Literature Review

The Role of Trust in School Organizations

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Trust has been explored in educational and organizational research as vital for efficient and effective operations. Within a school or district, the primary measure of effectiveness is student achievement. Studies have found that trust contributes to achievement through a direct impact on standardized test scores (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Sweetland & Hoy 2000; Tschannen-Moran, 2004), as well as by improving factors that contribute to student learning, such as the level of teacher collaboration (Meier, 2002; Tschannen-Moran, 2001); participation in decision making (Sweetland & Hoy, 2000); a systemic ability to respond quickly to trends (Hoy, Gage, Tarter, 2006); collective teacher efficacy (Goddard, Hoy & Hoy, 2000; Tschannen-Moran, 2004); productive conflict resolution (Tschannen-Moran, 2004) and organizational commitment (Tschannen-Moran, 2003). This literature review summarizes findings related to these benefits and examines the factors that influence the development of trust.

Definition of Trust

Studies of trust define the concept as a belief that a person or group will not take advantage of the trusting person's weaknesses. Hoy and Tschannen-Moran (1999) proposed this commonly-cited description: "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." The confidence in another is not given easily, but must be earned on an ongoing basis (Meier, 2002).

Bryk and Schneider (2002) used the term "relational trust" to describe the dynamics of the social interactions that occur in the school environment. In a school, teachers, parents, students and principals are mutually dependent on each other to achieve their goals. This mutual dependence creates a feeling of vulnerability as each party relies on the others to fulfill their responsibilities. Satisfaction results when the parties have a shared understanding of their roles and believe each other to be acting with good intentions (Bryk & Schneider, 2002).

This consideration of intentions distinguishes relational trust from the trust that individuals unconditionally place in an institution (organic trust) or the type of trust that is governed by specifically defined roles and expectations in a legal relationship (contractual trust) (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). Organic trust is based on common moral or ethical beliefs among a homogenous group of people. There is a presumption that the organization and its members mean to do well, with no need to analyze their motivations. Similarly, the specific outcomes and

processes defined in a contractual trust relationship do not consider the intentions of each party, only whether the good or service was produced as required (Bryk & Schneider, 2002).

The development of relational trust is based on several factors, including the personalities of each party, shared values, moods, institutional processes, and the stage of the relationship (Tschannen-Moran, 2004).

The literature on trust in schools distinguishes between principal-teacher relationships, teacher-teacher relationships, and the relationships that teachers have with parents and students. The dynamics of trust in each relationship are correlated, but have different characteristics (Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 1999).

Elements of Trust

Wayne Hoy and Megan Tschannen-Moran have dedicated much of their research to the characteristics and impact of trust for school organizations and student achievement. Their definition of trust identifies five characteristics of people or groups who are trusted: benevolence, reliability, competency, honesty and openness (Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 2003; Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 1999; Tschannen-Moran, 2001; 2003; 2004). These elements are consistent with the aspects of trust examined throughout the literature (Geist, 2002; Hoy, Gage & Tarter, 2006; Hoy & Sweetland, 2001; Sweetland & Hoy, 2000; Tarter, Bliss & Hoy, 1989; and Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000).

> Benevolence is explained as a consideration for the needs of another party and a willingness to promote their interests.
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> Reliability reflects the consistency and predictability of positive behaviors.
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> Competency refers to the skills and abilities needed for the task.
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> Honesty is a commitment to the truth and promises made. Trusted people are not hypocritical and will take responsibility for their errors.
>
> Openness includes transparency in decisions and operations through accurate and timely communication and sharing of control (Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 1999; Tschannen-Moran, 2003).

Trust Instruments

Two of the most common instruments for measuring trust in schools are the Faculty Survey and the Principal Survey (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2003). Both questionnaires are based on a 6-degree Likert Scale and are applicable for elementary, middle, and high schools.

The Faculty Trust Scale measures faculty trust in the principal, faculty trust in colleagues, and faculty trust in clients (students and parents). Students and parents are combined into one subscale because previous research found that there was no difference in teachers' trust of those groups (Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 1999). The Faculty Trust Scale contains 26 items, such as "Teachers in this school typically look out for each other," and "The principal doesn't tell teachers what is really going on." Tested in 146 elementary schools, 66 middle schools, and 97 high schools, reliability was .98 for trust in principal, .93 for trust in colleagues, and .94 for trust in clients (Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 2003; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2003).

