

ENABLING SCHOOL STRUCTURE, MINDFULNESS, AND  
TEACHER EMPOWERMENT: TEST OF A THEORY

by

DONALD M. WATTS

A DISSERTATION

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## ABSTRACT

This study looked at the relationship of an enabling school structure and mindfulness toward teacher empowerment. An enabling school structure is the perception in which leadership fosters collaboration, innovation, and trust among participants. Its rules and procedures are flexible and promote problem-solving (Hoy & Sweetland, 2000, 2001). Mindfulness is ongoing scrutiny of existing expectations, continuous refinement of those expectations based on new experiences, appreciation of the subtleties of context, and identification of novel aspects of context that can improve foresight and functioning (Hoy, 2003). Teacher empowerment is the process whereby teachers develop the competence to take charge of their own growth and resolve their own problems (Short, 1994a).

It was hypothesized that a structure that supports mindfulness should combine with mindfulness to predict teacher empowerment. To test the central hypothesis, some 1,100 teachers at 23 schools responded to surveys that measured an enabling school structure (Enabling School Structure), mindfulness (Mindfulness Scale), and teacher empowerment (School Participant Empowerment Scale) in the 2008-2009 school year. Reliabilities for all measures, including the subscales of teacher empowerment, ranged from .71 to .92, indicating acceptable levels of reliability.

As predicted, an enabling school structure and mindfulness were related. Although both an enabling school structure and mindfulness were related to subscales of the empowerment measure, there was no significant relationship to the overall measure. Significant relationships emerged through regressing the empowerment subscales of professional growth, self-efficacy,

and impact, although there was no significant simultaneous relationship between the two predictors and the overall test of teacher empowerment.

Further study should examine the theoretical base of broad teacher participation as an outcome desired by teachers. Raising the sample size might find relationships that had been hypothesized but were not sufficiently robust as to emerge in a sample of 23 schools. Finally, it may be that training teachers to become more active participants in the school at large is the precursor to useful teacher empowerment.

## DEDICATION

To Cathy, my wife, whose inspiration and encouragement have meant everything. This is a lifelong goal that I would not have been able to achieve without your interest and support. It may have been unusual for a married couple to pursue the same goal of separately writing a dissertation at the same time but the exchange of ideas, the bantering, and sharing fortitude to “get it right,” was an advantage. I know the experience has helped us to grow, and I look forward to future challenges knowing you are by my side.

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To Dr. C. John Tarter, chairman of my committee, thanks for all the advice and support. Your vision was always further reaching than mine, even at times when I did not want to admit it.

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## CHAPTER 1

### THE PROBLEM

#### Introduction

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, typical of recent reform efforts, has emphasized the importance of improving teacher qualifications. As teachers take additional courses, they gain expertise in their field. Incorporating expert teachers into school structures and empowering teachers to have greater influence will require some alteration of the current school practices. Given the increased expertise of teachers, are there some administrative actions that will lead to greater teacher empowerment?

Recent research on an enabling school structure and an informal monitoring of school operation may lead to greater teacher empowerment. Short (1994a) defined teacher empowerment as the process whereby teachers develop the competence to take charge of their own growth and resolve their own problems. Empowerment is a dominant theme in all types of organizations (Short & Rinehart, 1992). According to Perkins and Zimmerman (1995), applying empowerment in organizational processes enhances goal achievement for the organization. Current interest in empowerment has filtered to school organizations and school participants (Lightfoot, 1986; Maeroff, 1988). First, we must find out if an enabling school structure and mindfulness, the informal scrutiny of what the school is doing, predict empowerment; hence, the focus of this study.

## Background

Allowing teachers to carry out educational decisions met with great enthusiasm during the 1980s and 1990s in schools. According to Hirschhorn (1997), teacher empowerment has shifted to the forefront. An incorporation of empowerment gives teachers a sense of ownership and opportunities to improve the quality of instruction (Short, 1994a). Short (1994b) established a connection between schools and teacher empowerment as an “efficient means toward a self-management system confident of developing the roles of principals and teachers” (p. 493).

Short (1994a) presented six empirically derived dimensions defining the construct and broadening the dialogue of empowerment. These dimensions include shared decision-making, teacher impact, teacher status, autonomy, opportunities for professional growth, and teacher efficacy (p. 489). Short’s research acknowledge teacher empowerment goes beyond site-based concepts and embraces holistic approaches. However, how can teacher empowerment be achieved if a unidirectional communication, or top-down structure, is managing the system?

Marks and Louis (1999) stated, “To make schools more productive workplaces for staff and students, reformers have advocated decentralizing bureaucratic authority” (p. 709).

Hirschhorn (1997) stated that open communications should include a concerted consciousness to adjust the traditional school structure toward multidirectional communication and away from unidirectional or top-down hierarchical structures. The problem becomes how to effectively alter hierarchical authority to include all participants. Hoy and Sweetland (2000, 2001), Hirschhorn (1997), Short (1994a, 1994b), and Langer (1992, 1997) have focused on self-reliance and self-worth among teachers by advocating bureaucratic changes and promoting empowerment.

Hoy and Sweetland (2000, 2001) adopted terminology from Adler and Borys’s (1996) research on organizations, identifying two types of bureaucracy called *enabling* and *coercive*. An

enabling bureaucracy is a structure that is helpful and leads to problem-solving among members rather than rigid coercive activities that demand conformity. In schools, Hoy and Sweetland (2000, 2001) indicated that an enabling school structure motivates teachers, creates healthier working environments, and allows hierarchical authority to coexist with processes affecting daily instruction.

Mindfulness is related to an enabling school structure in organizational and educational systems (Hoy, 2003; Hoy, Gage, & Tarter, 2006; Weick & Sutcliffe, 2001). Langer (1992, 1997) developed mindfulness through a process of categories meant to restructure our thinking abilities. She insisted that by doing things routinely our brain becomes programmed to perform without consciously thinking of the event at hand. Langer contended that creating new categories by welcoming new information, entertaining more than one point of view, and processing before outcome help individuals gain a more mindful experience and thereby sharpen judgment.

Using Langer's social psychology viewpoint, Weick and Sutcliffe (2001, 2006) expanded on individual mindfulness and explored the characteristics of mindful organizations. They emphasized organizations, like individuals, can be *mindless* in their behaviors, causing a significant amount of mistakes and loss of productivity. They contended that five processes that promote "mindful organizations" are preoccupation with failure, reluctance to simplify interpretations, sensitivity to operations, commitment to resilience, and deference to expertise (Weick & Sutcliffe, 2001, 2006).

Hoy (2003) successfully translated mindfulness to school functions and school operations with theoretical and operational data. School mindfulness should be used to encourage more mindful solutions in educational settings. There is in all of us a tendency to adopt routine

categories that make sense out of complex things and become a victim of habit (Hoy, 2003; Trungpa, 1973).

Mindfulness as habit of mind does not come easily and without considerable thought to the process (Hoy, 2003). Hoy et al. (2006) reviewed the conceptual and empirical underpinnings of both individual and organizational mindfulness and incorporated two specific purposes: a theoretical one—to conceptualize mindfulness—and an empirical one—to operationalize it.

The goal of mindfulness is to actively engage in thoughtful processes, being open to different viewpoints, being open and alert to new information and subtle changes, and viewing problems as opportunities, all with vigilance and flexibility (Hoy et al., 2006). Hoy (2003) discussed mindfulness and an enabling school structure as having certain similarities. He sighted several examples, including a perspective emphasizing that both constructs learn from mistakes, have flexibility, and a consistency of attention toward problem-solving.

#### Statement of the Problem

Are enabling school structure, mindfulness, and teacher empowerment related to each other? Second, what are the joint and unique relationships of an enabling school structure and mindfulness to teacher empowerment?

In order to address the problem, a theoretical framework from the review of literature that defines each variable was developed. As these descriptions were developed, the theoretical framework proposed that a connection exists. Research questions and the hypotheses are stated along with a methodology for gaining empirical data.

## Purpose of the Study

The rationale for this study was to determine whether an enabling school structure, mindfulness, and teacher empowerment are related to each other, and whether an enabling school structure and mindfulness can augment teacher empowerment. Although there has been theoretical and empirical research on the constructs of an enabling school structure toward teacher performance, this new study indicates that further relationships exist between an enabling school structure (Adler & Borys, 1996; Hoy & Sweetland 2000, 2001; Langer, 1992), mindfulness (Hoy, 2003; Hoy et al., 2006; Weick & Sutcliffe, 2001), and teacher empowerment (Cherniss, 1997; Marks & Louis, 1999; Short, 1994a; Short & Johnson, 1994).

## Theoretical Significance

The theoretical significance of this study is that it explains the relationships between the constructs of an enabling school structure, mindfulness, and teacher empowerment, and it explains the joint and unique relationship between an enabling school structure and mindfulness to teacher empowerment. Teacher empowerment is the process whereby teachers develop the competence to take charge of their own growth and resolve their own problems (Short, 1994a). Teacher empowerment has been measured in a variety of educational paths and can point toward success with the proper support, staff development, and a collaborative spirit (Hoy & Sweetland, 2000; Short & Greer, 1997).

Hoy and Sweetland (2000, 2001), Hoy and Miskel (1996), and Adler and Borys (1996) argued that an enabling school structure can be the key to a successful method by which teachers are more motivated, working environments are healthier, and hierarchical authority can coexist with the daily educational decision-making process.



Langer (1992, 1997) developed an intriguing venture to reconstruct individual thinking through mindfulness. Weick and Sutcliffe (2001) generated a connection for mindfulness and organizational success, whereas Hoy (2003) and Hoy et al. (2006) promulgated empirical mindfulness as an ingredient to organizational success in schools.

### Practical Significance

The practical significance of the study will be to inform school leaders of the associations in organization as being more or less enabling and the relationship to mindfulness and teacher empowerment. Professional autonomy among teachers while working collaboratively with colleagues and administration helps promote the school mission statement and the curricular goals of the school. By making available as much information as possible, school leaders can make better informed decisions. If school leaders can incorporate avenues for teachers to empower themselves by creating mindful school environments, they should be able to improve the quality of teaching.

### Scope and Limitations

This study is subject to the following limitations:

1. There may be unexamined factors affecting the outcome of an enabling school structure and mindfulness toward teacher empowerment not accounted for in this study.
2. Due to the limited area of recruitment, accept with caution the results of this study given the relatively small sample. There will be one school district located in the state of Georgia with 30 schools participating.
3. The accuracy of the responses depends on the ability of the respondents to recall their perceptions in answering the survey.

4. This study is designed to discover relationships that could exist between an enabling school structure, mindfulness, and teacher empowerment. It is not an attempt to establish cause-effect relationships.

5. This study is cross-sectional. Data were gathered during one interval and may not relate with longitudinal data gathered during multiple intervals.

### Research Questions

1. Does an enabling school structure correlate with mindfulness?
2. Does enabling school structure correlate with teacher empowerment?
3. Does mindfulness correlate with teacher empowerment?
4. What are the joint and unique relationships of an enabling school structure and mindfulness to teacher empowerment?

### Hypotheses

H1: The more enabling the structure of the school, the greater the extent of mindfulness.

H2: The more enabling the structure of the school, the greater the extent of teacher empowerment.

H3: The greater the extent of mindfulness, the greater the extent of teacher empowerment.

H4: The more enabling the structure of the school and mindful, the more positive the joint and unique effect on teacher empowerment.

### Definition of Terms

*Enabling School Structure.* Enabling school structure is the perception of a school structure in which leadership fosters collaboration, innovation, and trust among participants. Its

rules and procedures are flexible and promote problem-solving rather than coercive means of conformity (Hoy, 2003; Hoy & Sweetland, 2000, 2001).

*Mindfulness.* Mindfulness is ongoing scrutiny of existing expectations, continuous refinement of those expectations based on new experiences, appreciation of the subtleties of context, and identification of novel aspects of context that can improve foresight and functioning (Hoy, 2003).

*Teacher Empowerment.* Teacher empowerment is the process whereby teachers develop the competence to take charge of their own growth and resolve their own problems (Short, 1994a).

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

#### Introduction

In this chapter the history of an enabling school structure, mindfulness, and teacher empowerment are reviewed. Following the review, a theoretical rationale identifies relationships among the constructs. Finally, the hypotheses are developed to test the theoretical rationale.

From the review of literature, it is evident that an enabling school structure is characterized by rules that are not autocratic and do not exercise control over subordinate members; instead, they foster a relationship of shared creativity and decision-making (Hoy & Sweetland, 2000, 2001). Likewise, mindfulness can foster trust between teachers and administrators by consciously reviewing information and its subtleties, improving foresight and functioning (Hoy et al., 2006). Lastly, empowerment is a dominant theme in organizational structures. Teacher empowerment can create competence and a sense of ownership with opportunities to improve the quality of instruction (Short, 1994a).

#### Conceptual Framework

##### *Enabling School Structure*

Bureaucracies can have both positive and negative connotations. A beginning point for most organizations comes from the research of Max Weber. To Weber, “bureaucracy was one of the characteristics and ubiquitous forms of administration in modern society, not confined to government by any means” (Gouldner, 1954, p. 19). Weber (1947) believed organizations of work should involve clear defined levels of employment with a hierarchy of authority overseeing

production and enforcing rules and procedures for true effectiveness. He developed an ideal type that included a division of labor and specialization coupled with an impersonal orientation meant to separate feelings from job performance. Although Weber's conception of bureaucracy is an ideal type that is not found in the real world, all real organizations share some characteristics of the ideal type (Hoy & Miskel, 1996).

