate in

school, a significant breach in trust between two groups. In the response below, Stappenen (2007) model would identify openness, goodwill and intentionality as antecedents, components and organisational glue. However, there is an aspect of risking these actions. Notably, there is a vulnerability that the other (parents), might act in an opportunistic way as opposed to confidence and predictability. Gambetta (1998 p.218) terms this “freedom to disappoint” the others’ expectations or as Hosmer (1995) notes, the probability of this disappointment occurring is not known.

In this example the trust breach was repaired, and the positive expectation or belief that this approach would work is based on the decision to trust. Trust is generative as it builds through new interactions and the context of those interactions, i.e. open evenings in which integrity, credibility and openness are demonstrated by the school. These are components of trust. Changes in work practice to influence situational normality, a calculated trusting change to influence perceptions amongst parents that this school is a well-ordered environment and that the staff have the attributes of ability, benevolence and integrity, i.e. the factors of perceived trustworthiness.

> P1: We did a lot of additional work links with the community, **open evenings**, the children were singing, inviting the parents in, and it took a little bit of time.
>
> INT: Did the school pull together?
>
> P1: YES!
>
> INT: But the violation came … was the trust broken within the school?
>
> P1: Yes, very much so, and the school got caught in the middle of it. The staff pulled together - the staff did unite and drew together.

The group pulls around the staff member, protecting the AO of the school. The school social ties are tested, vulnerability acknowledged, an aspect that builds trust

around you. The social relationships demonstrated here are identified antecedents to intra-organisational trust.

> INT: So, at that point the school was vulnerable and you became vulnerable …
>
> P1: Yes.
>
> P1: It was very difficult – but it was a very, very difficult and strange situation; the senior management certainly felt isolated from the staff. It's the first time I've experienced that.

Both institutional and interpersonal trust has been damaged, and clearly, is unusual in this HT's career. Sacket (2002), Bennett and Robinson (2000), would identify this as an example of counter-workplace behaviour, dysfunctional behaviour as having a very significant impact on this school's organisational trust. Staff who are exhibiting these counter-workplace behaviours are likely to be poorly engaged in the organisation and will continue to engage in these behaviours at the risk of losing their jobs. In later examples in these commentaries from other HTs, this is the outcome of those breaches in trust, termination of contract.

> INT: And because this person had been difficult and complained against you, they became isolated.
>
> P1: Yes …
>
> INT: And they're still in your school. Are they treated slightly differently now? Are you cautious round that person?
>
> P1: Yes. As are other members of staff.
>
> INT: OK. Have you ever made yourself vulnerable to establish levels of trust with people?
>
> P1: No, I try not to.
>
> INT: Do you think you can grow trust?
>
> P1: Yes, you can.
>
> INT: So, highly trusting teachers tend to be more exciting and open to change and more adaptable, more resilient.
>
> P1: I totally agree with you.
>
> INT: Can you expand on that a bit?

P1: Yes – some teachers are keen to take on new ideas, to experiment - to look over the edge, so to speak … to excite the children.

This participant response indicates trust is generative, and innovation and the willingness to take risks and take the initiative termed goodwill trust (Das and Teng, 2001, Lann et al., 2011) to achieve a mutual benefit. The participant agrees that trust equates to resilience and adaptability. Innovation equates risk taking boundary between trust and risk-taking relationship based on FT and trust in the HT; the structures that make the environment feel trustworthy and one in which trusting action can take place.

The next HT responses also indicate that trust is generative.

P1: I think they all build on each other … over time.

INT: Yes, I think you're right.

P1: They build on each other.

Trust can be built, constructed, and takes time based on integrity and knowledge of how the trustor behaves.

INT: So you've not had your trust completely breached or violated?

P1: Yes, and that one person's left.

INT: They've gone now?

P1: They've gone …

INT: They've left.

Another fracture event acknowledged with historical reference trustor/trustee relationship has broken down, the result being termination of contract.

INT: What do you think of you being a benevolent leader in terms of trust?

P1: Yes, I agree. Understanding where your staff are at, what sort of emotions **they're feeling at that time** … sometimes their life is good – with personal pressures etc. – sometimes it's not that good at all.

Gabarro (1987) noted that leaders need to use time to develop appropriate positive personal relationships. In this HT response, emotional attachment is evidenced through the use of plural and there is relational trust evidence (Nooteboom, 2006) through the care and empathy demonstrated. The staff perceives the HT as a trusting person to share complex issue; they are expecting a benevolent reliable response.

> INT: By being benevolent you're building trust, aren't you?
>
> P1: Yes.

Benevolence builds trust in the individual relationship that this teacher has and actions from HT illustrate that the organisation can be flexible and these acts of trusting and support has benefits for the CE, FT; all round it is the glue.

> P1: Is this just for your ears … the majority of them, I think, would keep it. There are one or two that I would not divulge certain things – because they're so close to one or two others - it would be bound to go out.
>
> INT: So you try and manage the trusting relationships in your school?
>
> P1: Yeah.

This school's FT scores in the high range broad but with the biggest range of outliers, interesting response - *this is for your ears*. HT acknowledges key trusting relationships/partners, in effect does not trust some staff. The HT notes that trust needs care and maintenance in this school by choosing who to trust. This HT decision to trust is based on manifestation of trustworthiness. This example is exemplified in the literature as the degree to which one trust fluctuates along a continuum of intensity (Williams, 2001). It also identifies with Stappenen (2007) very strongly as an intentional behaviour, an antecedent of intra-organisational trust. In the next section the HT, in this example, identifies with Shaw (1997) thresholds of

trust and demonstrates a reliance on that person and the consequences of one's trust not being met; the trust component of openness has not been reciprocated.

> INT: So do you invest trust to build trust?
>
> P1: There have been occasions where something has been said … after one, it's found its way to the other very, very quickly … and I've heard it back then through the other grapevine, coming back the other way. So obviously the person who broke the trust in the first place hasn't made that much of an effort to tell the other person – hey, I'm only telling you this, but it can't go any further.