The Principal Trust Scale examines principal trust in teachers, principal trust in students, and principal trust in parents. The 20 items include "I believe in my teachers," "Students here really care about the school," and "Parents in this school have integrity." The instrument was found to be valid in a sample of 642 principals in Virginia and Ohio. Reliability was .87 for principal trust in teachers, .87 for principal trust in students, and .86 for principal trust in parents (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2003).

The faculty and principal measures and scoring instructions are available on Megan Tschannen-Moran's website, http://mxtsch.people.wm.edu/research_tools.php. The Faculty Trust Scale, also called the Omnibus Trust Scale, can be downloaded from www.coe.ohio-state.edu/whoy.

School Characteristics Associated with Trust

Several studies have investigated the characteristics of schools with high levels of trust.

Although formalized structures are often associated with strict procedures that can obstruct efficiency, two studies reviewed for this summary proposed that bureaucracies with high levels of trust can be set-up to reduce role conflict and create systems to ensure collaboration. Hoy and Sweetland first investigated the role of enabling bureaucracies in school trust relationships in 2001. The researchers defined enabling bureaucracy in terms of formalization (rules and procedures) and centralization (hierarchy). An enabling bureaucracy establishes processes to encourage problem solving by teachers and allows them to participate in decision making (Hoy & Sweetland, 2001).

Hoy and Sweetland (2001) suggested that an enabling bureaucracy would cultivate trust between teachers and that teachers' trust of colleagues would contribute to the enabling structure of the school. An instrument was created to measure enabling, hindering, and coercive aspects of school organizations. The survey was administered to teachers within 97 high schools in Ohio. Participants

also completed measures of trust in the principal, truth spinning, and role conflict. Results indicated that schools with the highest levels of enabling bureaucracy had more faculty trust in the principal ($r = .76$, $p < .01$). Enabling structures were also associated with low levels of truth spinning ($r = -.74$, $p < .01$) and role conflict ($r = -.71$, $p < .01$). The results remained after controlling for school size, urban location, and socioeconomic status. The researchers concluded that enabling bureaucracies promote trust between teachers and principals and make it easier for both parties to have honest, open communication with each other (Hoy & Sweetland, 2001).

Geist (2002) utilized the Hoy and Sweetland instrument to examine the aspects of bureaucracy that help to promote trust in elementary schools. More than 4,000 teachers and administrators in 146 schools were surveyed about the features of enabling bureaucracy, teacher professional behavior, and academic emphasis that contribute to faculty trust. Instruments included the Hoy and Tschannen-Moran trust survey, the enabling bureaucracy measure, and the Organizational Health Inventory (Geist 2002).

Enabling bureaucracy had the greatest relationship to faculty trust in the principal ($r = .71$, $p < .01$). Teacher professional behavior was the best predictor of faculty trust in colleagues ($r = .66$, $p < .01$) and academic emphasis had the highest correlation to faculty trust in clients ($r = .77$, $p < .01$). Enabling bureaucracy also contributed to faculty trust in colleagues ($r = .52$, $p < .01$) and faculty trust in clients ($r = .33$, $p < .01$) (Geist 2002).

The findings support the hypothesis that an enabling bureaucracy that combines flexible rules and procedures with decentralized authority creates an environment in which teachers are encouraged to solve problems and seek out best practices. The culture of open communication and shared responsibility increases the trust that teachers have in their principal (Geist 2002).

In 1989, Tarter, Bliss and Hoy investigated the impact of school climate on faculty trust in the principal and colleagues. Specifically, the research focused on the openness of the school as defined by supportive principal behaviors and teacher engagement. Supportive principal behaviors were expected to increase teacher initiative and reduce frustration with administrative paperwork and lack of time to dedicate to teaching. Similarly, engaged teacher behaviors were believed to nurture open and positive relationships with students, colleagues, and administrators (Tarter, Bliss & Hoy, 1989).

More than 1,000 teachers in 72 schools completed the Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire-Rutgers Secondary (OCDQ-RS) with climate subscales regarding principal and teacher behavior, as well as faculty trust scales. The results found a significant correlation between openness and trust in the principal ($r = .44$, $p < .01$) and trust in colleagues ($r = .35$, $p < .01$). Faculty trust in the principal was positively associated with the principal's helpfulness and

supportive behavior (zero order correlation of .50, $p < .01$) (Tarter, Bliss & Hoy, 1989).