Gouldner (1954) found fault in Weber's theory on the subject of authority and the implementation of rules. Weber failed to weigh the possibility that "a bureaucracy's effectiveness, or other of its characteristics, might vary with the manner in which rules are initiated, whether by imposition or agreement" (p. 20). In addition, Weber failed to adequately deal with possible dysfunctions such as employee boredom, a lack of morale, communication blocks, rigidity and goal displacement, and conflict between achievement and seniority (Hoy & Miskel, 1996).

Gouldner (1954) drew conclusions from his 3-year study of a gypsum company transferring from a policy of leniency toward workers to stronger management controls. Gouldner split Weber's intentions into two distinct analyses—representative and punishment centered. Punishment-centered rules are initiated by either the workers or administrators, but not jointly, to coerce the other to comply (Gouldner, 1954; Hoy & Miskel, 1996). This resulted in punishment by one group over the other, causing conflict and dissatisfaction. On the other hand, representative rules are initiated and sustained by both workers and administrators and are less likely to evoke dysfunctional consequences, because both jointly agree to support their implementation. Representative rules, as contrasted with the punishment-centered rules, are more likely to have the desired functional consequences without many of the unintended dysfunctional consequences (Hoy & Miskel, 1996).

Relating this concept to education, schools have often operated with the punishment-centered mentality, forcing teachers to comply with little or no input concerning their job task. Hoy, Blazovsky, and Newland (1983) established a comparison between welfare agencies and schools, being of similar organizational structure and hierarchical control, and found that schools were more likely to enforce rules and procedures than were most organizations. They tested a relationship of bureaucracy and alienation in the school organization in New Jersey by surveying some 2,500 teachers. They showed, through aspects of high centralized hierarchical control and formalized rules and procedures, that teachers were more alienated from administrators and colleagues. Schools with more rigid hierarchies, or punishment-centered, were typically marked by alienation of teachers “with expressive relations, particularly with superiors” (Hoy et al., 1983, p. 115). Although both types of service organization were considered moderate in job codification, “Schools are dramatically more formalized in terms of the degree to which rules are observed and enforced” (Hoy et al., 1983, p. 116). The findings supported new efforts in a belief that our public schools should undergo a restructuring process.

Another criticism of the Weberian model by Gouldner (1954), Hoy and Miskel (1996), and Hoy and Forsyth (1986) was the noticeable exclusion of the informal organizational aspect as an integral part of the structure. The informal arises from the formal organization and develops patterns of behavior through series of encounters among the workers, and among the workers and administrators. In a school setting, teachers utilize informal techniques by the exercise of shared beliefs and values, division into cliques, personal relations, and various communication avenues considered outside the formal structure (Hoy & Forsyth, 1986; Hoy & Miskel, 1996). In virtually every school district across the country, teacher lounges, workrooms, lunchrooms, and hallways are steadily filled with informal conversation that can become the “business of the

school,” equipped with agendas and political motives (Hoy & Miskel, 1996, pp. 53-58). Hoy and Miskel insisted that the impact of informal on formal can be constructive or destructive and is not an enemy by itself. Rather it is to be shared, monitored, and incorporated to impact the organization and becomes an identifiable “climate” (pp. 53-58).

Contractual agreements are implemented through formal settings with workers willing to do their jobs and comply with management directives. Hoy and Forsyth (1986) related that the legal authority of management is rarely questioned by subordinates in exchange for wages and salaries. But although formal authority does promote compliance, it does not guarantee additional efforts beyond the prescribed minimums (Hoy & Forsyth, 1986).

Weber’s idea of bureaucratic principles is the authority based on competence and knowledge or authority based on legal powers and discipline. On the one hand, Weber (1947) believed “bureaucratic administration means fundamentally the exercise of control on the basis of knowledge” (p. 339), but on the other, it is the strict adherence and unwavering compliance to carry out directives (Hoy & Miskel, 1996, p. 58). Is bureaucratic administration based primarily on expertise or strictly following directives?

Does a school leader’s authority reside in the bureaucratic authority or in professional expertise? In an obvious answer, the school leader is a mixture of both viewpoints and conditionally deals from both established principles (Hoy & Forsyth, 1986). Gouldner (1954) and Constat (1958) rationalized that Weber may have intended to identify two separate bureaucracies and simply failed to distinguish “bureaucratic from professional principles” as well as their mixing.

Blau (1963) studied two government agencies and focused on intrapersonal relationships. His findings supported the notion that personal relations do influence operations. Regardless of

Weber's intention, later studies establish that formal and informal authorities have an integral makeup within organizations and influence operations.

Mintzberg (1979) looked at all organizations as having five basic parts. At the base is the operating core, wherein the operators do the work of the organization. Above them sits the administrative components implementing standards for the process of work. The strategic apex consists of the hierarchical management with a middle management linking directly with the operating core. In a diagram these three would be shown as one continuous sequence indicating a single line of formal authority. The remaining two parts operate outside and influence the operating core only indirectly. To the left is the technostructure, wherein analysts carry out standardization of work. A fifth component to the right of the middle line is the support staff doing such things as research, legal council, and public relations. Figure 1 demonstrates this basic formation.

Mintzberg (1979) stressed that considerable power in a machine bureaucracy rests with the managers of the strategic apex. The formal power clearly rests at the top but so also does much of the informal power, because that resides in knowledge, and only at the top of the hierarchy does the segmented knowledge come together.

By contrast, Mintzberg (1979) identified the significant difference between machine bureaucracies and professional bureaucracies being in the amount of formal power disposed by the strategic apex of the organization. "The professional bureaucracy relies for coordination on the standardization of skills and its associated design parameter, training and indoctrination. It hires duly trained and indoctrinated specialists—professionals—for the operating core, and then gives them considerable control over their own work" (p. 349). Figure 2 demonstrates the five basic parts of professional bureaucracy.



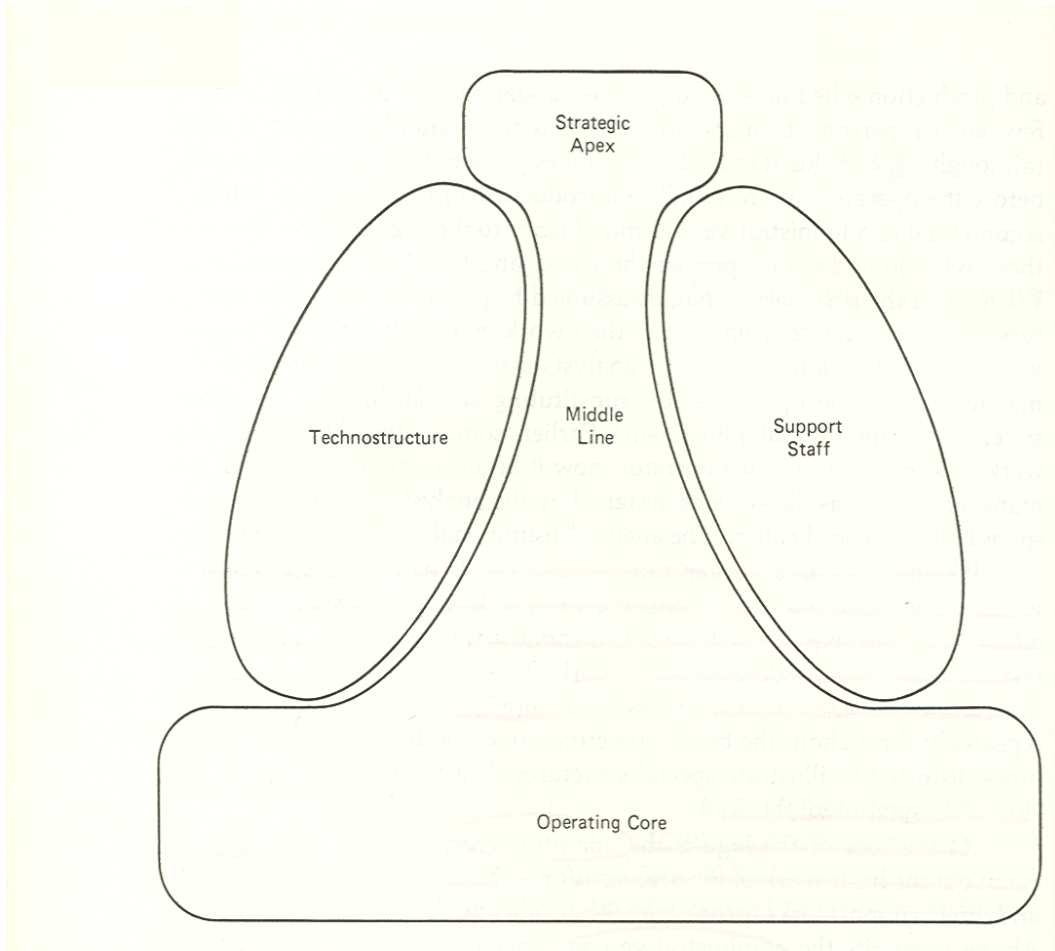


Figure 1. Mintzberg's five basic parts of a machine bureaucracy (1979, p. 20).

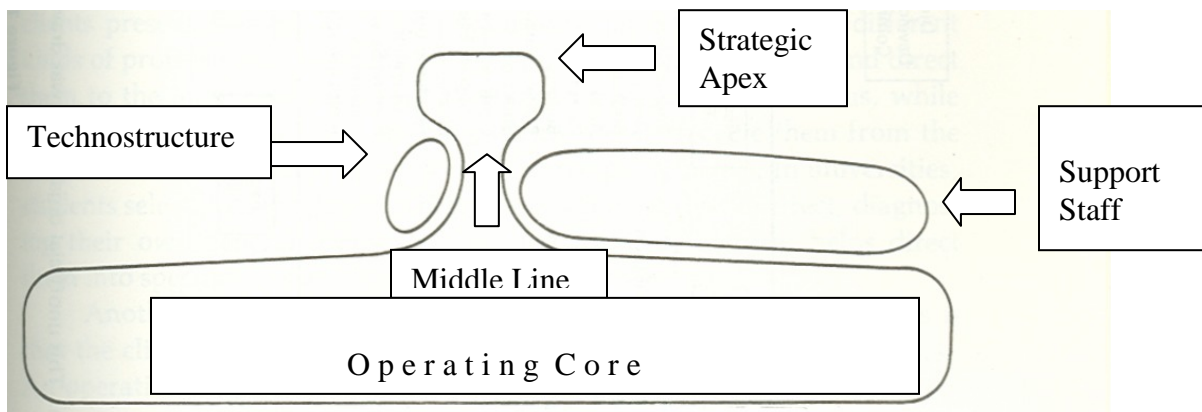


Figure 2. Mintzberg's five basic parts of professional bureaucracy.

Teaching as a profession would be regarded as a professional bureaucracy. Teachers work alone in a classroom hidden from colleagues and superiors. They apply broad discretionary jurisdiction by virtue of their training and indoctrination (Mintzberg, 1979).

In understanding how the professional bureaucracy functions in its operating core, teachers use a repertoire of standards applied in predetermined situations, called contingencies. Weick (1976) referred to this process as *pigeonholing* (p. 8). Teachers determine the students' needs through diagnoses and then apply, or execute, the appropriate standards from their repertoire of skills (Mintzberg, 1979).

Rousseau (1978) found formalized rules and procedures equated with higher absenteeism, a propensity to leave employment, physical and psychological stress, and negatively related to innovation and job satisfaction. Other studies (Arches, 1991; Bonjean & Grimes, 1970; Kakabadse, 1986) found similar negative aspects associated with high bureaucratic controls. Workers tend to experience high levels of frustration and aggravation associated with strict adherence to rules and regulations showing little human regard for the worker (Hirschhorn, 1997). In the educational sense, in this top-down method of authority, subordinates, such as teachers, face a daily problem of having little or no control of their job or decisions affecting their daily routines (Hoy et al., 1983).

Sometimes rules are welcomed by the workers. Deming (1986) reported employees demonstrated a pride of workmanship when well-designed procedures helped define the company's goals and workers understood them.

Senatra (1980) studied the stress of employees in a large public accounting firm and found formalization of rules and procedures reduced the role conflict and ambiguity among workers. Although earlier studies conducted in four accounting firms found the opposite to be

true, Senatra found no significant relationship between high job-related tension, low job dissatisfaction, and a high propensity to leave the firm. But in the unexpected areas of role conflict and role ambiguity and job satisfaction, there was a statistical significance. Hoy and Sweetland (2000) suggested that organizational research depicts two conflicting views of the human consequence toward bureaucracy.

From either perspective, job satisfaction can be measured by the degree of implementation of formalized rules and procedures. In a similar relationship, the degree of formalized rules and procedures affect schools and their structure as well (Hoy & Sweetland, 2000).

Scott (1987) helped establish contemporary organizational thought by identifying three competing systems called rational-systems, natural-systems, and open-systems perspectives. Each has distinctive differences and some have overlapping qualities. The rational-systems perspective views organizations as formal instruments designed to achieve specific organizational goals. With ties to the early scientific approach, this behavior in organizations is seen as purposeful, disciplined, and rational. The hierarchy of authority toward following rules and procedures is heavily enforced (Hoy & Miskel, 1996; Scott, 1987).

The natural-systems perspective has early roots in the human relations approach of the 1930s and their reaction to the scientific movement. Like the rational-systems approach, the natural-systems perspective believes in organizational goals but views organizations as social groups adapting to their particular situation. It maintains that an informal structure evolves into a formal structure by individuals bringing their “heads and hearts and sharing values, interests, and abilities” (Scott, 1987, p. 55). Whereas a rational-system emphasizes the importance of structure over individuals, the natural-systems approach emphasizes individuals over structure.