This HT has experienced trust violation and there is a fracture and it is not repairable, and supports the literature on counter-workplace behaviours. Bijlsma-Frakema and Koopman (2003) identify the influence of the shadow of the past influencing how the trustor feels if their position is stable or precarious (Payne and Clark 2003). In this response it is clear the HT does not move towards trusting action with this teacher.

> P1: It has happened once … it's happened twice.
>
> INT: So now you're very cautious about it.
>
> P1: I'm very cautious, yes.
>
> INT: Was that a teacher?
>
> P1: Yeah.
>
> INT: OK, and how long had they been in the school?
>
> P1: About ten, fifteen years.

Risk-taking in this relationship which builds trust will not take place.

> INT: So that person's deliberately trying to impact on the collective efficacy of your school …?
>
> P1: YES!
>
> P1: Yeah. So they have gone.
>
> INT: Definitely gone. OK.
>
> P1: GONE!

This indicates that the HT was prepared to allow this staff member to return to school. The literature identifies that you can breach personal trust twice; in this example the person has repeated the violation with the HT and the HT response is to terminate the employment.

> INT: Did you feel that you'd been let down, that your trust had been broken?
>
> P1: Oh yeah.
>
> P1: Oh yes. Yes, very divisive, pulling people … organising them, you know … controlling them.

This is an exemplification of actions taken to protect the institutional trust and the HT. These staff can contaminate the institutional trust and are identifiable in the AO Likert survey. This member of staff in this school has influence on the CE and consequently the FT across the school. Control and social influence as an antecedent for the trustee who left and had their contract of employment terminated; a clear example of reduced intra-organisational trust.

This is an extract from another HT and represents a secondary form of trust, the decision to trust, i.e. the belief in staff trustworthiness manifested by trusting them. Huff and Kelly (2003) indicate that for honest trust to happen there is an expectation for trustworthy behaviour and an intentional act (antecedent) must be present.

> P1: I do trust them, and I would hope that they would trust me. I make decisions often that they don't like, but they know it's fair.
>
> I think further down the line they'll understand why I've made that decision … OK, we trust you. We know you're doing it for the right reasons.

This is an example of bi-directional relationship and acknowledges that being fair is important; a moral choice made and shares the rationale behind the choice. This

exemplifies time needed for accepting these choices and the culture is open, a condition of institutional trust. However, the HT comments that:

> P1: Mind you, I'm sure there are staff who don't trust me.
>
> INT: Do you know who they are?
>
> P1: Yeah, yeah. I know one – there's only one, I think, who'd be a bit like this.
>
> INT: Are they a spoiler?
>
> P1: Yeah. I've worked with them for a very, very long time and he tried for the deputy headship (unclear speech) and they didn't get it.

This comment supports Williams' (1993) term, calculative trust, in which the individual, HT, accepts a certain level of vulnerability based on the understanding of the positive and negative consequences of maintaining this relationship. This trust breach by a senior member of staff is damaging at a relational and organisational level. The comment clearly identifies these staff and can identify them from the survey instrument. Time acknowledged again is this matured trust, and therefore much harder or more brittle, more impactful/damaging if breached; this type of trust is predominantly integrity biased, based on time served relationship or reputation.

> P1: No, I'd probably be more vulnerable around him … I wouldn't confide many things to many people anyway… unless I knew I'd crossed the "t"s and dotted the "i"s, I wouldn't say anything.
>
> INT: So you're being quite benevolent, you're trusting him to do something for you, aren't you?
>
> P1: Yes, I suppose so.
>
> P1: I am trusting him, yes, to do this, and I'm taking him with me as well, so yes, hopefully.

Not a given that the trust will be reciprocated - this situational normality is the HT believes that the risk will have a benefit. This develops and strengthens institutional trust. There was a counter to this altruism:

P1: Yes, nearly dragged us down, very nearly.

P1: It's been a series of events since then, really, and that was because I was open, honest and completely trusted – completely 100% trusted in him – Estyn had realised that things hadn't been done.

INT: Oh dear. You won't do that again, then.

P1: No, never again. That was a big learning curve.

The participant HT view is that the violation had a collective effect on the school (us) and is linked to performance and scrutiny (Estyn), strong (100%); trust given and lost reflects the maturity of this relationship and a strong response that **it will never happen again**. This was damaging, even reflecting the sense of distrust as a result, in this person letting the school down under scrutiny from Estyn. This comment identifies with competence based trust (Nooteboom, 2006 and Sako and Helper, 1998); a trust type that Doney and Cannon (1997) term the lowest and most fragile level of trust.

In the context of this research, there is, emerging, antecedents to AO. In this participant comment there is a distinct bias towards knowledge based trust and the generative nature of trust itself. The knowledge based trust (Zucker, 1986) is evidenced by:

P1: **They know how I work**, and I create a lot of trust in my staff – all of them – teachers, teaching assistants – a lot of give and take …

P1: The trust was broken … it puts strain on everybody … and the atmosphere is broken down – that atmosphere that I wanted to create.

I create trust across all groups - this is reciprocal bi-directional with reference to performance - CE builds trusting relationships. HT acknowledges that trust can be broken and re-built, organisational expectation not being met with some staff, which impacts on the collective group; CE being eroded and not reflecting the ethic of the

HT, which implies that the HT is shaping beliefs by being reciprocal, reflecting Creed and Miles' (1996) view that knowledge-based trust is developed by the expectation that good will be returned in kind. Shapori, Sheppard and Cheraskin (1992) defined this as a courtship in which each party is careful not to violate the others' emerging trust.

> INT: As the Head, do you still invest the same amount of trust in that person?
>
> P1: I'm a little cautious, but I'll stick to my guns ... I work on trust, and you know.

This is calculative trust and is brokered depending on previous elements of the trusting relationship with this teacher. Therefore, the greater the exposure to each other, the greater the understanding and predictability about each other's behaviours. This is an intentional act by the HT; a generative act or trusting action.

> P1: I'm being open and honest and I believe that I've created a good atmosphere …they know what I expect; they know what standards they've got to deliver.