Domineering and directive principal behavior was negatively correlated to teachers' trust in the principal ($r = -.22$, $p < .05$), but had no effect on trust between colleagues. However, teachers' trust in each other was negatively correlated to perceptions of interference from the principal and the other teachers ($r = -.29$, $p < .05$) (Tarter, Bliss & Hoy, 1989).

A correlation was found between engaged and frustrated teacher behaviors and trust in the principal ($r = .29$, $p < .05$; $r = -.23$, $p < .05$, respectively). Finally, faculty trust in colleagues was significantly related to faculty trust in the principal ($r = .43$, $p < .01$). The hypothesis that openness of school climate is associated with faculty trust in the principal and colleagues was supported (Tarter, Bliss & Hoy, 1989).

Barriers to Trust

The studies of characteristics of schools with high levels of trust cited above emphasize the importance of open communication, enabling structures, and supportive relationships in establishing trust. The research suggests that, conversely, strict rules and regulations and blaming behaviors inhibit the formation of trusting relationships (Hoy & Sweetland, 2001).

In addition to these internal factors, the literature has highlighted two societal influences on trust in schools. First, the accountability movement reinforces feelings of distrust in school systems because the need for standardized testing implies that schools cannot be trusted to educate students without oversight (Meier, 2002; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000). Meier (2002) also notes that standardized tests increase the suspicions of minority populations who perceive bias in the tests.

Second, demographic trends, including transience and increased diversity, make it difficult to establish the common values needed to develop trust (Meier, 2002; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000). People find it more natural to trust others who are similar to themselves because they are likely to share the same values (Meier, 2002). Meier (2002) suggests that school personnel be aware of their attitudes, assumptions, and language to avoid any behaviors that could be viewed as an assertion of power over families of other racial and ethic backgrounds.

Impact of Trust on School Effectiveness

Trust influences the effectiveness of schools by enhancing the teamwork of staff, facilitating the efficiency of operations, and promoting a culture in which students can succeed.

Tschannen-Moran (2001) considered the ways in which trust is necessary for principals and teachers to feel confident enough in each other to collaborate and share decision-making responsibilities, as well as resources. She suggested that instructional practices and school policies will improve as teachers are encouraged to share their expertise and support and evaluate each other (Tschannen-Moran, 2001).

Tschannen-Moran's survey of 898 teachers from 45 elementary schools revealed that collaboration between teachers and principals was associated with collaboration among teachers ($r = .68$, $p < .01$). Collaboration with principals also was significantly correlated to trust in the principal ($r = .32$, $p < .05$) and collaboration among teachers was associated with trust in colleagues ($r =. 30$, $p < .05$). Collaboration with colleagues was significantly correlated to trust in the principal ($r = .64$, $p < .01$) (Tschannen-Moran, 2001). The study concluded that schools with high levels of trust were likely to demonstrate strong collaboration between the principal and the faculty and between teachers and colleagues.

In 2003, Tschannen-Moran investigated the role of trust in nurturing organizational citizenship and the motivations that prompt staff to do more than the minimum requirements of their job descriptions (Tschannen-Moran, 2003). The research is based on the idea that effective schools rely on teachers who regularly take on additional responsibilities.

More than 3,000 teachers in 55 middle schools were surveyed about the indicators of transformational leadership, organizational citizenship behaviors, and faculty trust in the principal. The results revealed that transformational leadership by the principal had no significant effect on organizational citizenship. However, trust in the principal had a moderate but significant relationship to the citizenship behavior of teachers ($r = .38$, $p < .01$). The strongest connection was found between the staff's perception of transformational leadership behaviors and their trust in the principal ($r = .75$, $p < .01$), indicating the importance of trust for leadership (Tschannen-Moran, 2003).

A third area of study involves the connection between faculty trust and school mindfulness, the ability of an organization to quickly identify potential problems and take risks on innovative solutions (Hoy, Gage & Tarter, 2006). Trust is a necessary element of a culture that makes it safe for people to work in teams, challenge behaviors, and try new strategies. The study administered the School Mindfulness Scale, an instrument developed for the research, and a trust scale to 2,600 teachers from 75 middle schools (Hoy, Gage & Tarter, 2006). The mindfulness scale addressed the five elements of mindfulness found in the literature: Focus on Mistakes and Failure; Reluctance to Simplify; Sensitivity to Teaching and Learning; Commitment to Resilience; and Deference to Expertise.

