



Title: Investigating the Role of Collective Trust, Collective Efficacy, and Enabling School Structures on Overall School Effectiveness

IMPORTANT QUOTE:

“This study demonstrates the necessity and importance of collective trust and collective efficacy in the establishment of overall school effectiveness” (p. 125).

What is this study about?

The researcher hypothesized that teachers’ perceptions of collective trust, collective efficacy, and enabling school structures would individually and jointly contribute to overall school effectiveness.

- Collective trust was defined as a group’s willingness to be vulnerable to another group and comprised of teacher trust in the principal, their colleagues, and clients (which included students and parents).
- Collective efficacy was defined as the groups’ shared *belief in its conjoint capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to produce given levels of attainments.
- Enabling school structures were described as opportunities for teachers to resolve issues and problems with support of the principal. Schools characterized by ‘enabling structures’ were described as places where teachers were afforded greater autonomy and opportunities to be creative and exercise professional judgements as opposed to ‘hindering structures’ where leaders exercise greater management and control.

WHAT’S IMPORTANT

The researcher noted that trust is considered an essential ingredient in the work of schools and pointed out that if faculty members trust the principal, then they tend to have confidence that the principal will keep their word and act in teachers’ best interest. In regard to trusting their colleagues, the author noted that teachers are more likely to believe that they can depend upon their coworkers, especially in challenging circumstances, and rely upon them to act with integrity. The researcher also cited studies that demonstrate collective efficacy as a strong determinant of teacher trust and a strong predictor of student achievement. Finally, the researcher noted that in schools where there are enabling structures and innovation is encouraged, there tends to be less conflict, more trust, cooperation, and valuing of differences. The hypothesis for this study was that collective trust, collective efficacy, enabling school structures, and overall school effectiveness would be correlated with each other.

THE DETAILS OF THE STUDY

Participants/Method and Procedures

This was a quantitative study. The dependent variable was overall school effectiveness measured by the SE-Index, School Effectiveness Scale, an eight-item, six-point Likert-type scale. Sample items included “most everyone in the school accepts and adjusts to changes” and “teachers in this school anticipate problems and prevent them”.

The independent variables were collective trust, collective efficacy, and enabling school structures. Collective trust was measured using a 26-item, Likert scale trust survey. A sample item included “the principal doesn’t tell teachers what is really going on” (reverse scored). Subscales of trust in the principal, trust in colleagues, and trust in clients all had reliabilities within an acceptable Cronbach’s alpha range. Collective efficacy was also measured using a Likert scale survey. The twelve items on this scale scored high in reliability. Teachers’ perceptions of enabling school structures were measured using a five-point Likert-type scale that ranged from “never” to “always”. Sample items included “administrative rules help rather than hinder” and “the administrative hierarchy of this school enables teachers to do their job”. The control variable was socioeconomic status (SES) measured by the proxy of percentage of students eligible for free and reduced lunch at each site.

The participants in this study were teachers from 83 elementary public schools from ten urban southeastern school districts in one state in the United States. The school districts had student enrollment that ranged from 1,600 to 17,000 students. The mean percentages of students who were eligible for free or reduced lunch services were 51% of the students enrolled. The ethnic make-up of the students enrolled in the schools in the sample was: 59% Caucasian, 34% African American, Hispanic (non-white) 4.3% and Asian/Pacific Islander 1%.

The Pearson Correlation Coefficient was used to consider the relationship between each of the independent variables with the dependent variable (overall school effectiveness). Multiple regression analysis was used to determine the individual and collective relationships between the independent variables to the dependent variable.

Results:

All the variables were significantly correlated with one another.

- Collective trust and organizational effectiveness shared the strongest significant relationship with a .78 ($p < .01$) correlation.
- Collective efficacy and organizational effectiveness also had a substantial and significant relationship with a .65 correlation ($p < .01$).
- Enabling school structures and organizational effectiveness had a moderate and significant correlation with of .51 ($p < .01$).

In addition, collective trust, collective efficacy, and enabling school structures individually and jointly contributed to an explanation of overall school effectiveness, accounting for 60% of the variance of school effectiveness while controlling for socioeconomic status.

The researcher concluded that collective trust, collective efficacy, and enabling school structures provide a foundation upon which a school can become more effective, meet goals, work efficiently, and improve teaching and learning.

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*Attributed to Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-efficacy: The exercise of control*. New York: W.H. Freeman.