There are two factors from the definitions of trust, open and honest, identified; communicates expectation and what performance is needed *(standards).* This statement reflects inter-organisational trust at the level of ability in that the trustor (HT) perceives the innate ability for the group to get the job done. Gillespie (2003) identifies this as reliance based behaviours, reducing control and having a positive expectation about maintaining and improving standards.

> INT: OK. Do you think you can build trust?
>
> P1: Yeah.

Trust can be built suggesting there are key components and a binding agent or process. Stappenen (2007) identifies this antecedent as organisational glue.

> P1: I think it's trust in each other … we share information, we've got the same aims.

HT explores the data and identifies and states that trust is key and the expectation is the same across all groups in this school. The use of 'we' also reflects the literatures on affective trust (Nooteboom, 2006) and the absence of negative intentions.

> P1: With some, I think you've got to be honest and open … or if they're not competent in an area, right OK, let's do something … what will help you to become competent in it ... I think that if we trust each other and we can rely on each other.

Dependent on situation in the school, HT uses trust as a performance process and acknowledges that it is a collective (we) to support trust and reliance (predictability) identified which by some process (AE) as a transferable quality in this school … role model element identified and an assumption that everyone else is … we will make sure suggests a checking mechanism or integrity factor in play, a glue that holds relationship together (Singh and Siredeshmukh 2000)

> P1: I would hope that I'm as benevolent with one as the other as and when it's needed. I would hope that I don't treat teaching assistants and teachers differently. We're all doing the same thing – the best for the school.
>
> INT: Can you think of an example of when your trust has been completely shattered?
>
> P1: Yes, when I felt that had happened, luckily it's not with any of the staff that are here now, so it's a past episode
>
> There was a question of honesty; there was a question of openness.

Challenge to the HT integrity and erosion of interpersonal trust based on performance of a teacher. Note that openness and honesty as components of trust are raised by this head teacher, and is strongly associated with the Tschannen et. al., (2014) definition of trust in schools.

P1: And then, the following year, when they said they hadn't had it, everybody, everybody had to sign to prove that they had had it … when it happened a third time I said, right that's enough, and that was really hard.

INT: Off she went.

P1: She had it.

P1: Yes, because their lack of trust, their lack of honesty, their lack of competency meant that other staff had to do something that I wouldn't have asked for. They did resent it and I know that the atmosphere within the school definitely changed when that person left.

HT changes the structural assurance processes, i.e. the guarantees and regulations that are in place to facilitate trustworthy interactions because of these actions - note apologising to the group - this demonstrates vulnerability as a factor in perceived trustworthiness. The HT is relying on group perception, CE, to mitigate for the actions of one. Third violation and the response is hard edged. A consequence of this relational breakdown which impacted as stated on the atmosphere, then CE. Note the reference to it changing when the teacher left. This HT identifies different levels of trust in different staff. In this example, the antecedents to intra-organisational trust have been changed by the HT. The action of addressing the issue initially focused on the structural assurance aspect of the school. Secondly, in an effort to deter opportunistic behaviour this HT used the CE and collective group to reduce hierarchy. In essence, the trust breach leads to changes in the HT situational norms and belief in that this breach impacts at a personal and institutional level. Dimensions of trust are linked directly to the factors of perceived trustworthiness, particularly ability and integrity.

INT: So, 17 then – what do you do to build trust, and what do you do if it's broken?

P1: I've got to be honest, I find myself sometimes micro-managing because I'm rarely happy with the way other people do things.

HT does not exhibit high trust behaviour, rarely happy but accepts a level of ability versus performance. Acknowledgement that trust can be invested would suggest reciprocation. Also acknowledges that trust can be completely broken. Note that this situation counters the respondent's micro-management style and has learnt from this and listens to comments from teacher, therefore supporting bi-directional nature of FT, CE, AE.

> P1: I feel I can say I've invested a lot of trust … and I found the more I stood back the better she did, and she's doing an absolutely amazing job.

Risk-taking relationship has benefits and that by trusting this teacher the school benefits in several ways. This is supported by Huff and Kelly (2003) who note that for trust to develop there needs to be trustworthy behaviour and an intentional act.

> P1: Yeah, the other way – I just sometimes – I decide whether or not I'm going to be able to step back and let it happen.
>
> There was one teacher … she hadn't marked a bunch of the books … I'm walking into class to check books, my heart's going a little bit because I'm thinking, I don't know what I'm going to find, you know.

Consideration given by HT on his approach to either trust or not to trust by internally checking teachers' performance; which is an expectation on the HT. HT recalls this event as mortifying, a strong breach of interpersonal trust. HT states the teacher knew the visit was pending and this made the event more embarrassing. The collective group are impacted on because of an individual's breach of the structural assurance, regulations and expectations of the school around marking etc.

The participant went on to offer:

> INT: So you're hyper-vigilant of that person?
>
> P1: Yeah.
>
> INT: Because of that …

P1: And I think that's OK, I think I'm enlightened … that you don't need to monitor everybody at the same sort of level.

INT: Do you trust that person?

P1: Oh no, not at all.

This is a clear example of how counter-workplace behaviours impact on the leadership of this school. Reference to the teacher being underhanded. HT response also quite interesting in that his propensity towards trust with this teacher was very low and the reaction to his suspicions could be deemed untrustworthy. In essence he used a range of actions to catch the teacher out violating her trust. HT anticipates her reaction to challenge and identifies the updated perception he has about her actions before and after this point, i.e. she would again violate his trust in her to meet his expectations.

INT: Thank you for sharing that. So we discussed high levels of trust associated with student achievement, so high trusting schools equals high performance schools?

P1: (Pause) Yeah. High trusting schools – yeah, I think definitely.

INT: It's about co-operating, isn't it, and working together?

Hard work and trust linked to this HT reflects the expectation and orderly environment, the AE of a school, but this is influenced by trust interactions between teachers.

P1: Yes. Trust will be broken if somebody wasn't working for the whole. They know the expectations ... our expectations.