The open-systems perspective was a reaction to the unrealistic assumption that organizational behavior could be isolated from external forces. From the environment, external forces could include political pressures, resources, and competition affecting the internal workings of organizations (Hoy & Miskel, 1996). Open systems have formal structures to achieve certain goals but are composed of people who have their own beliefs, interests, and needs that often conflict with the those of the organization. “An open system is concerned with both structure and process; it is a dynamic system with both stability and flexibility, with both tight and loose structural relationships” (Hoy & Miskel, 1996, p. 30).

Schools are generally regarded as open systems confronted with both rational and natural constraints that change as the environmental forces change. Schools are social systems that take resources such as labor, students, and money from the environment and subject these inputs to an educational transformation process to produce literate, educated students (Hoy & Miskel, 1996).

Adler and Borys (1996) focused on the different types of formalization with emphasis on the “organizational technology” to differentiate two generic types of formalization—formalized designed to *enable* employees to master their task, and formalization designed to *coerce* effort and compliance from employees (p. 62). They intended to look at both foundational types and distinguish attitudinal outcomes as being very different. The negative view stifles creativity, fosters dissatisfaction, and lessens motivation for employees, whereas, the positive view maintains that a bureaucracy provides needed guidance and clarifies responsibilities reducing stress and helping individuals feel more valuable (Adler & Borys, 1996).

An assembly manufacturing plant not allowing employees to fix a machine problem helps demonstrate the negative viewpoint. Adler and Borys (1996) observed several manufacturers and the manner in which machine breakdowns were handled. Instead of repairing even minor

problems, help is solicited through a chain of command, eventually summoning an engineer to fix the machine. This example illustrates obvious complaints in the loss of production time while bureaucratic procedures are being followed.

Demonstrating a positive viewpoint and drawing from the examples of companies such as Xerox, Adler and Borys (1996) explained how an organization was able to confront a problem by engaging users and soliciting their knowledge rather than following the typical bureaucratic red tape. With copying machines in work offices across the country, Xerox was faced with a dilemma of frustrated solicitors and not enough repairmen. It resulted in the company devising copiers with informative views of the copier's functioning and the interaction with its users to fix simple problems. Adler and Borys used this example of equipment technology to contrast enabling and coercive types of formalization along three dimensions: (1) the feature of the system, (2) the process of designing the system, and (3) the implementation of the system.

Xerox helped users formulate a "mental model" that involves the usability idea rather than deskilling the employee. Deskilling is defined as providing no additional skills to the worker beyond production tasks. Adapting this concept, Adler and Borys (1996) had the idea that to empower workers and utilize resources benefited both the company and the worker's self-reliance. Whatever common sense would say about the events of usability versus deskilling, in most instances of a traditional bureaucracy, equipment design and repair was held to a coercive approach and employees were told, "That's not your job" (p. 72). Salzman (1992) reviewed over 100 books used in U.S. engineering design courses and reported not one discussed the possible advantages of user involvement. Xerox and other companies saw the potential to incorporate self-reliance and self-worth in employees and customers as psychological and production benefits.

This plan to transition from strict adherence to an enabling system rests on some key ideas such as flexibility and professional judgment. Enabling rules and procedures are flexible guidelines reflecting “best practices” and enable subordinates to deal with surprises. As a general rule professional judgment is acceptable rather than blind obedience to rules (Adler & Borys, 1996). Adler and Borys pointed to Gouldner’s challenge of a bureaucracy that could deliver efficiency without enslavement. They admitted that more research is needed to explore whether and how organizations can shift from coercive to enabling types of bureaucracy.

Hirschhorn (1997) began his quest to define the problems of organizational structure by identifying our present period of history as the “post-industrial revolution” (p. 1). The images of railway dominance, Cold War weapons and planes, and a baby-booming workforce are lost to the new informational age of computer technologies. Computer technology is now the new wave of communication, adding the ability to be open to others, referred to as a “culture of openness” (p. 18). Businesses no longer produce just products; the culture of openness communicates by transcontinental messaging and entertaining conglomerates simultaneously—all at the click of a mouse.

In the midst of this transitional period, Hirschhorn (1997) saw struggles develop between management (leaders) and workers (followers) when it came to things like the future of the company. The culture of openness posed many new questions and problems about the level of involvement from the followers and the directional responsibilities of the leaders. He suggested patterns of behavior involving sensibility and forgiveness should be commonplace. The dependence on one another, leaders and followers, to achieve a level of successful confidence should not be deterred by mistakes and invulnerable to injury. Hirschhorn added that the postmodern development of organization is still being defined.

Two of the pivotal characteristics of bureaucratic organization are formalization (formal rules and procedures) and centralization (hierarchy of authority). Adler and Borys's (1996) identification of enabling and coercive were theoretically applied to formalization and later included in Hoy and Sweetland's (2000, 2001) empirical research to compare and contrast a new construct of enabling bureaucracy.

*Coercive Formalization* is a collection of procedures, rules, and regulations that attempt to force subordinates to comply (Hoy & Sweetland, 2000). Formalization tends to alienate rather than commit (Hoy et al., 1983) by constraining, punishing, and forcing reluctant subordinates to comply. Rules and procedures are designed to make work foolproof; the more restrictive the procedures, the more hindering they are in dynamic situations (Hoy & Sweetland, 2001).

Enabling formalization assists employees with solutions to problems and allows for flexible guidelines that reflect best practices and help subordinates deal with surprises and crises (Adler & Borys, 1996). "Enabling procedures invite interactive dialogue, view problems as opportunities, foster trust, value differences, capitalize on and learn from mistakes, and delight in the unexpected; in brief, they facilitate problem-solving" (Hoy & Sweetland, 2001, p. 298). Coercive procedures demonstrate problems as obstacles, fear the unexpected, are autocratic, and foster mistrust, all while demanding obedience to the rules (Hoy & Sweetland, 2000, 2001).

Hoy and Sweetland (2000, 2001) also developed and applied enabling to centralization. They conceptualized that centralization could be either enabling or hindering. Enabling centralization is the locus of authority for organizational decision-making; it is the degree to which employees participate in decision-making. High centralization means decisions are concentrated at the top in the hands of a few, whereas low centralization indicates that the authority for making decisions is diffused and shared among many (Hoy & Sweetland, 2000).

Hindering centralization refers to a hierarchy and administration that gets in the way rather than helps its participants solve problems and do their work. In this type of environment, the hierarchy would obstruct innovation and force their power and authority to control and discipline teachers (Hoy & Sweetland, 2000, 2001). In schools where professional work is controlled in a top-down fashion, the consequence is often resistance, and teachers are coerced into satisfying artificial standards rather than serving the needs of their students (Hoy et al., 1983).

An enabling centralization helps employees solve problems rather than obstruct their work. The authority structure of an organization can help superiors and subordinates work across recognized boundaries while retaining their distinctive roles (Hirschhorn, 1997). Enabling centralization is conceived as flexible, cooperative, and collaborative rather than rigid, autocratic, and controlling. Within this concept, school administrators would use their power and authority to buffer teachers and design structures that facilitate teaching and learning (Hoy & Sweetland, 2001).

Schools have structure in formal roles such as school boards, superintendents, assistant superintendents, principals, assistant principals, teachers, and students. In spite of all the reforms, a hierarchy of authority will continue. The key to avoiding the dysfunctions of centralization is to change the kind of hierarchy rather than to try to eliminate it. Hirschhorn (1997) suggested that hierarchy must be embraced and enlivened with feelings and passion. Hoy and Sweetland (2001) speculated, just as formalization can be enabling rather than coercive, centralization can be enabling rather than hindering. They further stated the following:

We are not simply advocating decentralization of authority as enabling; the problem is more complicated. Our argument is not against hierarchy per se but rather against a specific kind of centralization—hierarchy that hinders. Our conceptualization of



hierarchy of authority is along a continuum enabling at one pole to hindering at the other. Again, we are referring to the kind not the amount of centralization. (p. 301)

The contrasting characteristics of enabling and hindering centralization are summarized in

Table 1.

Table 1

*Contrasting Enabling and Coercive Formalization*

Characteristics of Enabling Rules and Procedures	Characteristics of Coercive Rules and Procedures
Two-way communication	One-way (top-down) communication
Viewing problems as opportunities	Viewing problems as constraints
Encouraging differences	Suspecting differences
Promoting trust	Promoting distrust
Learning from mistakes	Punishing mistakes
Delighting in the unexpected	Fearing the unexpected

In Hoy and Sweetland’s (2000) first study, a valid measuring tool called the Enabling School Structure (ESS) form was formulated using four sets of Likert items—items to measure the degree of enabling formalization, coercive formalization, enabling centralization, and hindering centralization. The following are sample statements used in each of the four areas:

Enabling Formalization—Administrative rules in this school help me solve problems; Administrative rules in this school help rather than hinder.

Coercive Formalization—Administrative rules in this school are coercive; Administrative rules in this school are used to punish teachers.

Enabling Centralization—The administration hierarchy of this school facilitates teaching and learning; The administration in this school enables teachers to do their job.

Hindering Centralization—The administration hierarchy of this school obstructs innovation; The administrative hierarchy of this school causes more problems than it solves.

After the sufficient number of statements was formulated, they were loaded on one or both of the two factors using principal-axis factor analysis. Because the empirical results suggested the two factors were strongly related and a single hyperplane, a one-factor solution was used. All items loaded strongly on the single factor and explained about 43% of the variance. The factor loadings ranged from .40 to .81. Hoy and Sweetland (2000) concluded that school bureaucracies tended to vary along a continuum with enabling at one extreme and hindering at the other; enabling bureaucracy is a bipolar concept of one dimension.

In the second study, one teacher each from 116 different schools was sampled with an 89% usable return questionnaire. This time the items were loaded along a bipolar continuum from enabling to hindering with an alpha coefficient of reliability of .96. The factor loadings for both samples were similar but with a slight edge toward the second sample, which was larger and more diverse. The conclusion found the enabling bureaucracy measurement was stable and reliable with some evidence of validity (Hoy & Sweetland, 2000).

Using these findings, Hoy and Sweetland (2000) predicted the more enabling the structure of schools, the greater the extent of collegial trust between teachers. They also hypothesized that the more enabling the bureaucratic structure of schools, the less the sense of powerlessness among teachers. In a follow-up study, Hoy and Sweetland (2001) gathered more evidence to support their theoretical beliefs with additional empirical data.

The preliminary studies provided evidence of a valid measure for an enabling school structure. Because only one teacher from each faculty was solicited, Hoy and Sweetland replicated the study with more teachers and better perceptual measures. Secondly, because the

original study showed strong reliability toward a continuum of enabling to hindering along a unitary dimension, rather than two types of bureaucracy, 12 of the 24 items with the strongest factor loadings were selected (Hoy & Sweetland, 2001).

Not only did Hoy and Sweetland (2001) want to validate earlier findings, they wanted to explore the relationships of enabling bureaucracy with other important school variables. Samples of 97 high school faculties were used from urban, suburban, and rural areas with two separate questionnaires. Teachers were randomly given either the enabling bureaucracy questionnaire or a questionnaire on faculty trust. The enabling questionnaire resulted in similar findings of the first two samplings. Indications were the 12-item short form was equally effective at predicting a positive or negative image by teachers toward administration.

In the trust questionnaire the following variables of trust were analyzed: trust in the principal, spinning the truth, and role conflict. The need to acquire this data came from Hoy and Sweetland's (2001) hypotheses referent to trust as an important factor in enabling bureaucracies being successful. The more enabling the bureaucracy the greater the extent of faculty trust in the principal, the less the degree of truth spinning in the school, and the less the extent of role conflict in the school. Results indicate enabling schools encourage trusting relations between teachers and between teachers and the principal. "The findings of this study support the argument that enabling structures are characterized by principals who help teachers solve problems, encourage openness, and support teachers to do their jobs without undue concern and punishment" (Hoy & Sweetland, 2001, p. 314).

### *Mindfulness*

Weick and Sutcliffe (2001) defined mindfulness as

the combination of ongoing scrutiny of existing expectations, continuous refinement and differentiation of expectations based on newer experiences, willingness and capability to

invent new expectations that make sense of unprecedented events, a more nuanced appreciation of context and ways to deal with it, and identification of new dimensions of context that improve foresight and functioning. (p. 42)

Hoy (2003) related the construct of mindfulness developed from individual and organizational settings and applied them to schools. His intention was to develop a theoretical analysis to identify the features of school structure that efficiently promoted positive outcomes of schools, while limiting negative consequences that are often associated with bureaucratic structures. The paradox of relying on routines and standard practices, which protect institutional functioning from the vagaries of personality, often comes at the cost of thoughtful adaptability (Hoy, 2003). “People are so accustomed and so efficient at one way of behaving that they become seduced by the nominal success of routines” (Hoy et al., 2006, p. 237).

The following section of research proposes that a correlation exists between the constructs of an enabling school structure and mindfulness. Hoy and Sweetland (2000, 2001) demonstrated that an enabling rather than a coercive school structure is helpful and leads to problem solving among members. Moreover, they found that an enabling school structure motivates teachers, creates healthier working environments, and allows hierarchical authority to coexist with processes affecting daily instruction. Mindfulness is explored to show that similarities exist between the two constructs. Mindfulness is reviewed from an individual, organizational, and school perspective.

Also, this study shows that a correlation exists between mindfulness and teacher empowerment. Finally, this study shows that a correlation exists between mindfulness and an enabling school structure toward teacher empowerment. An exploration of teacher empowerment follows this section, concluding with a theoretical framework that the three variables mentioned have a joint and unique relationship.

*Individual Mindfulness.* Ideologies of all kinds rationalize and justify our behavior; they provide us with identities, rules of action, and standard interpretations (Trungpa, 1973). Langer (1992) brought the concept of mindfulness to literature by focusing on the habits associated with *mindlessness*. She developed mindfulness as a restructuring of our thinking abilities. She contended that by doing things routinely our brain becomes programmed to perform without consciously thinking of the event at hand. Langer (1992) emphasized that creating new categories by welcoming new information, entertaining more than one point of view, and processing before outcome help individuals gain a more mindful experience with intuitive and creative sequences, and thereby sharpening judgment.