A strong correlation was found between school mindfulness and faculty trust in the principal ($r = .90$, $p < .01$) and school mindfulness and faculty trust in colleagues ($r = .73$, $p < .01$). Faculty trust in the principal was associated with principal mindfulness ($r = .97$, $p < .01$). Faculty trust in colleagues was related to faculty mindfulness ($r = .90$, $p < .01$). These results were confirmed by multiple regression analyses (Hoy, Gage & Tarter, 2006).

The researchers asserted that mindfulness depends on trust to create an environment where the staff feels safe to identify errors and address them as learning opportunities. In addition, the principal must trust teachers to experiment with different strategies, work collaboratively, and build resilience (Hoy, Gage & Tarter, 2006).

Trust has also been associated with collective teacher efficacy, an indicator of student achievement (Goddard, Hoy & Hoy, 2000). Almost 460 teachers from 47 elementary schools participated in a study that validated a collective teacher efficacy scale with a sense of powerlessness scale, a measure of individual teacher efficacy, and a faculty trust scale (Goddard, Hoy & Hoy, 2000).

It was expected that trust in other teachers would be correlated to collective teacher efficacy as a function of the opportunities for cooperative learning that typically occur in schools with high trust levels. The hypothesis was supported with a significant correlation between collective efficacy and trust among teachers ($r = .62$, $p < .01$) (Goddard, Hoy & Hoy, 2000).

The study found that collective teacher efficacy, in turn, was associated with higher student achievement as reflected in the math and reading portions of the Metropolitan Achievement Test, seventh edition. An increase of one unit on the collective teacher efficacy scale was related to an average 8.62 point increase in math achievement and an average 8.49 point increase in reading achievement for individual students (Goddard, Hoy & Hoy, 2000).

In another study of school effectiveness, Uline, Miller, and Tschannen-Moran (1998) formulated a model that examined the roles of expressive activities (trust and organizational health) and instrumental activities (student achievement). Expressive activities included teacher trust in colleagues and the principal, positive school climate, and high expectations for students. Instrumental activities were achievement in reading, math, and writing (Uline, Miller & Tschannen-Moran, 1998).

Eighty-six schools participated in the research, which surveyed 2,777 teachers with trust scales measuring trust in the principal and trust in colleagues, as well as the Organizational Health Inventory for Middle Schools, an instrument that includes subscales for academic emphasis, teacher affiliation, collegial leadership, resource support, principal influence, and institutional integrity. Results from the New Jersey Eighth Grade Early Warning Test were analyzed to

measure student achievement. Organizational effectiveness was assessed using indicators such as teacher perceptions of the quantity and quality of instruction, extracurricular activities, and school efficiency (Uline, Miller & Tschannen-Moran, 1998).

Findings revealed a correlation between instrumental and expressive activities (beta = .61). Instrumental activities (beta = .32) and expressive activities (beta = .33) had the same level of impact on organizational effectiveness. The researchers concluded that both elements are important for school effectiveness. (Uline, Miller & Tschannen-Moran, 1998).

Goddard (2003) included trust as a component of social capital in his study of academic achievement in elementary school students. Data were collected from 2,429 students and 444 teachers in 45 elementary schools about the relationship networks between the school and the parents and community; trust levels among students, teachers, and parents; and values that promote academic success. These indicators of social capital were correlated to student scores on state achievement tests in math and writing over a two year period. Multilevel analyses revealed that schools with high levels of social capital had higher pass rates for students on the state tests. After controlling for school socioeconomic status, schools with a 1 standard deviation higher level of social capital had a 39 percent higher pass rate in math and a 35 percent pass rate in writing.

Faculty trust in colleagues was also found to be related to student achievement in a study published by Tschannen-Moran in 2004. Principals and teachers in 66 middle schools in Virginia completed the faculty and principal trust scales to measure faculty trust in the principal, faculty trust in colleagues, faculty trust in students and parents, principal trust in teachers, principal trust in students, and principal trust in parents. The results were correlated to student scores on the SOL tests in English and math (Tschannen-Moran, 2004, November).

The strongest association was found between faculty trust in students and parents and student achievement in English and math ($r = .78$ and .74, respectively, $p < .01$). Faculty trust in colleagues was somewhat related to student achievement in English and math ($r = .61$ and .57, $p < .01$), while faculty trust in principal had no relationship to student achievement ($r = .14$ and .18) (Tschannen-Moran, 2004, November).