HT identifies that one breach impacts on the whole, i.e. collective expectations are clear, structured, and an orderly environment, the enactment of the two factors of FT and CE.

INT: Does that build trust in the school?

P1: Because people know what is expected.

Building trust based on expectation, therefore structural assurance and inter-organisational trust are high.

> INT: OK. So you're suggesting that trust and standard and expectations are related?
>
> P1: They are.

Clear link between trust and standards, her time to support the pupil. HT looking at the data too and identifying the trust breaker.

> INT: OK, so there are there … examples in your headship here where your trust has been broken?
>
> P1: Yes … I was absolutely gutted and … the same one you've got there … looking at scores for faculty trust.
>
> P1: I was feeling most aggrieved and totally pissed off, to be honest … and without everybody doing their individual jobs, nobody's able to do their job.
>
> INT: You said a teacher came to see you after the event and said what we can do to help, so the collective came to support you in that moment.
>
> P1: Yes.

In this example the honest conversation leads to restored integrity and repair process to act as a deterrent to opportunistic behaviours, and a reduction of risk of future violations. Relational trust built or demonstrated by trusting actions.

> P1: Yes, as did this person, but what she has done has **weakened my trust** between me and her.
>
> INT: Have you spoken to her about that?
>
> P1: We've discussed it, yes, and as I've told her (name of person in question), I realise this is disruptive, but it's disruptive to every other person.
>
> P1: I don't expect anyone to do anything I wouldn't do myself, and if I'm asking somebody to do something it's because I need them to do it.
>
> INT: Are you suggesting that, by investing your trust … it's a huge thing to give away?

P1: It is.

INT: You're expecting a reciprocal …

P1: Yes, I am.

Weakened trust suggesting trust has some elasticity to it. Trust can be invested with an expectation and a return on the investment. Das and Teng (2001); Laan et al., (2011); Sako (1998) would identify this narrative with broad trust thought which the HT is willing to take the initiative over and above what was promised to attain mutual benefit. The HT is not being opportunistic but fair, trying to build resilience into the relationship between her and the teacher.

5.19 Summary

As a head teacher I am expected to make decisions and effect change to improve opportunities for all learners. This is a complex and demanding role in a behaviourally rich environment. This research has applied a school-based organisational measure, AO, and interviewed head teachers about their views, experiences and opinions on the components of the construct. The research has drawn on the literature of positive organisational psychology to try and interpret the narratives presented. In essence, the research has highlighted the importance of positive school climates and how important the head teacher is in creating these climates. Current educational reform in Wales is creating turbulence in schools and whilst the ambition is welcomed, the details are going to need teachers, LSAs and head teachers innovating and jointly creating bespoke curricular for their schools. This is a change in the landscape that will work if the behaviours and relationships are in sync in school. In New York, the district educational board mandates schools to administer and publish in school climate measures based on trusting climates and academic performance indices. I would advocate the same approach and use

the AO survey as a benchmark from which schools can understand where and how to invest the energy during this period of substantive change and how to become a learning organisation to manage that change.

In 2017 WG commissioned the OECD to produce a report entitled 'Implementing Educational Polices, Developing Schools as Learning Organisations in Wales'. This report was significant and detailed several aspects which were identified, and which resonate with this thesis and its measures.

The OECD report 2017 used a mixed methods design and established in the executive summary that:

> "A school as a learning organisation has the capacity to change and adapt routinely to new environments and circumstances as its members, individually and together, learn their way to realising their vision. Wales has set out to develop all schools as learning organisations in support of the ongoing curriculum reform".

This assessment has shown that:

> "The majority of schools in Wales seem well on their way towards developing as learning organisations; however, a considerable proportion of schools are still far removed from realising this objective".

Two dimensions are less well developed:

> "Although schools need to be adequately supported to develop as learning organisations, many actions are within their control. School leaders play a vital role in creating a trusting and respectful climate that allows for open discussions about problems, successful and less successful practices, and the sharing of knowledge. This is also essential for narrowing the gaps in perceptions between staff."

This thesis offers a contribution to knowledge on which it can measure and classify the actions the head teachers need to enact to create a trusting and respectful climate that allows for open discussions and knowledge sharing.

5.20 Contribution to Knowledge

The dominance of trust as an intra-organisational factor in this research is established as having significant influence on head teachers when considering to move across the threshold proposed by Dietz et al., (2006) from presumed trustworthy qualities to trusting actions. Manifestations of trustworthiness are exemplified, as are the consequences of breaching trust, in these case study schools. HT being optimistic and predominantly in the deliberative phase is noteworthy and suggests that the research was carried out during a period in the school year when implementation has yet to be enacted. The links between optimism from a HT perspective and school performance are established in this case study, as are the various types of organisational optimism. The importance of organisational citizenship and positive organisational behaviour as an antecedent to collective efficacy are identified, as are counter-workplace behaviours and their impact on head teachers' trusting actions. Generative trust and its formulation are identified, as is its repair, and emerge through this research.

Academic Optimism (Hoy, 2006) is the combination of three components that positively influence student achievement. These are academic standards, efficacy and trust. Hoy et al. (2006) have demonstrated that the three work together in reciprocal causal relationship to create a positive academic climate.

This research has identified that there is a causal relationship in the case study schools in West Wales and that optimism from school leaders is important in creating a mood or modelled behaviours that support the group sub-constructs of AO. I have demonstrated that the bi-directional nature of the construct as Bandura (1997) identified is not equal in its contribution to the latent nature of AO. Trust and

optimism as antecedents to the construct are either inhibitors or promote the development of the sub-constructs of academic optimism. There is distinct evidence of Stappenen (2007) antecedents, trust components and consequences of trust in the HT commentary which clearly impact on the optimism of the HT in this research. There are several contributions to knowledge this thesis makes, with practical application of the AO survey instrument validated across all the staff who worked in these case study schools.