This evolution of individual mindfulness began with descriptions of mindlessness caused by information being processed routinely. Blindly following rules and procedures is different from following reasonable rules and challenging unreasonable ones. Mindlessness relies on old categories, whereas mindfulness is the creation of new ones (Hoy et al., 2006; Langer 1992). “When teachers and administrators simply follow rules or comply with senseless orders, they are mindless; they turn mindful as they substitute their judgments for routine responses” (Hoy et al., 2006, p. 238).

Langer (1992, 1997) and Langer and Moldoveanu (2000a, 2000b) focused more efforts on practices that reduced mindlessness than on efforts to increase mindfulness. Langer advocated interventions that promoted discrimination of subtle cues previously unnoticed. When these cues are noticed, routines that have been unfolding mindlessly are interrupted, and when routines are disrupted, the resulting void is similar to the void induced by meditation (Langer, 1992, 1997; Langer & Moldoveanu, 2000a, 2000b; Weick & Sutcliffe, 2006).

Context is another powerful force that can lead to mindless behavior because it controls a person's reactions and interpretations and makes an individual susceptible to what Langer (1992) called "context confusion" (p. 40). People confuse the context controlling the behavior of another person with the context determining their own behavior. Contextual confusion reinforces action viewed from a single perspective only and limits the use of multiple perspectives.

*Organizational Mindfulness and School Mindfulness.* Organizational mindfulness can be defined broadly to include individuals as well as groups of individuals. Krieger (2005) defined mindfulness as an information processing organization to be "a psychological state in which individuals engage in active information processing while performing their current tasks such that they actively analyzing, categorizing, and making distinctions in data" (p. 137).

In their study of U.S. health care markets, Fiol and O'Connor (2003) contended that managers of organizations benefit from mindful approaches when making decisions concerning "bandwagon behaviors." Bandwagon behaviors refer to individuals or organizations adopting an idea or technique due to pressures from other organizations. Without careful consideration, the bandwagon behavior can cause many organizations to respond to popular persuasion rather than sound principles and analyses. Fiol and O'Connor challenged organizations to strongly question the protocol of enlisting the bandwagon technique by resisting social pressures through mindful adaptation.

Fiol and O'Connor (2003) presented an extension of Langer's study with a three-dimensional continuum from mindfulness to mindlessness: (1) from category creation to category rigidity, (2) from openness of new information to automatic behaviors that preclude new information, and (3) from awareness of multiple perspectives to fixation on a single point of view.

Using the health care industry, Fiol and O'Connor (2003) established an initial framework for understanding the relationship between mindfulness and decision-making processes in those organizations. They implied that the widespread adoption and dispersion of mindfulness throughout the organization differs according to the commitment level. High-reliability organizations anchored an extreme end of the continuum as compared to the low-reliability organizations. Fiol and O'Connor rested on three benefits of mindfulness: (1) expanded scanning, (2) context-relevant interpretation of internal and external conditions, and (3) discriminating decisions via bandwagon behaviors.

Weick and Sutcliffe (2001) saw mindfulness as a complex entity in organizational structuring. Mindfulness redirects attention from the expected to the unexpected, from the confirming to the disconfirming, from the factual to the probable, seeing problems as opportunities and viewing successes as problematic; it is both optimistic and skeptical. They argued that five processes promote mindfulness in organizations: preoccupation with failure, reluctance to simplify interpretations, sensitivity to operations, commitment to resilience, and deference to expertise.

In an effort to continuously scan for problems, Weick and Sutcliffe (2001, 2006) felt that mindful leaders and organizations avoid preoccupation with their successes, in part, because success breeds contentment and sometimes arrogance, which ultimately leads to vulnerability. Instead, mindful organizations pay attention to small mistakes and seek to eliminate those (Weick & Sutcliffe, 2001).

Mindful organizations and their leaders are also reluctant to accept simplifications because of the need to understand the subtleties of the situation (Weick, 1993; Weick & Putman, 2006). Hoy (2003) stated, "Knowing schools are complex and unpredictable, leaders and

participants of mindful schools position themselves to see as much as possible and try to reconcile different interpretations without destroying the nuances of diversity and complexity” (p. 94).

Mindful organizations are concerned with the unexpected. Being sensitive to operations entails detecting problems and preventing them from enlarging (Hoy, 2003; Weick & Sutcliffe, 2006; Weick, Sutcliffe, & Obstfeld, 2005). It is imperative that leadership stay close to operations for better understanding about what is happening and why. School leaders should stay close to teaching and learning in the classroom. Sensitivity goes beyond operations and includes intrapersonal relationships. Workers in organizations who refuse to speak freely enact a system that knows less than it needs to know to remain effective (Hoy, 2003). Lack of sensitivity to teaching and learning causes an information gap, which delays timely response (Hoy et al., 2006).

Commitment to resilience is another characteristic of a mindful organization. No organization or system is perfect, and mindful principals know they must develop a capacity to overcome mistakes and continue operations (Hoy et al., 2006; Weick & Sutcliffe, 2001). No amount of preparation is sufficient to prevent mistakes from happening, but being resilient is necessary in coping and emerging with a positive outcome. “Mindful organizations and leaders do not let failure paralyze; instead, they detect, contain, and rebound from mistakes” (Hoy, 2003, p. 94).

Deference to expertise helps organizations avoid the mistake of embracing rigid administrative structures. Mindful organizations instead match expertise with problems, stripping the status or experience procedures and opting to quickly solve situations and return to productive environments (Weick & Sutcliffe, 2001). Hoy et al. (2006) noted that decision-



making is fluid and defers to knowledge. Rigid structures are replaced by enabling ones; listening to those with expertise is fundamental to problem solving (Hoy, 2003; Hoy & Sweetland, 2001).

Each of the dimensions is important for mindful organizations to be successful. Teachers and administrators who develop the ability to anticipate surprise by focusing on failure, avoiding simplification, and remaining sensitive to operations control and advance learning opportunities (Hoy et al., 2006). When the unexpected happens, mindful organizations can rebound with the help of expertise and a resilience to overcome and succeed (Hoy, 2003; Hoy et al., 2006).

*Comparing and Contrasting Enabling Structures and Mindfulness.* The concept of mindfulness has certain similarities to an enabling structure. Both require openness, flexibility, cooperation, organizational learning, and trust (Hoy, 2003). Both concepts can produce a genuineness that helps teachers and administrators toward a collaborative spirit focused on improving learning. Both concepts have characteristics of problem-solving and anticipating the unexpected. But mindfulness differs by directing attention to a preoccupation with failure. Schools can be the victim of their own success by relying on their procedures and focusing less on what elements brought about the achievements. The end result is a tendency to ignore shortcomings (Hoy, 2003).

Another common feature is the emphasis on learning from mistakes. Rules can be the mechanism by which organizations feel comfortable and safe. The perspective becomes one of protecting oneself rather than taking risks and engaging in problem-solving activities. Both enabling and mindfulness emphasize participants being able to question rules. Enabling structures and mindful organizations encourage an openness to admit to mistakes, and cultivate leadership that is flexible toward rule enforcement (Hoy, 2003).

Enabling structures have flexible hierarchies that can be related to the mindful organization and its deference to expertise. Rather than being rigid toward status or experience, both concepts shift leadership and problem-solving strategies by deferring to expertise. The resilience of mindfulness relates to the flexibility of an enabling structure to overcome obstacles and bounce back from adversity (Hoy, 2003; Weick & Sutcliffe, 2006).

Hoy (2003) described the two concepts in the following manner: “It is difficult to imagine a mindful organization that is not enabling, but it is possible to conceive of enabling organizations that is not mindful” (p. 95). Mindfulness calls for continuous scanning and monitoring of activities and pays special attention to the smallest subtleties; whereas, structures can enable the wrong thing. Mindfulness should provide for a self-correction from errant ways (Hoy, 2003).

For the most part, Hoy (2003) felt that the concepts of enabling and mindful structures are complementary; they have much more in common than they have differences. Mindfulness has a preoccupation with failure, a resiliency, and sensitivity to the unexpected that some enabling structures lack. In spite of minor differences, the expectation is that mindfulness and enabling go together; the two concepts are expected to be strongly associated (Hoy, 2003).

Hoy et al. (2006) expounded on Hoy’s (2003) theoretical framework and Weick and Sutcliffe’s (2001) work on high reliability organizations (HROs). Coupled with faculty trust, the initial task was to examine the theoretical and empirical components of each. Hoy et al. (2006) sampled 75 middle schools in 11 different counties. The study yielded approximately 2,600 usable surveys from two different instruments; the Mindfulness Scale (M-Scale) and the Omnibus T-Scale. The M-Scale consisted of 20 items developed by Hoy et al. (2004) in two highly related concepts—principal mindfulness and faculty mindfulness. The Omnibus T-Scale

consisted of 26 items in three areas of subtests: faculty trust in colleagues, in principal, and in clients. The two aspects of school mindfulness (principal and faculty) were significantly correlated with each other ( $r = .59, p < .01$ ).

In the multiple regression analysis the best predictor of faculty mindfulness was faculty trust in colleagues, which has a strong independent effect on faculty mindfulness. Both faculty trust in clients and faculty trust in principals had independent effects on faculty mindfulness. The indication seemed to support the theoretical rationale that trust and mindfulness were related and likely necessary conditions for each other. Faculty trust promotes school mindfulness, and mindfulness reinforces trust (Hoy et al., 2006).

The Hoy (2003) and Hoy et al. (2006) studies indicate that an enabling school structure and mindfulness are strongly associated. The next section is a review of the third construct, teacher empowerment. After the review, the theoretical framework and hypotheses will explain that a positive connection exists between an enabling school structure, mindfulness, and teacher empowerment.

### *Teacher Empowerment*

Short (1994a) defined teacher empowerment as the process whereby teachers develop the competence to take charge of their own growth and resolve their own problems. The constructs of empowerment can rest in many different categories for exploration. This study proposed to investigate empowerment from the intrapersonal to the organizational and community level. This was intended to serve as a backdrop in transitioning to Short's six dimensions of empowerment as the catalyst for defining teacher empowerment in this study.

*Intrapersonal and Organizational Empowerment.* Rappaport (1995) stated, "Empowerment is a construct that links individual strengths and competencies, natural helping

systems, and proactive behaviors to social policy and social change” (p. 795). Perkins and Zimmerman (1995) defined empowerment as a process by which people gain control of their lives. It usually involves participation with others to achieve an understanding of the sociopolitical environment.

In the past 10 to 15 years, empowerment has evolved from the new paradigm-challenging concept to become a highly popular discipline in itself (Perkins & Zimmerman, 1995).

Rappaport (1995) felt empowerment would come as individuals sought to become more knowledgeable and seek to change their lives. From the community-psychological viewpoint, people who seek either personal or community change often find it difficult without the support of a collectivity of communal efforts. Relating this to a school sense, without support of the traditional organizations, teachers will find resistance and fail to establish any transitional merits of long-lasting empowerment (Manz & Sims, 1987).

Manz and Sims (1987) concluded that leadership is at least as important in organizations with self-managing work groups as it was in traditionally structured organizations. They described the leader in an organization with self-managing work groups as an *unleader*, “one who leads others to lead themselves” (Manz & Sims, 1984, p. 411). Organizations that utilize self-managing work groups operate with a bottom-up perspective and “the leader’s job is to teach and encourage subordinates to lead themselves effectively” (Manz & Sims, 1987, p. 121).

Maton and Salem (1995) conducted multiple case studies of individuals and communities and generated a number of key characteristics affecting empowerment. Among those characteristics was a belief system focusing not on oneself but on the good of the organization, along with an emphasis on a support system encompassing a sense of community. A support

system utilizes principles of uniform goals of achievement to assist and develop one's self-esteem.

Zimmerman (1995) concluded that the support system is vital to the growth and sustainability of any empowerment endeavors. He recognized two distinct types of empowerment one being psychological and the other political. Psychological empowerment refers to the individual's sense of control, or the belief that one can influence aspects of their environment. Zimmerman referred to psychological empowerment as the "participatory action research" exemplifying that a partnership exists between both groups and a development of skills throughout the process (p. 583). Political empowerment refers to actual influence over social and political forces in one's environment. When a school adopts site-based management, teachers become politically empowered. During their participation on a school management team, they have real influence over such things as school budget and personnel issues. The distinction between psychological and political empowerment is useful because, although they are related, one does not necessarily lead to the other (Cherniss, 1997; Zimmerman, 1995).

Beer and Walton (1987) insisted a support system is needed for both areas of empowerment as well. Their expertise in research in organizational change and development indicated that teachers must be involved in any educational intervention that influences a change process. Their focus of tangible tools relies heavily on the support of culture, leadership, and an open system dedicated to change.

Advancing the concept of equal partnership and support, Spreitzer (1995) studied managers in a Fortune 500 company. He found that managers characterized with sociopolitical support, an employee-centered environment, and a wide superior span of control gained more

empowerment than those who had less of these characteristics. These characteristics were seen as encouraging autonomy, innovation, commitment, and a sense of control.

In self-autonomy, Spreitzer (1995) carried his studies to a private level, studying the intrapersonal, or the individual experience of empowerment. His psychological experiment devised a common set of dimensions that defined the experience of empowerment in the workplace and included meaning (a sense of purpose), competence, self-determination, and impact. Zimmerman (1995) suggested the four dimensions reflect a proactive, rather than a passive, self-orientation of an individual in relation to his or her work role. Both Spreitzer and Zimmerman concluded that intrapersonal empowerment mediates the relationship between some elements of workplace social structure and innovativeness, but not effectiveness.