The relationship between principal trust in students and achievement in English and math was weak ($r = .16$ and .25, $p < .01$). Principal trust in parents and student achievement in English and math also was not significant ($r = .16$ and .21, $p < .01$). There was no correlation between principal trust in teachers and student achievement in English ($r = .05$). However, there was a slight relationship between principal trust in teachers and math achievement ($r = .13$, $p < .01$) (Tschannen-Moran, 2004, November).

The findings indicated that faculty trust is a factor in raising student achievement because it facilitates problem solving within the school and contributes to a positive learning environment for students (Tschannen-Moran, 2004, November).

In a study of the impact of teacher empowerment on student achievement, Sweetland and Hoy (2000) suggested that healthy and open relationships (a characteristic of trust) would promote a sense of empowerment in teachers as they perceive greater involvement in decision making. Specifically, the researchers proposed that principals are more likely to consult teachers if they trust and respect them (Sweetland & Hoy, 2000).

More than 2,700 teachers from 86 middle schools completed the Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire, Revised Middle (OCDQ-RM) and the Organizational Health Inventory (OHI-RM). Data about student achievement were drawn from the results of the state of New Jersey's Eighth Grade Early Warning Test (Sweetland & Hoy, 2000).

Teacher empowerment was found to be associated with collegial leadership ($r = .55$, $p < .01$), teacher professionalism and respect for colleagues ($r = .49$, $p < .01$), and academic press ($r = .58$, $p < .01$). Multiple regression analyses established that teacher empowerment explained 60% of variance of student reading achievement (R^2 of .60, $R = .78$, $p < .01$) and 62% of variance of math achievement (R^2 of .62, $R = .80$, $p < .01$) (Sweetland & Hoy, 2000).

The study demonstrated that principal supportiveness and teacher professionalism contribute to teacher empowerment, which is a factor in teacher perceptions of the effectiveness and efficiency of the school. High levels of teacher empowerment were shown to predict student achievement on standardized tests (Sweetland & Hoy, 2000).

Suggestions for Promoting Trust in Schools

The research findings highlighted in this review identify several methods for enhancing trust between principals and teachers and between teachers and colleagues.

The studies describe the importance of an organizational structure that is flexible and enables teachers to make decisions in a culture of trust (Geist, 2002, Hoy & Sweetland, 2001). Rules should be flexible so that they do not present obstacles to creative problem solving (Geist, 2002; Hoy, Gage, & Tarter, 2006; Hoy & Sweetland, 2001). Supervision practices that are punitive and focus on blame for mistakes will motivate teachers to protect themselves and reduce their loyalty to the school (Uline, Miller & Tschannen-Moran, 1998). However, schools that empower teachers are more likely to adapt to external demands and be more efficient (Sweetland & Hoy, 2000).

School districts are advised to train principals and other school leaders to address trust in their leadership strategies (Tschannen-Moran, 2003). Principals should be open, supportive, and concerned about their teachers, professionally and personally (Tarter, Bliss & Hoy, 1989). In addition, school leaders should apply the five elements of trust to the five functions of leadership (Tschannen-Moran, 2004):

- Visioning- communicate plans to teachers and exhibit benevolence.
- Modeling- demonstrate how to be caring and respectful in relationships.
- Coaching- guide staff, rather than coerce them to change.
- Managing- delegate responsibilities and nurture a climate of flexibility to resolve problems.
- Mediating- seek to repair relationships.

School leaders should understand the factors that influence the development of trust, such as personal disposition, shared values and attitudes, organizational stage, institutional support, and assumptions (Tschannen-Moran, 2004). Trust begins with the hiring process, as administrators select staff in whom they feel confident (Tschannen-Moran, 2004). Administrators also should recognize that trust must be earned on an ongoing basis (Meier, 2002).

Teachers who participate in professional development will help to build a core of supportive and friendly coworkers who trust the competence of their colleagues (Geist, 2002). In addition, teachers must develop self-awareness about how their values and attitudes affect their ability to trust colleagues, parents, and students (Meier, 2002). Daily communication between teachers should focus on intentions, honesty, a shared-mission, and outreach to people hesitant to sharing values. (Bryk & Schneider, 2002).

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