Firstly, the optimistic behaviour of the HT is critical in the construction of an academically optimistic school. Several HT comments noted that they actively model being optimistic even when they might not be optimistic themselves. This modelling activity takes place often, in some cases daily, with face to face interaction across the school. HT also, in the main, are optimistic people who identify that optimism can be taught and fostered. This provides an additional line of enquiry in that the methods of teaching or fostering optimism across a school are not established and would need to consider the antecedents identified to AO in this thesis. An example from the transcripts identified the following comment as important when considering this choice of optimism being taught or fostered. The HT self-efficacy is the mechanism for modelling the optimistic behaviour in this school.

> *I would presume the school is in high optimism … everybody is as optimistic as me.*

Other examples provided indicated the collective efficacy as a mechanism for developing optimism based on the view of the HT. In two separate examples, this was noted as:

> *They are optimistic about how they can get children to where they want them to be.*

or

> *We like to try and get the best out of the children … I would say we are an optimistic school.*

HT comments distinctly identified two specific phases when considering their own optimism: deliberation and implementation phases. There is suggestive evidence that these phases may change in year as the school develops alongside its SDP and evaluates its performance and goals. This was exemplified by the following HT who considered themselves to be modelling optimism and identified an implementation phase:

> *They are optimistic once there's a structure in place to be able to raise academic levels.*

Several types of optimism are evidenced in the comments from HT and are identified in the typology of optimism at an individual and group level. This is an important finding in that a HT optimism bolsters the school culture, particularly the organisational commitment in the school. Teachers' professional commitment was identified by the HT as important and how it is linked to the school performance.

Secondly, organisational commitment and self-efficacy are critical in that they are linked. Organisational commitment is dependent on a HT self-efficacy, which in turn influences the collective efficacy of the group. Organisational commitment can be categorised into three groups: emotional, willingness, and obligation to the organisation. In this thesis, willingness was the dominant characteristic of organisational commitment. This relationship was identified in the commentary on cultivation of optimistic behaviours. The utility of this finding for a HT has several characteristics. A school's organisational commitment can be exemplified in the following quotes. In this example an obligation is identified.

I found myself telling staff you must be optimistic … the school expects of you.

This HT further developed the point by stating:

I am not asking you to be positive, I am telling you, you have to, otherwise …

This expectation and identification of organisational commitment …

We are very optimistic and very eager that the children do well.

The following exemplifies how the HT influences the school's organisational commitment by modelling optimistic behaviour to the staff.

I always try to promote an optimistic feel … to be cheerful … you are more ready to give it a go.

Organisational commitment is a key school-based characteristic that HT need to be mindful of in their role in influencing self-efficacy beliefs to improve organisational commitment of their schools.

The transcripts also revealed that the HT could offer examples of trust violations, and recovery from these experiences was poor and damaging. The direct impact of these experiences impacted on OC, OCB and the three constituent parts of AO.

A threshold of trust was exemplified, and HT acknowledged crossing this threshold as their experiences of trusting behaviours with staff developed over time. In the transcripts, teacher competency and counter-workplace behaviours are noted as the main examples of trust violations. The group CE is impacted on when these violations occur in school. HT need to be mindful of their behaviours during these trust fracture events; the consequences are felt across all groups and therefore the AO of the school.

Oplatka (2006) argues that a positive atmosphere, positive collegial interaction, a sense of belonging, established norms … supportive relationships among staff all positively influenced teachers' OCB level, an AO school. These relationships are built on trust as a foundational experience across the school community. OECD (2017) noted that for schools to develop as learning organisations, they must ensure that the "learning culture is built on trust." HT are key in creating these conditions and promote trust in their schools by adopting trusting behaviours with all the staff. HT need to shape the school in such a way as to invoke positive OCB amongst the staff.

This research is important, and the significance of the findings are profound for the way schools are run and led. This thesis has re-contextualised an existing school measure, AO, and applied a new context with a new methodology. The mixed method approach has conformed and expanded the existing knowledge of AO as a school model. In seeking specific views of the HT on AO and its antecedents, a rich and varied insight into the behaviours of all groups of staff in these case study schools who impact on standards has emerged. The thesis demonstrates that HT influence the teachers' OCB, an antecedent to AO. The AO climate of a school reciprocates and influences the OCB of the teachers and staff. This is a new perspective on the antecedents of AO.

There was an existing gap in the literature, in that research offered examples of the quantitative dimension of AO across U.S. and Taiwanese schools. This thesis has contributed to knowledge by seeking the views of school leaders, i.e. HT, on their experiences of the construct and its constituent parts. This is a contribution to the

qualitative dimension of AO. Malloy (2012) develops this point, stating that AO can be utilised to shape the culture of any school leading to improved student success.

HT need to know what the school OCB is like and can use AO survey instrument as a collective snapshot in the school year, as an organisational measure, or baseline of the culture towards school improvement.

The research question is to evaluate the factors that influence the second order latent construct termed AO and its antecedents in sample primary schools in a specific geographical area, in Llanelli. The purpose of the thesis is to apply the sample survey instrument in ten different primary schools to establish if the construct could be validated. The study seeks to identify, through quantitative and qualitative research methods, not only the existence of AO but to identify the antecedents of the construct.

The objectives of the study are:

- To examine the three elements of the construct interaction and to establish if there is a developing dominance or bi-directional relationship evident from the results.
- What factors emerge and underlie the construct?
- What are the views on AO and its components from the head teachers of the schools in this research?
- To evaluate the antecedents of AO and the interplay of these factors on a school.