Manz and Sims (1987) professed that self-empowerment comes through the ability to lead and coexist with management, to share the process equally, and to claim ownership through involvement. Their study of a medium-sized manufacturing plant yielded 21 leader behaviors observed over several years. They concluded that when self-managing teams are given autonomy to make decisions based on expertise, a higher sense of ownership is developed.

*Empowerment and Teachers.* The idea of teachers and school authority coexisting and growing together is not a novel idea but actually a long entrenched experiment. Although the term was not being used, the history of teacher empowerment for better instruction can find roots throughout our public school's existence. John Dewey's (1915) book, *The School and Society*, was one of the first glimpses at teacher involvement in education by way of his laboratory school. It could be considered one of the first subtle but effective examples of empowerment and self-management. Dewey, along with the Progressive Movement, inspired innovations in

teaching strategies and school organizations that encouraged teachers to be more creative and enlightened. However the nurturing of this endeavor was short lived.

The bureaucracy of education was heavily entrenched in the 1940s by the scientific management's emphasis on rules and regulations (Tyack, 1974). There was little accomplished toward empowering the teachers. By the 1950s, the human relations movement helped soften education's approach to teacher involvement. The birth of the first faculty advisory committees brought many informal mechanisms designed to diminish the social and emotional distance between teachers and administrators (Tyack, 1974).

However, not until the late 1950s did major reform movements take prominence to improve school structuring. The political Cold War scare of Sputnik, and years later, a review of the economy's health called, *A Nation At Risk*, in 1983, criticized the American public school systems. These events confidently warned that our children were not prepared for the nation's increasingly technological society (Goodlad, 2001; Spring, 2005). It gave political clout to groups that insisted that teachers are the classroom experts and should be more involved in the managing of academics.

Since these events, the federal government has scrambled to implement new legislature geared toward improving teacher qualifications, increasing accountability, and endorsing standardized testing. Spring (2005) asserted that public schools were made the scapegoats for the difficulties the United States was having in the global economy of the 1980s. These and other political events led to our present educational law, the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, which mandates improved teacher qualifications as part of its structure.

During the reform movement that currently exists, not all implementation has produced support for teachers to be more empowered. Many states launched programs of self-managing and/or site-based strategies that were unsuccessful, causing others to rethink their options.

Rosenholtz (1987) described the now-defunct career ladder program of Tennessee as being ill-conceived. Part of the original idea was to help teachers gain professional mobility and self-autonomy. The process mandated that all teachers must pass a minimum competency test; a plan many teachers resisted. Rosenholtz's qualitative study with 73 elementary teachers across the state found "their loss of task autonomy constrained their ability to deliver appropriately paced instruction" (Rosenholtz, 1987, p. 538). Over one third of the teachers interviewed felt self-autonomy was weakened by the career ladder process, which was originally meant to improve teacher empowerment.

Kelley, Heneman, and Milanowski (2002) looked at school-based performance award (SBPA) programs and their motivational effects on teachers. They collected data between 1995 and 1998 by means of a series of surveys and interviews in several school districts. The research suggested that teachers associated a variety of positive and negative outcomes with the programs, including pay bonuses that indirectly affected their decision-making ability. Teachers expressed a relatively high level of commitment to program goals, and teacher expectancy was a good predictor of school success. Kelley et al. concluded that linking pay with school performance narrowed the curriculum, warped teaching practices, reduced the ability to accurately assess student performance, and stifled teachers from collaboratively accepting participation in the decision-making process. "The findings suggest that program designers need to focus on setting realistic goals, provide 'enabling conditions' for success, maximize perceptions that achieving the goals will lead to positive outcomes, and minimize stress reaction" (p. 372).



Smylie (1992) found teachers are sometimes reluctant to participate in decision-making strategies because they lack confidence and professional experience. Smylie found that decision-making strategies can increase job satisfaction and loyalty among teachers, but there is no clear evidence of how participation relates to the quality, implementation, and outcomes of those decisions. His findings revealed that teachers varied in their willingness to participate in decisions based on a teacher-principal working relationship. Smylie concluded success seems to indicate that leadership must be strongly linked with teachers before successful participation can advance.

In a later study, Smylie (1994) looked at school and teacher work redesign programs including career ladder plans; mentor, master, and lead teacher programs; and participative decision-making initiatives. His purpose was to empirically review relationships between teacher work redesign and classroom instruction. The initial evidence indicated that teacher status and relationships remained unchanged and unequal, resulting in administrators continuing to set the agendas for student instruction. On the other hand, the study revealed after teacher leaders and their principals became more egalitarian in their relationship, teacher leaders felt more freedom and flexibility to express opinions concerning instruction and other school activities. He concluded that a correlation existed between teacher empowerment, type of leadership, and organizational health of the school.

Short and Rinehart (1992, 1993) developed their own instrument to measure teacher empowerment called the School Participant Empowerment Scale (SPES). The SPES focused on the extent to which teachers perceive such things as decision-making, self-efficacy, impact, professional development, status, and autonomy. Along with another measurement, the School Climate Questionnaire (SCQ), Short and Rinehart (1992, 1993) empirically defined a method by

which teacher empowerment could successfully be determined. Interestingly, empowerment was negatively correlated to school climate, suggesting that as the level of empowerment increases, in dimensions such as decision-making and status, teachers perceive a less positive climate in the school. In an earlier study, Short, Greer, and Michael (1991) looked at schools restructuring to create greater teacher empowerment and found that when teachers' involvement in school decision-making increased, the opportunities for conflict increased. This was due to disclosure of ideologies and perceptions that were not disclosed in the traditional school structure. Short and Rinehart (1993) indicated that the more input teachers have in critical decisions and increased autonomy, the more complex the communication and the greater the need for substantive change, precipitating organizational conflict.

Marks and Louis (1997) found the relationships of teacher empowerment to other school reform objectives of interest were mixed. Their study was conducted among 24 restructuring schools that completed at least 4 years of decentralizing or site-based management. Data from surveys suggested the following results:

- (1) Overall, empowerment appears to be an important but not sufficient condition of obtaining real changes in teachers' ways of working and their instructional practices;
  - (2) The effects of empowerment on classroom practice vary depending on the domain in which teacher influence is focused;
  - (3) Teacher empowerment affects pedagogical quality and student academic performance indirectly through school organization of instruction.
- (p. 245)

Empowering teachers may be a useful strategy to improve student achievement, but the relationship between empowerment and teacher performance seems to indicate that it is not as straightforward as some would believe (Marks & Louis, 1997). Other research seems to indicate empowering teachers leads to better instruction and management of operations.

Short and Greer (1997) addressed "participant empowerment" as a key element involving both leadership and participation in embracing change. "Research on leadership suggests that the

challenge is to provide a new kind of leadership that engages all school participants in solving problems, creating opportunities, and overcoming barriers to student learning. Schools face critical issues, and new leadership is required” (p. 70). Empowerment involves both personal and organizational issues. The empowerment process can be seen as a development of personal competence and an opportunity to display that competence in an organizational setting.

Short (1994a) defined teacher empowerment as “a process whereby school participants develop the competencies to take charge of their own growth and resolve their own problems” (p. 488). Both empowered teachers and empowered schools are important to improve education; the culture of the school changes significantly when experienced teachers stop functioning in isolation and start solving student problems (Rosenholtz, 1991). Attention to the roles in decision-making increases when collective participation in the critical areas of activity takes place (Rosenholtz, 1991; Short, 1994a).

Short (1994a) derived six dimensions of teacher empowerment taken from a study of schools across the country between 1989 and 1992. She identified them as (1) involvement in decision-making, (2) teacher impact, (3) teacher status, (4) autonomy, (5) opportunities for professional development, and (6) teacher self-efficacy. Each of the six dimensions has established a mechanism by which teacher empowerment can be achieved. Therefore each dimension will be discussed as to its individual impact and significance.

*Decision-Making.* Decision-making refers to the critical decisions directly affecting the operations of schools (Short, 1994a). This participation generally involves responsibilities for decisions relating to budgets, teacher selection, scheduling, curriculum, and other programs of instructional or curricular importance. Providing teachers with a significant role in school decisions is a key element in empowerment (Short & Greer, 1997). In order for teachers to be

empowered, they must believe that their involvement is genuine and their opinion critically impacts the outcome of the decision (Short, 1994c).

Gamoran, Porter, and Galing (1994) described a view of empowerment referred to as the teacher professionalism view. Proponents of the teacher professionalism view argue that teachers are in the best position to assess the needs of students (Lieberman, 1988). This perspective holds that teachers are well-trained, experienced, dedicated, and motivated professionals and therefore should participate in the decision-making process. Gamoran et al. claimed when teachers have greater say in the collective issues, they are more motivated to bring out the best in their students. Shared decision-making holds the key to successfully transforming teachers from policy bystander to maximizing learning for students (Gamoran et al., 1994; Maeroff, 1988).

The kind of school climate that encourages involvement in decision-making is characterized by openness and risk taking (Short, 1994b, 1994c). This environment encourages teachers to try new ideas and approaches. Rosenholtz (1987) concluded one of the greatest strengths of shared decision-making in schools is the improved quality of the problem-solving capacity of teachers. Decisions become conscious, well-reasoned choices. Teachers feel ownership and commitment to the process. Smylie (1992) believed the more teachers perceive they are responsible for student learning, the more strongly they perceive that they should be held accountable for their work.

*Teacher Impact.* Teacher impact refers to teachers' perceptions having an effect and influence on school life (Short, 1994a, 1994b). Teachers' self-esteem grows when they feel they are doing something worthwhile, doing it in a competent manner, and are recognized for their accomplishments. Teachers want to feel appreciated and respected by not only their students and colleagues, but by their working superiors as well (Short, 1994a, 1994b; Short & Johnson, 1994).

Lightfoot (1986) reflected that teachers in her study of good schools grew from the respect they received from parents and community as well as the support they felt for their ideas. Lightfoot followed three assumptions when it came to empowerment in action. First, the earlier one begins to practice empowerment the better. Young students should be given an opportunity to be empowered, make choices, and develop autonomy in their lives to enable them to be more comfortable, wise, and sophisticated. By developing these as early habits, the practice becomes engrained (Lightfoot, 1986).

Second, the expression of empowerment in schools should be felt at every level—by students, teachers, and administration. If teachers feel strong, responsible, and influential, and their wisdom is valued, then it is more likely that they will encourage these qualities in their students. Thirdly, empowerment reflects a dynamic process, not a static state. Schools that reflect qualities of empowerment for both students and adults must expect some discomfort with the community as relationships increase initiative, autonomy, and responsibility for all. The practice of these qualities demands negotiating with the organizational structure and relationships that are fundamentally symmetrical (Lightfoot, 1986).

Lightfoot's (1986) study of good schools showed similarities to effective schools, another popular plan in redesigning schools. Brookover (1973) sought to define the organizational characteristics of effective schools that correlate with high student achievement. Dimensions such as a safe and orderly environment, a strong charismatic principal, a climate of high expectation, and frequent monitoring of student progress identified the effective school process. According to Brookover, effective schools must have effective teachers who compliment the school and community. Lightfoot's report on good schools spoke to the need for positive teacher influence and the impact gained from mutual respect throughout the community. Her qualitative

interviews with large interracial schools across the country were supported by Brookover's effective schools concepts, with both researchers identifying the merits of a positive influence that included teacher impact (Brookover, 1973; Lightfoot, 1986).

*Teacher Status.* Short (1994a, 1994b) referred to teacher status as the teacher's sense of esteem ascribed by students, parents, community members, peers, and superiors to the position of teacher. Recognition of this esteem can be found in comments and attitudes from various constituents of the school environment, responses to the teacher's instruction, and the respect afforded the teaching profession (Short, 1994a, 1994b; Short & Johnson, 1994). Having mutual respect and admiration from peers and colleagues allows an acknowledgment of authority and expertise.

Maeroff (1988) claimed that the meager salaries and other disfranchising circumstances of teaching reduce teacher respect. Everyday responsibilities and duties outside the realm of classroom teaching can erode the professional perception of teaching. Bus duty, hall monitoring, lunchroom supervision, and tedious clerical work are examples of duties that help to create a disillusioned sense of merit. Teachers worry that their status is being further eroded by the public's declining faith in education in general (Maeroff, 1988). Teachers are faced with community concerns of attacks on their competence and ability to teach. These and other factors stifle the overall perception of teachers and respect for their position. Short (1994a, 1994b) claimed that status was affected by the powerlessness that is a characteristic of bureaucratic organizations. Teachers feel left out and unimportant in critical decisions affecting their work life in schools.

*Autonomy.* Autonomy, as a dimension of empowerment, refers to teachers' beliefs that they can control certain aspects of their work life (Short, 1994a, 1994b; Short & Johnson, 1994).

This may include control over textbooks, scheduling, curriculum, and instructional planning. Autonomy is the sense of freedom to make certain decisions.

Firestone (1991) declared autonomy as a necessary prerequisite for a sense of accomplishment. His study of two teacher work reforms seemed to indicate that teachers are more motivated by job enlargement than merit pay. Firestone compared merit pay, giving teachers more money for the same amount of work, to job enlargement, pay for doing different work. The study suggested job enlargement is more likely to improve teacher motivation and autonomy than merit pay. The study further indicated job enlargement enriches teaching practice and enhances opportunities for autonomy and self-esteem (Firestone, 1991).