The chronology of the thesis involved using the Likert survey instrument across all members of the school community, notably to include the HT, teachers and support staff (termed LSAs). This approach has not been trialled before. The existing literature on the 2nd order construct termed AO has used large reference groups across large teacher population, notably in the U.S. Existing studies identified relationships between AO and student achievement and school based subject standardised test scores and individual sub-constructs of AO, collective efficacy, faculty trust and academic emphasis. In the initial quantitative phase the relationships between these sub-constructs was established with collective efficacy and faculty trust evidencing the strongest relationship. Academic emphasis, the drive for improved standards, was the weakest sub-construct of the three. When each sub-construct was examined at the individual level by staff type, the lowest scoring group for this sub-construct AE was head teachers. The strongest sub-construct was faculty trust. AO genesis lies in the social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1997), conceptualising human behaviour as triadic interaction between behaviour, personal factors and the environment. Bandura (1997) does not indicate that all three factors interact equally, and is dependent on which one is the strongest at any one time. The initial test of the construct and its utility supports this contention. However, in evaluating the utility of the instrument, the researcher conducted P.F.A. analysis to delve deeper to find those factors with the greatest influence at the time of data collection across the case study schools. P.F.A. analysis identified six factors (Table 11, Ch. 4).

This is a contribution in that the collective response from all groups identified aspects of trust as the dominant sub-construct of AO. The data set was small and the use of qualitative transcript analysis was employed to determine why this was

the case. The research focused on the head teachers as the unit of analysis primarily because there was no extensive literature on the views of head teachers and the collective impact AO has on their schools. Schools with high levels of academic optimism are associated with leaders who can demonstrate distributed leadership; conversely, when leadership was not aligned with the group, low levels of academic optimism were identified (Mascall, Leithwood, Straus and Sacks, (2008). This thesis demonstrates the utility of AO as an indicator of leadership capacity and influence in their schools.

Hoy (2009) states that teachers in efficacious schools demonstrate aspects of productivity and positive behaviours that affect school culture and its effectiveness.

The research, also through this method, sought to seek out the antecedents and views on what this data was suggesting and how this instrument could be useful in the current educational landscape. AO is a collective property about future-orientated judgments and capabilities; measuring this potentiality would be a very effective tool for the strategic lead in a school, the HT. The exploration of the sub-constructs and associated antecedents would provide some school level approaches to strengthen these sub-constructs and improve AO, which is an indicator of a focused and successful primary school. Head teachers need to understand the importance of organisational commitment, organisational citizenship behaviours, and optimistic cultures, since they all influence AO in some way.

Trusting school cultures are fundamental to a school developing a productive and collaborative workplace. The transcript analysis and P.F.A. both confirmed this and

the identification of the trust types from those transcripts demonstrates the importance and fragility of trust. Welsh Government, as part of the educational policy, The National Mission, proposes that schools need to focus effort on developing as learning organisations (SLO). I would suggest that AO could be used as a primer for establishing the school's capacity and willingness to embrace the demands of these changes to our current practice. The following extract demonstrates the synergy this thesis has with the OECD report 2017:

> "In an SLO, staff have a positive attitude towards collaboration and team learning. Trust and mutual respect are core values. They form the glue that holds the school together and allows for co-operation between individuals and teams to thrive. When people trust and respect each other, other means of governance and control can be minimised (Cerna, 2014; Bryk and Schneider, 2002). Creating an organisational culture of trust and optimism in which team learning and collaboration can thrive naturally involves most, if not all, members of the organisation."

This is where this research positions itself as a contribution to knowledge since LSAs were included in the survey instrument and are part of team learning because they are directly involved in the day to day routines and practice in the classroom.

Table 14: Trust and mutual respect in learning and working together (source Developing Schools as Learning Organisations, 2018)

Note: N: 1 625, 1 626, 1 625, 1 626 and 1 620 individuals respectively.
Source: OECD Schools as Learning Organisations Survey, 2017.

SLO survey statements	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
Staff spend time building trust with each other	0.9%	5.7%	19.1%	44.3%	30.1%
Staff treat each other with respect	0.6%	3.3%	10.8%	43.5%	41.9%
Staff feel comfortable turning to others for advice	0.9%	4.5%	10.9%	47.8%	35.9%
Staff listen to each other's ideas and opinions	0.5%	3.4%	11.1%	53.3%	31.7%
Staff give honest feedback to each other	0.8%	5.1%	17.9%	50.4%	25.8%

The table above proposes that in many schools in Wales trust and mutual respect are important values which are being worked on regularly. The OECD 2017 report identified the following:

> "For example, about 85% of respondents to the SLO survey indicated that "staff listen to other's ideas and opinions" and "treat each other with respect". However, respondents were somewhat more critical about the extent to which "staff give honest feedback to each other" and "spend time building trust with each other" – as can be seen from the proportions of staff who disagreed with these statements or responded neutrally. Looking at differences between staff categories, it was again found that teachers in general held more critical views, followed by learning support.

These critical views can and have been evidenced in this thesis as counter-workplace behaviours, breakdown of trust, black clouds, spoilers. This thesis also identified in case study schools that the LSAs as a group had higher levels of collective efficacy than the HT or the teachers; they are more optimistic as a group. This extract from the report OECD Schools as Learning Organisations Survey, 2017 supports the finding in this thesis that trust is a pivotal factor in schools in Wales.

> "For both levels of education, teachers were most critical: 11% of teachers reported that in their school, staffs were not open to others questioning their beliefs, opinions and ideas, compared to 6% of learning support workers, deputy head teachers and assistant head teachers, and 3% of head teachers.

These results suggest that additional efforts should be made to help increase people's willingness to deliberate new ways of working, find ways to encourage greater openness and move towards a learning culture built on trust in all schools in Wales. School leaders have a significant role in creating these conditions.

The utility of the concept of AO, the complexity of a school's organisational behaviours, beliefs and actions at a group and individual level are demonstrated in this thesis as being important when considering a school's effectiveness. The

contribution to the existing knowledge is that the survey instrument is relevant and can be used across all members of a school who are involved in learning.

5.21 Reflections on the Process, Limitations and Recommendations for Further Research

Reflections on the Process

There are changes the author would make to this research, as a result of the lessons and experience gained from undertaking such extensive research. The research was successful, in that it was able to apply the measurement the second order construct, termed Academic Optimism, across a range of primary schools in West Wales. It also demonstrated the utility of the construct in that it was applied to all groups who make up the school as a unit of analysis and who are directly involved in teaching and learning.