Rosenholtz (1987) indicated the traditional bureaucratic organizational structure of schools prevents teacher autonomy and leads to teachers' defection from the profession. Her research went directly to the workplace in which she identified "psychic rewards" by internal and external examples. "If people are highly motivated, their feelings are closely related to how well they perform on the job; good performance is self-rewarding and provides the incentive for continuing to perform well" (Rosenholtz, 1989, p. 422). However, when people experience low internal motivation, they feel dissatisfied and alienated, resulting in higher absenteeism, low effort expenditure, and outright defection. If high internal motivation is necessary for workplace commitment, it follows that teachers' commitment can alternatively be viewed as the extent of their work investment, performance quality, satisfaction, attendance, and desire to remain in the profession (Rosenholtz, 1989).

Rosenholtz's (1989) external viewpoint stated, "Most teachers derive their strongest rewards from positive and academically successful relations with individual students and from external recognition they receive from colleagues, parents, and principals" (p. 423). From both

internal and external measures, jobs that give people more autonomy and discretion require they exercise judgment and choice; in doing so, they become aware of themselves as “casual agents” in their performance (p. 423). Rosenholtz concluded that the traditional organizational structure of schools stifles teacher autonomy by minimizing opportunities for internal and external gains.

*Professional Growth.* Short (1994a, 1994b) described professional growth as a dimension of empowerment referent to the school providing them with opportunities to grow and develop teaching skills. There is a generalized view that teachers receive staff development and training when the need arises. Professional growth goes beyond the generalized view in terms of authentic empowerment. Professional growth refers to the opportunities and support that raise the level of authority derived from the command of the subject matter and essential teaching skills.

Maeroff (1988) stated teachers are the basis of schooling. According to his viewpoint, during the political era of the 1980s, reformers had little regard for teachers and their contribution. Maeroff insisted that teacher input formed the educational setting and could not be left out of important decisions. “Knowledgeable teachers who act as professionals can improve the education of their students. This is the reason teachers should be empowered” (Maeroff, 1988, p. xiii).

Maeroff (1988) described professional growth and training as important in maintaining empowerment. He depicted a program to strengthen arts and humanities in secondary schools called *CHART*. Designed for mostly urban settings, CHART included improving and training teachers professionally while providing a vehicle for empowerment to take place. The program, sponsored by the Rockefeller Foundation, became a focal point throughout leading cities, bringing much attention to teacher input and professional growth. Teachers were trained in such



things as being agents for change, adaptability to administration and board policies, removing constraints on themselves, and maintaining growth and professional attitudes (Maeroff, 1988). This program along with others reached national recognition and became advocates for developing teacher skills and enhancing teacher empowerment.

Fullan (1982, 2001) felt that teachers need acceptance among their own colleagues in order to build relationships and improve professional growth. Isolation and powerlessness has long been a source of contention among teachers. “The degree of change in schools is strongly related to the extent to which teachers interact with each other, a factor that has been verified repeatedly” (Fullan, 1982. p. 121). Fullan (2001) emphasized going further in professional growth must include knowledge sharing. He insisted organizations have invested heavily into technology and possibly training, but little is done in the way of knowledge training for professional benefit and growth. “It is one of life’s great ironies: schools are in the business of teaching and learning, yet they are terrible at learning from each other. If they ever discover how to do this, their future is assured” (p. 93).

*Self-Efficacy.* Self-efficacy refers to teachers’ perception that they have the skills and ability to help students learn, are competent in building effective programs for students, and can effect changes in student learning (Short, 1994a, 1994b; Short & Johnson, 1994). Woolfolk-Hoy and Hoy (2003) stated, “Teachers with a higher sense of efficacy are more motivated, set higher goals, and are less afraid of failure, and find new strategies when old ones fail” (p. 128).

Over the last two decades researchers have established strong links between teacher efficacy and teacher behaviors that foster student achievement. Bandura’s (1993) social cognitive theory anchors most efficacy research for either measurement of self-efficacy or collective efficacy. “Bandura’s (1997) theory of self-efficacy suggested that efficacy may be the most

malleable early in learning, thus the first years of teaching could be critical to the long-term development of teacher efficacy” (Shaughnessy, 2004, p. 155).

Gibson and Dembo (1984) developed a 30-item Likert scale to assess teacher efficacy and personal teaching efficacy and found it correlated to Bandura’s (1982, 1997) two-factor theoretical model of self-efficacy. Using both scales, Woolfolk and Hoy (1990) examined the structure and meaning of efficacy from prospective teachers and found dimensions of teaching efficacy and personal teaching efficacy related to beliefs about control and motivation. Teachers’ self-efficacy for teaching—their perception about their own capabilities to foster students’ learning and engagement—has proved to be an important teacher characteristic often correlated with the positive student and teacher outcomes (Shaughnessy, 2004; Woolfolk & Hoy, 1990).

Later Hoy and Woolfolk (1993) demonstrated that the constructs of general and personal teaching efficacy were separate sets of beliefs. They examined the two specified dimensions with healthy school climates and found that a development of teacher’s beliefs when supported by good principal leadership was enhanced. The need for efficacy leads to greater effort and persistence in the face of setbacks. Efficacy also influences motivation through goal setting (Woolfolk-Hoy & Hoy, 2003).

Bandura (1982, 1997) postulated four sources of self-efficacy information: mastery experience, vicarious experience, social persuasion, and emotional arousal. Just as these sources are critical for individuals, they also serve in the development of collective teacher efficacy (Goddard, Hoy, & Woolfolk-Hoy, 2000).

*Mastery experience.* Mastery experiences are important for organizations. As a group, teachers experience successes and failures. Successes build a robust belief in the faculty’s sense of collective efficacy and the failures undermine it. If success, however, is frequent and too easy, failure is likely to produce discouragement. A resilient sense of collective efficacy probably requires experience in overcoming difficulties through persistent effort.

*Vicarious experience.* Teachers do not rely on direct experience as the only source of information about their collective efficacy. They listen to stories about achievements of their colleagues as well as success stories of other schools. Similarly research on effective schools enumerates the characteristics of exemplary schools. Just as vicarious experience and modeling serve as effective ways to develop personal teacher efficacy, so too do they promote collective efficacy.

*Social persuasion.* Social persuasion is another means of strengthening a faculty's conviction that they have the capabilities to achieve their goals. Talks, workshops, professional development opportunities, and feedback about achievement can influence teachers. The more cohesive the faculty, the more likely the group as a whole can be persuaded by sound argument. Verbal persuasion alone is not likely to be a powerful change agent. Coupled with models of success and positive direct experience, it can influence the collective efficacy of a faculty. Persuasion can also encourage the faculty to give the extra effort that leads to success.

*Emotional arousal (affective states).* Organizations have affective states. Just as individuals react to stress, so do organizations. Efficacious organizations can tolerate pressure and crises and continue to function without severe negative consequences; in fact, they learn how to adapt and cope with disruptive forces. When confronted by such forces, less efficacious organizations react in dysfunctional ways, which reinforce their basic dispositions of failure. They misinterpret stimuli, sometimes overreacting, underreacting, or not reacting at all. The affective state of an organization has much to do with how challenges are interpreted by the organizations. (Bandura, 1997, pp. 484-485)

### Theoretical Framework

An enabling school structure has been defined and supported by the literature as leadership that fosters collaboration, innovation, and trust among its participants. Its rules and procedures are flexible and promote problem solving (Hoy & Sweetland, 2000, 2001). A particular strength of the concept of an enabling bureaucracy is that it encompasses both formal and informal organizational structures (Hoy & Miskel, 1996).

Enabling versus coercive was shown to have origination from Adler and Borys's (1996) organizational bureaucracy and was adapted to school organization by Hoy and Sweetland (2000, 2001). They selected two classical aspects of bureaucracy—formalization and centralization—and conceptualized each along a continuum from enabling at one extreme and coercive at the other. Their study argued that the more enabling the structure; the more

cooperative, flexible, and collaborative the outcome. Hoy and Sweetland (2000) stressed the kind rather than the amount of organizational structure is the key factor.

The construct of mindfulness was shown to have complementary factors to an enabling school structure. Both concepts require trust, openness, flexibility, cooperation, and organizational learning. Both are concerned with problem solving, collaboration, and anticipating the unexpected. Mindfulness works to strengthen the quality of the organization at the individual and collective levels. Hoy (2003) premised although it would be difficult to envision a mindful organization that is not enabling, it is possible to have an enabling organization that is not mindful. Hoy et al. (2006) concluded empirical data has shown that the more mindful an organization, the more understanding participants can obtain with regard to effective school organizations.

The theoretical framework (Hoy, 2003) supported by empirical data (Hoy et al., 2006) establishes a link between an enabling school structure and mindfulness. Therefore, it has led this researcher to predict that a positive correlation will exist between an enabling school structure and mindfulness.

Teacher empowerment has been defined as the process whereby participants develop the competence to take charge of their own growth and resolve their own problems (Short, 1994a). It has been established that empowerment links individual strengths and competencies with proactive behaviors for social policy and social change (Rappaport, 1995). More important, it has been established that a support system is vital to the growth and development of any empowerment (Zimmerman, 1995).

Short established six empirically derived dimensions defining the construct of teacher empowerment. Among these dimensions, the decision-making process was extensively explored

by Short and many colleagues, suggesting that in order for teachers to be empowered, they must believe their involvement is genuine and their opinion critically impacts the outcome of the decision (Short, 1994b). The kind of school climate that encourages involvement in the decision-making process would be characterized by openness and risk taking (Short, 1994b, 1994c). An environment that fosters collaboration and embraces the capacity of teachers to problem solve has the best perception of achieving success (Rosenholtz, 1987; Short, 1994b; Smylie, 1992).

Based on the review of literature, teacher empowerment should have a positive correlation to an enabling school structure, one that invites openness, creates healthier environments promoting collaboration, and encourages teachers to problem solve. Mindfulness can enhance teacher empowerment with its emphasis on learning from mistakes and involving participants in the decision-making process. Mindfulness is similar to empowerment in that it encourages teachers to ask questions by proclaiming that rules and procedures are flexible.

Therefore, the literature suggests that an enabling school structure, mindfulness, and teacher empowerment are positively related through complementary similarities and concepts. Answers to the hypotheses will be tested by the following research questions.

#### Research Questions

1. Does an enabling school structure correlate with mindfulness?
2. Does an enabling school structure correlate with teacher empowerment?
3. Does mindfulness correlate with teacher empowerment?
4. What is the joint and unique relationship between an enabling school structure and mindfulness to teacher empowerment?

#### Hypotheses

H1: The more enabling the structure of the school, the greater the extent of mindfulness.

H2: The more enabling the structure of the school, the greater the extent of teacher empowerment.

H3: The greater the extent of mindfulness, the greater the extent of teacher empowerment.

H4: The more enabling the structure of the school and mindful, the more positive the joint and unique effect on teacher empowerment.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

#### Introduction

This chapter describes the sample and how data was collected. An analysis of the measures is provided; complete copies of each measure are found in the appendixes. Teacher responses were aggregated to the school so that all variables were measured at the organizational level.

An enabling school structure was measured by the Enabling School Structure (Form ESS) instrument (See Appendix A). Mindfulness was measured by the School Mindfulness Scale (M-Scale; See Appendix B) and teacher empowerment was measured by the School Participant Empowerment Scale (SPES; See Appendix C). Measurements were taken from one school district in the state of Georgia. The school district totaled 30 individual schools, grades K-12. Of the 30 individual schools, 23 agreed to participate in this study. The methodology and research design used to conduct this study are discussed in this chapter.

The following methods were used in determining the relationship between an enabling school structure (Form ESS), mindfulness (M-Scale), and teacher empowerment (SPES). A comparison of an enabling school structure and each of the variables, mindfulness and teacher empowerment, were conducted to determine if any relationship exists. The extent of mindfulness and the extent of teacher empowerment were measured. Finally, the combined relationship between an enabling school structure and mindfulness were determined to predict the joint effect

on teacher empowerment. Responses from the Form ESS were examined based on the descriptions of the school structure (enabling versus hindering bureaucracy).

Data from each survey were aggregated to the school level for comparative purposes using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The SPSS data results tested the relative contribution of an enabling school structure and mindfulness in the prediction of teacher empowerment. Correlations to determine if there is a relationship between mindfulness and teacher empowerment and if mindfulness has a greater effect on teacher empowerment were conducted. Each correlation conducted used an alpha level of .05 as the level of significance. Regression analyses were conducted for enabling school structure, mindfulness, and teacher empowerment to determine if there are any significant relationships.

#### Limitations of the Study

The limitations of this study included that research with participants from a suburban school environment may not apply to the rural or urban school environments. Internal validity of the study may be compromised due to the nonrandom distribution of the surveys by the principal or their designee at their particular school. Other limitations to this study include the collection of data at one point rather than from a longitudinal study over different periods of time to allow the researcher to study changes over time. Finally, participants in this study came from one select school district within one particular state.

#### Population and Sample

The population of this study consisted of elementary, middle, and high school teachers from Paulding County in the state of Georgia during the 2008-2009 school year. Paulding County is located 30 miles northwest of Atlanta and presently has a population in excess of 121,000 residents. Paulding County is among the fastest growing counties in the United States



according to the Paulding County Chamber of Commerce Website. The Paulding County School District includes 18 elementary, 7 middle, and 5 high schools. There were over 27,000 registered students during the 2008-2009 school year and over 3,900 employees making Paulding County Schools the largest county employer. The population of teachers consists of over 2,500 certified educators, grades K-12. Among these numbers approximately 1,800 certified teachers were approached for participation in this study.

Solicitation for participation in completing any survey was on a voluntary basis along with anonymity and confidentiality in accordance with the University of Alabama procedures, and the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Human Subjects, and the Paulding County Board of Education. Teachers were asked for their participation at a regularly scheduled faculty meeting at their respective schools. All participants remained anonymous to enhance honest responses. Permission was gained through the offices of the Superintendent and the individual Principals in each of the 30 schools in which 23 agreed to participate. A copy of the permission is included (See Appendix D).

#### Instrumentation

This study used three instruments to collect data. The Enabling School Structure Form (Form ESS) developed by Hoy and Sweetland (2000, 2001), was used to identify the school structure (enabling vs. hindering bureaucracy). Mindfulness was measured by the School Mindfulness Scale (M-Scale) developed by Hoy et al. (2004) to determine the teachers' perception of the level of mindfulness within their school. The School Participant Empowerment Scale (SPES) developed by Short and Rinehart (1992, 1993) was used to determine the teachers' perception of empowerment.

### *Enabling School Structure (Form ESS)*

The degree to which a school structure is enabling or hindering was determined by the use of the Form ESS. The Form ESS is a 12-item, Likert-type scale that measures the degree to which school structure is enabling; the higher the score, the more enabling the school structure, and the lower the score, the more hindering the structure. The Form ESS contains short, descriptive statements that determine the structure of the hierarchy as to whether it helps rather than hinders the effectiveness of teachers. The Form ESS characterizes the system of rules and regulations in the school structure that serve as guides to problem solving rather than obstruct innovation and professional judgment. The scales responses range from 1 (*never*) to 5 (*always*). Items 1, 3, 5, 6, 10, and 12 were scored from 1 to 5 corresponding to the extent of frequency of each item. Items 2, 4, 7, 8, 9, and 11 were reverse scored, that is, these items were scored from 1 (*Always*) to 5 (*never*). The higher the cumulative score, the more enabling the school structure is judged to be.

### *Mindfulness Scale (M-Scale)*

The M-Scale was used to measure the degree to which the school is a mindful organization. The M-Scale is a 14-item, Likert-type scale. The reliability of the scale is consistently high, usually .90 or higher (Hoy et al., 2004). The construct validity has also been supported in three factor analyses. The scale responses range from 1 (*Strongly Disagree*) to 5 (*Strongly Agree*) for the following items: 2, 3, 6, 9, 10, 12, and 13. The remaining items (1, 4, 5, 7, 8, 11, and 14) were reversed scored, from 1 (*Strongly Agree*) to 5 (*Strongly Disagree*). For each item, an average school item score (ASIS) was computed by adding all scores for all individuals and dividing by the number of individuals. By adding all 14 ASIS and dividing by

14, a school score was determined. The higher the score, the greater the mindfulness the organization is considered to have.

A series of factor analytic studies demonstrated that the M-Scale has two significantly correlated factors: mindfulness of the principal and mindfulness of the faculty, each measured by 10 items. Both factors measure five elements of mindfulness, including focus on mistakes and failure, reluctance to simplify, sensitivity to teaching and learning, commitment to resilience, and deference to expertise.

#### *School Participant Empowerment Scale (SPES)*

The SPES was used to measure teacher perceptions of empowerment. The SPES focuses on the extent to which teachers perceive a sense of self-efficacy in the workplace, perceive they have impact within the school, enjoy collaborative relationships, perceive they have high status, and believe they function with a strong knowledge base about teaching and learning (Short & Rinehart, 1993). The 38-item, Likert-type scale contains statements about teacher empowerment. The item responses were reported on a 5-point scale, from 1 (*Strongly Disagree*) to 5 (*Strongly Agree*). Factor analysis revealed six dimensions of empowerment: self-efficacy, professional growth, impact, collaboration, status, and knowledge base.

#### Measures

This study intended to measure the degree to which a school structure is enabling or hindering. Mindfulness was measured, seeking whether a correlation exists between an enabling school structure and teacher empowerment. Lastly, a measurement of teacher empowerment was conducted to determine whether a correlation existed between the previous two constructs used as independent variables.

Hoy and Sweetland (2001) conducted factor analysis on the Form ESS to determine reliability, which yielded alpha coefficients of .90 or higher. The construct and predictive validity have been strongly supported in a number of studies (Hoy & Sweetland, 2000, 2001). The Form ESS captures the degree to which formalization and centralization enable teachers to accomplish work. Samples of centralization items include, “The administrative hierarchy of this school enables teachers to do their work,” and “The administrative hierarchy of this school obstructs innovation” (reverse scores). Examples of formalization items include, “Administrative rules help rather than hinder,” and “In this school, red tape is a problem” (reverse scored). The Form ESS has been in numerous studies to determine enabling school structure as a hierarchy that helps rather than hinders and a system of rules and regulations that guides problem solving rather than punishes failure. Conversely, a hindering school structure is a hierarchy characterized by a system of rules and regulations that impedes and controls teacher behavior.

The M-Scale developed by Hoy et al. (2004) was designed to measure school mindfulness, a fairly new construct intended to assist organizational measures that could include trust. The reliability of coefficients for the scale ranks at .90 or higher. The scale ranks five elements of mindfulness, and sample items are as follows: focus on mistakes and failure, “Teachers in my building learn from their mistakes and change things so they do not happen again,” and “In my building, teachers hide mistakes” (reverse scored); reluctance to simplify, “My principal negotiates differences among faculty without destroying diversity of opinions,” and “Teachers negotiate differences among each other without the diversity of opinions”; sensitivity to teaching and learning, “My principal is an expert on teaching and learning,” and “In this school, teachers welcome feedback about ways to improve”; commitment to resilience, “When a crisis occurs, the principal deals with it so we can get back to teaching,” and “When

things don't go well, the teachers bounce back quickly"; deference to expertise, "The principal of this school does not value the opinions of the teachers" (reverse scored), and "Teachers in this school value expertise more than authority."

The SPES developed by Short and Rinehart (1992, 1993) was used to measure teacher perceptions of empowerment. The reliability of coefficients ranks at .94. The scale ranks six elements of empowerment, and sample items are as follows: decision-making, "I am given the responsibility to monitor programs," and "I am involved in school budget decisions"; professional growth, "I am treated as a professional," and I am given an opportunity for continued learning"; status, "I believe I have earned respect," and I believe I am good at what I do"; self-efficacy, "I believe I am helping kids become independent learners," and "I see students learn"; autonomy, "I have control over daily schedules," and "I have the freedom to make decisions on what is taught"; and impact, "I am a decision maker," and "I believe that I have the ability to get things done."

### Procedures

To test each hypothesis, the participating educators in this study were administered the Form ESS, which is a 12-item questionnaire using a 5-point, Likert-type scale from 1 (*Never*) to 5 (*Always*) and the M-Scale, 14 items with answers ranging from 1 (*Strongly Disagree*) to 5 (*Strongly Agree*) or the SPES, 38 items with answers ranging from 1 (*Strongly Agree*), to 5 (*Strongly Disagree*).

Contact was made at each participating school to solicit a facilitator to perform the task of distributing, explaining, and collecting materials at the designated faculty meeting. Each facilitator was given a monetary reward by this researcher as motivation to collect and return data. Packets containing consent letters, randomized surveys, score sheets, and pencils were

delivered to the facilitator for distribution to each respective faculty. This researcher was not present at any of the faculty meetings to enhance nonbiased participation.

The cover letter stated that all participants were voluntary and no person would be identified. All data received would be kept confidential by this researcher according to the University of Alabama's IRB specifications.

## CHAPTER 4

### RESULTS

#### Introduction

This chapter contains the results of the analyses performed to address the four research questions of this study.

1. Does an enabling school structure correlate with mindfulness?
2. Does an enabling school structure correlate with teacher empowerment?
3. Does mindfulness correlate with teacher empowerment?
4. What are the joint and unique relationships of an enabling school structure and mindfulness to teacher empowerment?

Initially, descriptive statistics are presented for all of the study variables, and the results of the analysis of the reliability of the composite scores are presented. Then, the results related to each of the four research questions are described. Supplemental analyses were performed in this study, and their results follow the results of the individual research questions. The chapter ends with a summary.

#### Descriptive Statistics

Table 2 shows descriptive statistics for the enabling school structure, mindfulness, and teacher empowerment scales, as well as descriptive statistics for the six subscales of teacher empowerment. Reliability coefficients for these scores are shown in Table 3. The reliability coefficients for the nine scales were all above the conventional criterion of .70 for adequate reliability. The most reliable scale was the overall teacher empowerment scale ( $\alpha = .92$ ),

followed by the decision making scale ( $\alpha = .85$ ) and the enabling school structure scale ( $\alpha = .81$ ). The least reliable scales were the professional growth ( $\alpha = .71$ ), autonomy ( $\alpha = .71$ ), and impact ( $\alpha = .71$ ) subscales of teacher empowerment.

Table 2

*Descriptive Statistics for Composite Measures*

	<i>n</i>	Min.	Max.	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Enabling School Structure	23	2.93	4.27	3.94	.30
Mindfulness	23	3.10	4.13	3.65	.26
Teacher Empowerment	23	3.48	4.14	3.84	.18
Decision Making	23	2.49	3.84	3.19	.36
Professional Growth	23	3.70	4.45	4.21	.18
Status	23	3.70	4.54	4.22	.16
Self Efficacy	23	3.71	4.52	4.27	.19
Autonomy	23	2.50	3.91	3.27	.33
Impact	23	3.59	4.50	4.11	.18

*N* = 23 schools.



Table 3

*Reliability Coefficients for Composite Measures*

	<i>N</i>	Item Number	Cronbach's $\alpha$
Enabling School Structure	528	12	.81
Mindfulness	535	14	.77
Teacher Empowerment	480	38	.92
Decision Making	519	10	.85
Professional Growth	537	6	.71
Status	535	6	.73
Self Efficacy	542	6	.79
Autonomy	546	4	.71
Impact	531	6	.71

## Research Question 1

The first research question of this study was, Does an enabling school structure correlate with mindfulness? Table 4 contains the correlations among all of the variables examined in this study, and from this table, it can be seen that enabling school structure scores and mindfulness scores had a correlation of .81 ( $p < .05$ ). The positive correlation indicated that schools with higher scores on the enabling school structure scale also tended to have higher mindfulness scores. Therefore, the answer to the first research question is that the results support a strong, positive relationship between enabling school structure and mindfulness.

### Research Question 2

The second research question was, Does an enabling school structure correlate with teacher empowerment? The correlation (shown in Table 4) between an enabling school structure and teacher empowerment was .25 ( $p > .05$ ). This correlation was not statistically significant, indicating that an enabling school structure did not affect teacher empowerment.

### Research Question 3

The third research question of this study was, Does mindfulness correlate with teacher empowerment? Table 4 shows that the correlation between mindfulness and teacher empowerment was .34 ( $p > .05$ ). The correlation of .34 was not statistically significant, and this indicated that the answer to the third research question is that mindfulness does not affect teacher empowerment.

### Research Question 4

The fourth and final research question of this study was, What are the joint and unique relationships of an enabling school structure and mindfulness to teacher empowerment? In order to address this question, a multiple linear regression analysis was performed with enabling school structure and mindfulness as predictors of teacher empowerment. The results of this analysis are shown in Table 5. Overall, the regression model was not statistically significant,  $R^2 = .11$ , Adjusted  $R^2 = .03$ ,  $F(2, 20) = 1.28$ ,  $p = .300$ . This indicated that an enabling school structure and mindfulness together did not predict teacher empowerment. In addition, neither an enabling school structure ( $\beta = -.06$ ,  $p > .05$ ) nor mindfulness ( $\beta = .38$ ,  $p > .05$ ) were statistically significant on an individual basis. Therefore, the answer to the fourth research question was that an enabling school structure and mindfulness did not have joint or unique relationships with teacher empowerment.

Table 4

*Correlations Among Composite Measures*

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.
1. Enabling School Structure	1.00								
2. Mindfulness	.81*	1.00							
3. Teacher Empowerment	.25	.34	1.00						
4. Decision Making	-.14	.10	.83*	1.00					
5. Professional Growth	.54*	.49*	.78*	.38	1.00				
6. Status	.46*	.29	.63*	.15	.83*	1.00			
7. Self Efficacy	.46*	.29	.63*	.15	.83*	1.00	.46*		
8. Autonomy	.00	.23	.77*	.81*	.37	.13	.21	1.00	
9. Impact	.56*	.47*	.74*	.35	.82*	.82*	.80*	.28	1.00

$N = 23.$

\* $p < .05$

Table 5

*Results of Regression Analysis with Enabling School Structure and Mindfulness as Predictors of Teacher Empowerment*

	$B$	$SE_B$	$\beta$	$t$	$P$
Constant	3.02	.55		5.48	<.001
Enabling School Structure	-.04	.22	-.06	-1.16	.871
Mindfulness	.26	.25	.38	1.07	.295

Note.  $R^2 = .11$ , Adjusted  $R^2 = .03$ ,  $F(2, 20) = 1.28$ ,  $p = .300$ .

$N = 23.$

## Unhypothesized Results

In addition to the analyses performed to address each of the four research questions of this study, several unhypothesized analyses were performed. Specifically, the subscales of teacher empowerment were substituted in place of the overall teacher empowerment scale, and regression analyses were performed to determine if an enabling school structure and mindfulness were predictive of these subscale scores.

Table 6 shows the results of the regression analysis with an enabling school structure and mindfulness as predictors of decision-making scores. The regression model was not statistically significant,  $R^2 = .14$ , Adjusted  $R^2 = .06$ ,  $F(2, 20) = 1.68$ ,  $p = .212$ . Neither enabling school structure ( $\beta = -.62$ ,  $p > .05$ ) nor mindfulness ( $\beta = .60$ ,  $p > .05$ ) were statistically significant. Thus, an enabling school structure and mindfulness were not predictive of decision-making scores.