The interviews with head teachers produced rich and perceptive data, and led to the development of new evidence on school climate measures and leadership views on the measure. However, given the research method was mixed in nature, the interviews could have been developed had the researcher had significant prior experience in thematic analysis at the beginning of the research process. The initial proposed research was to apply the Likert survey measure across all of the 586 schools in the consortia region termed SWAMWAC (now termed ERW). The scale of this original idea was in principle doable but politically it did not gain full support from the regions. The adoption of PFS analysis and SPSS techniques was extremely challenging to the author whose knowledge of statistics was adequate at best, although the use of SPSS and PFA analysis demonstrated relational aspects and dominance in factor loadings in this research. Faculty trust and collective efficacy are clearly very important aspects of the schools climate in this research.

Following the suggested investigative guides set out in the methodology, ensuring an appealing and successful interview was difficult, as the author was listening and considering the next questions to probe further and generate deeper evidence. The transcripts demonstrate that head teachers like to talk and often veer away from the original question or offered answers that were difficult to explain.

The amount of the data from these interviews was exceptionally difficult to code and make sense of. However, the value of transcription was a rich understanding of the views offered and a connection established between the research and the evidence that may not have emerged if the author used NIVIO (which was used initially, then abandoned).

The data analysis was semantic; there were no pre-conceived ideas prior to analysis, and such a semantic process led to the development of themes which provided unforeseen results, particularly the importance of relational trust in a school and the impact a head teacher has on that factor. Conversely, the author was perplexed by the low Academic Emphasis scores as a factor of AO. Even more illuminating were the very clear examples of head teachers having experienced incidents of their trust being violated and the consequences of that breach.

A comparative approach, involving other schools of the other regions within ERW, Ceredigion, for example, may have generated understanding of how AO has changes with linguistic preferences, i.e. Welsh as the first language or Pembrokeshire as a region with more rural small schools and across federated schools, for example.

Undertaking research using one complex survey instrument would have been simpler using qualitative approach across a large sample of schools across the ERW region. However, the author, as a head teacher, wanted to research what the head teachers thought of the construct. After the interviews had been completed, all of the interviewees stated they had questions of this nature posed to them before. The mixed methods approach was seeking to triangulate meaning between the literature, quantitative and qualitative approaches, to add to the knowledge of the construct termed AO.

5.22 Limitations of the Research

This research provides a contribution to the existing knowledge about AO. More importantly it contributes to professional educational practice, in that it provides an addition to the body of knowledge as to what the construct looks like in Welsh schools and what antecedents support the development of an academically optimistic school. However, there are improvements in the research to be made. Primarily the interviews should have included the other respondents, i.e. teachers and LSAs for their views on the components that make up AO. Their views on optimism and examples of how they think of it impacts on the performativity culture of their schools. The significant outliers in the data would also yield important narrative as to their views and why they are positioned in the data where they are.

This research is limited by the locality and timeframe in which the research is positioned. It is restricted by the lack of comparative analysis with other schools across the region termed ERW, was considered and rejected, given that the results

may have identified regional differences in schools that could have been problematical in a regional school improvement service, ERW.

Finally, through the research, a number of aspects were identified which would benefit from further study, both to explore new elements of the construct and to use the AO as part of a suite in school measures that could provide benchmark data as schools develop into learning organisations, specifically those aspects identified by the OECD report 2017, establishing a culture of enquiry and collaboration which will require trust; especially since in 2014 the sector has seen a reduction in staff being less open and willing to change and innovate.

5.23 Recommendations for Further Research

Using the theoretical framework established in this thesis, additional research could be taken on a larger case study basis to consider how AO varies across Wales by locality, language, pupil population and ethnicity of those schools. First-hand comparative research could be developed to test the transactional nature of this research among the three components of AO. The author would suggest that a suite of climate measures resulting from additional research into its application would create an all-Wales school measure, going forward as a base line indicator as the education system reforms are initiated, developed and embedded. This would create a new and useful way of judging schools, their performance and how optimistic they are during periods of change. I would also conduct a similar study to include commentary from the teachers and LSA groups identified in this study.

Conclusion

An evaluation of the significance of Academic Optimism of a sample of primary schools in this research has been illuminating. AO is a construct which has significance and relevance today in the current climate in Wales and pace of reform for WG. The utility of the concept as a primer for understanding the group level attributes and how they are interacting in a school is useful and, I would suggest, should be mandatory. A school to develop as a learning organisation, to effect change and embrace the new curriculum needs to be trustworthy and as Hoy and Tschannen (1999) proposed in their definition of trust:

> "One party's willingness to be vulnerable to another based on the confidence that the latter party is (a) benevolent (b) reliable (c) competent (d) honest (e) open."

It is my view as a serving head teacher that AO can be used not as a belief that things will get better but as stated by Boonen, Pinxten, Van Damme and Onghena, (2014, p.8):

> "… offer a rich explanation of school team behaviour in terms of cognitive, affective and behavioural dimension."

Or as Strakova and Simonova (2015 p.55) state:

> "Academic optimism emphasises the potential of schools ... to overcome the power of socio-economic factors that impair student achievement."

Appendix 1

SAOS Survey Instrument: All answers are strictly confidential and anonymous.

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

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Teachers in this school are able to get through to the most difficult pupils	1	2	3	4	5	6
Teachers here are confident they will be able to motivate their pupils	1	2	3	4	5	6
If a child doesn't want to learn, teachers here give up	1	2	3	4	5	6
Teachers here don't have the skills needed to produce meaningful results	1	2	3	4	5	6
Teachers in this school believe that every child can learn	1	2	3	4	5	6
These Pupils come to school to learn	1	2	3	4	5	6
Home life provides so many advantages that pupils are bound to learn	1	2	3	4	5	6
Pupils here just aren't motivated to learn	1	2	3	4	5	6
Teachers in this school do not have the skills to deal with pupils disciplinary problems	1	2	3	4	5	6
The opportunities in this community help ensure that these pupils wil learn	1	2	3	4	5	6
Learing is more difficult at this school because pupils are worried about their safety	1	2	3	4	5	6
Drug and alcohol abuse in the community make learning difficult for pupils here	1	2	3	4	5	6
Teachers in this school trust their pupils	1	2	3	4	5	6
Teachers in this school trust the parents	1	2	3	4	5	6

Pupils in this school care about each other	1	2	3	4	5	6
Parents in this school are reliable in their commitments	1	2	3	4	5	6
Pupils in this school can be counted upon to do their work	1	2	3	4	5	6
Teachers can count on parental support	1	2	3	4	5	6
Teachers here believe that Pupils are competent learners	1	2	3	4	5	6
Teachers think that most of the parents do a good job	1	2	3	4	5	6
Teachers can believe what parents tell them	1	2	3	4	5	6
Pupils here are secretive	1	2	3	4	5	6

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

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
The school sets high standards for performance	1	2	3	4	5	6
Pupils respect others who get good results	1	2	3	4	5	6
Pupils seek extra work so they can get good results	1	2	3	4	5	6
Academic achievement is recognised and acknowledged by the school	1	2	3	4	5	6
Pupils try hard to improve on previous work	1	2	3	4	5	6
The learning enviroment is orderly and serious	1	2	3	4	5	6
The pupils in this school can achieve the goals that have been set for them	1	2	3	4	5	6
Teachers in this school believe that their pupils have the ability to achieve academically	1	2	3	4	5	6

Appendix 2

School Academic Optimism Survey Scoring Guide

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

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

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

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

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

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

Compute Academic Optimism Score - Secondary Schools

1. 1. Create standardized (Std) scores for each component as follows:
   - Std for Collective Efficacy (Std CE) = (3.96-CE)/.33
   - Std for Faculty Trust (Std FT) = (3.65-FT)/.39
   - Std for Academic Emphasis (Std AE) = (2.75-AE)/.26
2. 2. Then compute an Academic Optimism Score as follows:

Academic Optimism = [.99X(Std CE)] +[.92X(Std FT)] +[.75X(Std AE)]

Appendix 3

E-mail invitation to participate in research project

From: "Joe Cudd"

To: Local Head Teachers

Subject: Joe Cudd, Head Teacher

Hello, I would like your help. (*Name of head teacher*) in (*name of school*) has piloted a questionnaire for me in her school. Some of you have agreed previously to also be part of my PhD research. I am launching a web-based questionnaire in the next week or so that will collect views within different groups in our schools, the target groups being teachers and LSAs. I would like to ask for two pieces of info:

a) are you willing to be part of this work (which is anonymous), and

b) can you advise me of the number of LSAs in your schools today ... the research focus is exploring the issues around a theory termed academic optimism ... and you are all most welcome to have the research results.

Appendix 4

Questions Used in the Interviews

Transcript Analysis:

The following questions served as the basis for the semi-structured interviews that were conducted with the head teachers.

Introduction: Sharing of school analysis to date that is based on collective response across the school community: This is your school data compared with your responses in the sample. You can see there is some variation and that's what we are going to discuss today. Your responses are strictly confidential and anonymous.

1) How would you describe your school in terms of optimism? What are your thoughts on optimism being linked to school performance? Do you think optimism is an underlying characteristic of a successful school?

2) As a head teacher are you conscious of the need to cultivate optimistic behaviours in your school? How do you facilitate this?

3) What examples can you give of those conditions/optimistic behaviours?

4) How do you create the conditions in which optimism thrives? Can it be fostered and taught? (This means professional development can aim to foster academic optimism in schools, which in turn can positively impact student achievement … comment please).

5) The research is examining collective beliefs at whole school level … what do you think this might mean in your school? Is there a collective belief? What is it in your school?

6) How do you build and shape the collective belief in view of the fact you're dealing with different groups within your school?

   What is the key characteristic that you believe impacts on collective beliefs in your school?

   This question will lead into developing Number 8.

7) Interviewer Prompts: "benevolent, reliable, competent, honest, and open" (Hoy, Tarter and Woolfolk Hoy, 2006, p.429).

8) The first component of academic optimism is self-efficacy.

9) People construct beliefs about their capacity to perform at a given level of competence. How do you support them (all staff or is it different for different groups) in building these beliefs?

10) These beliefs affect how much effort with which people apply themselves, how long they will persist in the face of difficulties, their resilience in dealing with

failures, and the stress they experience in coping with demanding situations. Why do you think your CE is higher/lower than the collective? Explain.

11) Collective efficacy has an impact on a school's culture. Why? What's your view on this?

12) Teachers with high levels of efficacy are more organised and better planned? Agree? Comment. Does the same apply to LSAs … does this mature with experience?

13) Efficacy relies on staff capacity to perform at a given level of competence … how do you build competence amongst different groups?

14) Research has found that collective efficacy is actually the key variable in explaining student achievement. Why? What do you think is the reason for this? Is it something you identify with in your school?

15) The second component of academic optimism is faculty trust in parents and students.

16) Trust is identified as a key factor in academic optimism. It is characterised by trust amongst students, teachers and parents … what are your thoughts on trust … is it linked to school performance?

17) What do you do to build trust? What do you do if it's broken? Can you give an example in both cases?

18) Teacher efficacy is also strongly correlated to trust.

19) Trust in regard to academic optimism is defined as a "willingness to be vulnerable to another party based on the confidence that the party is benevolent, reliable, competent, honest, and open" (Hoy, Tarter and Woolfolk Hoy, 2006, p.429)

20) High levels of trust are associated with student achievement (Hoy, 2002) and Hoy attributes this relationship to the co-operative nature of learning, and the fact that co-operation requires a degree of trust. Hoy, Tarter and Woolfolk Hoy (2006) also note schools with highly trusting teachers often have more vicarious learning happening, which in turn builds efficacy … your views?

21) The third component of academic optimism is academic emphasis.

22) Academic emphasis is a drive for academic achievement, where teachers set high, but attainable, goals for students, maintain an orderly and serious learning environment, and where students are motivated and respect academic achievement … why is the school/your score low/high? Explain.

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