Table 6

*Results of Regression Analysis with an Enabling School Structure and Mindfulness as Predictors of Decision making*

	<i>B</i>	<i>SE<sub>B</sub></i>	$\beta$	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Constant	3.16	1.05		3.00	.007
Enabling School Structure	-.74	.42	-.62	-1.77	.092
Mindfulness	.81	.47	.60	1.71	.103

*Note.*  $R^2 = .14$ , Adjusted  $R^2 = .06$ ,  $F(2, 20) = 1.68$ ,  $p = .212$ .  
 $N = 23$ .

The results of the regression analysis with an enabling school structure and mindfulness as predictors of professional growth are shown in Table 7. The regression model was statistically

significant,  $R^2 = .30$ , Adjusted  $R^2 = .23$ ,  $F(2, 20) = 4.37$ ,  $p = .027$ . This indicated an enabling school structure and mindfulness together were predictive of professional growth, with 30% of the variance in professional growth explained. However, neither an enabling school structure ( $\beta = .43$ ,  $p > .05$ ) nor mindfulness ( $\beta = .13$ ,  $p > .05$ ) were statistically significant on an individual basis. The high correlation between an enabling school structure and mindfulness ( $r = .81$ ,  $p < .05$  as previously discussed) is the likely cause of the fact that neither predictor variable reached the level of statistical significance on an individual basis despite the fact that together they were predictive of professional growth.

Table 7

*Results of Regression Analysis with an Enabling School Structure and Mindfulness as Predictors of Professional Growth*

	<i>B</i>	<i>SE<sub>B</sub></i>	$\beta$	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Constant	2.83	.48		5.87	< .001
Enabling School Structure	.26	.19	.43	1.37	.187
Mindfulness	.10	.22	.14	.45	.657

*Note.*  $R^2 = .30$ , Adjusted  $R^2 = .23$ ,  $F(2, 20) = 4.37$ ,  $p = .027$ .  
 $N = 23$ .

Table 8 shows the results of the regression analysis with an enabling school structure and mindfulness scores as predictors of status scores. The regression model was not statistically significant,  $R^2 = .23$ , Adjusted  $R^2 = .15$ ,  $F(2, 20) = 3.00$ ,  $p = .073$ . Neither an enabling school structure ( $\beta = .64$ ,  $p > .05$ ) nor mindfulness ( $\beta = 0.23$ ,  $p > .05$ ) were statistically significant on an

individual basis. Therefore, it can be concluded that an enabling school structure and mindfulness were not predictive of status.

Table 8

*Results of Regression Analysis with an Enabling School Structure and Mindfulness as Predictors of Status*

	<i>B</i>	<i>SE<sub>B</sub></i>	$\beta$	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Constant	3.36	.45		7.48	<.001
Enabling School Structure	.35	.18	.64	1.95	.066
Mindfulness	-.14	.20	-.23	-.69	.499

*Note.*  $R^2 = .23$ , Adjusted  $R^2 = .15$ ,  $F(2, 20) = 3.00$ ,  $p = .073$ .  
 $N = 23$ .

The results of the regression analysis with an enabling school structure and mindfulness scores as predictors of self-efficacy scores are shown in Table 9. The regression model was statistically significant,  $R^2 = .29$ , Adjusted  $R^2 = .21$ ,  $F(2, 20) = 4.00$ ,  $p = .034$ . The  $R^2$  coefficient of .29 indicates that together the predictors explained 29% of the variance in self-efficacy scores. Individually, an enabling school structure was statistically significant ( $\beta = .75$ ,  $p < .05$ ) but mindfulness was not ( $\beta = -.30$ ,  $p > .05$ ). This indicated that higher levels of an enabling school structure were associated with higher levels of teacher self-efficacy.

Table 10 shows the results of the regression analysis with an enabling school structure and mindfulness as predictors of autonomy scores. The regression model was not statistically significant,  $R^2 = .16$ , Adjusted  $R^2 = .07$ ,  $F(2, 20) = 1.83$ ,  $p = .186$ . Neither an enabling school

structure ( $\beta = -.54, p > .05$ ) nor mindfulness ( $\beta = .66, p > .05$ ) were statistically significant. This indicated that neither an enabling school structure nor mindfulness were predictive of autonomy.

Table 9

*Results of Regression Analysis with an Enabling School Structure and Mindfulness as Predictors of Self-Efficacy*

	<i>B</i>	<i>SE<sub>B</sub></i>	$\beta$	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Constant	3.19	.51		6.19	< .001
Enabling School Structure	.48	.20	.75	2.35	.029
Mindfulness	-.22	.23	-.30	-.95	.352

*Note.*  $R^2 = .29$ , Adjusted  $R^2 = .21$ ,  $F(2, 20) = 4.00$ ,  $p = .034$ .  
 $N = 23$ .

Table 10

*Results of Regression Analysis with an Enabling School Structure and Mindfulness as Predictors of Autonomy*

	<i>B</i>	<i>SE<sub>B</sub></i>	$\beta$	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Constant	2.59	.97		2.68	.014
Enabling School Structure	-.59	.38	-.54	-1.55	.138
Mindfulness	.83	.43	.66	1.91	.070

*Note.*  $R^2 = .16$ , Adjusted  $R^2 = .07$ ,  $F(2, 20) = 1.83$ ,  $p = .186$ .  
 $N = 23$ .

The results of the regression analysis with an enabling school structure and mindfulness as predictors of impact scores are shown in Table 11. Overall, the regression model was

statistically significant,  $R^2 = .32$ , Adjusted  $R^2 = .25$ ,  $F(2, 20) = 4.66$ ,  $p = .022$ . This indicated that when considered together, an enabling school structure and mindfulness were predictive of impact scores. However, neither an enabling school structure ( $\beta = .53$ ,  $p > .05$ ) nor mindfulness ( $\beta = .04$ ,  $p > .05$ ) were statistically significant on an individual basis.

Table 11

*Results of Regression Analysis with an Enabling School Structure and Mindfulness as Predictors of Impact*

	<i>B</i>	<i>SE<sub>B</sub></i>	$\beta$	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Constant	2.77	.47		5.96	< .001
Enabling School Structure	.31	.18	.53	1.71	.104
Mindfulness	.03	.21	.04	.12	.902

*Note.*  $R^2 = .32$ , Adjusted  $R^2 = .25$ ,  $F(2, 20) = 4.66$ ,  $p = .022$ .  
 $N = 23$ .

### Findings

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationships between an enabling school structure, mindfulness, and teacher empowerment. For teacher empowerment, both the overall score and six subscale scores were examined. The internal consistency reliability coefficients for all scales were above the conventional criterion of .70 for adequate reliability.

The first research question of this study was, Does an enabling school structure correlate with mindfulness? The results showed an enabling school structure scores and mindfulness scores had a strong positive correlation of .81, which was statistically significant. Squaring this correlation indicated that 66% of the variance in these two scales was shared variance. This result is consistent with the hypothesis an enabling school structure correlates with mindfulness,



although due to the correlational nature of this study, caution must be employed when drawing causal inferences.

The second research question was, Does an enabling school structure correlate with teacher empowerment? The answer to this research question is no. This conclusion is based on the finding that the correlation between an enabling school structure and teacher empowerment was not statistically significant. The third research question of this study was, Does teacher empowerment correlate with mindfulness? Again, the answer to this question is no, because the correlation between teacher empowerment and mindfulness was not statistically significant.

The fourth and final research question of this study was, What are the joint and unique relationships of an enabling school structure and mindfulness to teacher empowerment? This question was addressed by performing a multiple regression analysis with an enabling school structure and mindfulness as predictors of teacher empowerment. The regression model with these two predictors was not statistically significant, and neither predictor was statistically significant on an individual basis. Therefore, the answer to this research question is an enabling school structure and mindfulness did not have joint or unique relationships with teacher empowerment.

After the analyses performed to address the four research questions, a set of unhypothesized regression analyses were performed with the subscales of teacher empowerment substituted in place of the overall teacher empowerment scale. The results for the teacher empowerment subscales of decision making, status, and autonomy indicate that neither the regression model as a whole nor the two individual predictor variables were statistically significant. For the professional growth and impact subscales, the regression model was statistically significant, but neither predictor variable (enabling school structure and mindfulness)

was statistically significant on an individual basis. This was likely due to the strong correlation between the two predictors, indicating that they have a joint relationship with professional growth and impact but no unique relationships. For the self-efficacy subscale, the overall regression model was statistically significant, and an enabling school structure was statistically significant on an individual basis. The positive regression coefficient for an enabling school structure indicated that schools with a more enabling school structure had teachers with higher levels of self-efficacy.

## CHAPTER 5

### DISCUSSION

#### Introduction

This chapter presents a discussion from the results of the current study. The purpose of the study was to explore the relationships among three sets of variables: an enabling school structure, mindfulness, and teacher empowerment. The first section of this chapter presents a summary of the study that includes the problem addressed, the purpose of the study, the theoretical and practical significance, and highlights of the literature. Next, the findings of this study are discussed, followed by implications and limitations. This is followed by recommendations made for both educational practice and future research. The chapter ends with conclusions.

#### Overview of the Study

The purpose of this study was to address the relationships between three constructs: an enabling school structure, mindfulness, and teacher empowerment. Chapter 1 presented the key problem to be addressed along with a discussion of the specific purpose and significance of this study.

The general problem addressed was, given the increased emphasizes on improving teacher qualifications, are there some administrative actions that will lead to greater teacher empowerment? Empowerment is a dominant theme in all types of organizations (Short & Rinehart, 1992). Recent research on an enabling school structure and mindfulness of school

operation may lead to greater teacher empowerment. The specific problem became a test of the relationship of an enabling school structure and mindfulness in predicting teacher empowerment.

The theoretical significance of this study was to explain relationships between the three constructs, and the joint and unique relationship between an enabling school structure and mindfulness to teacher empowerment. The practical significance was to inform school leaders of the relationships in organizations as being more or less enabling and their significance to mindfulness and teacher empowerment. If school leaders can incorporate avenues for teachers to empower themselves and create mindful school environments, administrators should be able to enhance the quality of teaching.

Chapter 2 established a conceptual framework for each of the constructs of an enabling school structure, mindfulness, and teacher empowerment and ended with predictions of four research questions and four hypotheses.

Hoy and Sweetland's (2000) study established empirical data supporting the argument that enabling structures are characterized by principals who help teachers solve problems, encourage openness, and support teachers to do their jobs without undue concern and punishment (Hoy & Sweetland, 2000).

In this study, the descriptive statistics measured on the Enabling School Structure (ESS) form resulted in a median score of 3.94 out of a possible score of 5, indicating that teachers generally feel supported by the hierarchy of authority. There is a particular emphasis on teacher and administrative collaboration that may account for this high score in the school district in which data were secured. Collaborative time, an enabling feature, is scheduled during each grading period, allowing teachers to meet with their department and discuss improvements. At the end of the school year, teachers present recorded documentation of collaborative meetings as

part of their annual evaluation. Administrators attend these scheduled collaborative meetings as well. They are charged to listen and help teachers address concerns and work through any problems. Administrators in this district work at improving communication, show their support by their presence and involvement, and regularly offer suggestions to assist instruction.

The second construct, mindfulness, is meant to improve foresight and functioning. Hoy (2003) related the construct of mindfulness developed from individual and organizational settings and applied them to schools.

In this study, the descriptive statistics resulted in a median score of 3.65 out of a possible score of 5 on the mindfulness scale, indicating that teachers generally feel supported when concerns of trust, openness, flexibility, cooperation, and anticipating the unexpected are involved.

As an example, teachers often show a remarkable ability to be flexible during instruction, despite interruptions that change the typical teaching day. Usual interruptions include things like fire and safety drills, yearbook pictures, pep rallies, state testing days, severe weather, and discipline situations. It involves administrators and teachers maintaining a cooperative spirit and overcoming obstacles. In this district, administrators help teachers train by promoting plans for flexibility. Using a variety of communication tools, administrators discuss with teachers scenarios that could change the daily schedule and how to maintain learning with their students.

Short's (1994a) definition of teacher empowerment, the third construct, was intended to assist teachers to develop the competence to take charge of their own growth and resolve problems. Short identified six dimensions for developing the construct of teacher empowerment.

The descriptive statistics in this study resulted in a mean score of 3.84 out of a possible 5 on the empowerment scale, indicating that teachers recognize the principles of empowerment In

unhypothesized results, when professional growth, impact, and self-efficacy were individually factored as the dependent variable, and an enabling school structure and mindfulness were used as the independent variables, there was a positive relationship.

By observation, teachers in this district seek to improve the quality of education by examples of broadening their knowledge and improving their teaching techniques. In one example, leadership positions such as department heads, curriculum advisors, and planning chairmen are annually rotated in most schools to allow teachers more opportunities to improve leadership skills and enhance their professional growth. These positions are sought after by most teachers. It affords teachers the ability to increase their impact on the school environment.

In these positions, decisions are made that affect everything from the instructional materials to social activities throughout the year. Teachers often interact with administrators and make suggestions on how to improve the educational experience. Other examples are tutoring programs, recovery assistance, and online course help developed by the teachers. These promote learning for students and help promote some areas of empowerment for teachers.

#### Summary of Findings

The goal of this study was to explore the relationships between three variables: an enabling school structure, mindfulness, and teacher empowerment. As related in Chapter 4, only one research question had a positive relationship, that being an enabling school structure with mindfulness. The remaining three research questions had no significant relationship.

The first research question of this study was, Does an enabling school structure correlate with mindfulness? The positive correlation indicates that schools with higher scores on the enabling school structure scale also tended to have higher mindfulness scores. The answer to the

first research question is that there is a strong, positive relationship between enabling school structure and mindfulness.

The second research question was, Does an enabling school structure correlate with teacher empowerment? This correlation was not statistically significant, indicating that an enabling school structure did not affect teacher empowerment.

The third research question of this study was, Does mindfulness correlate with teacher empowerment? The correlation was not statistically significant, and this indicated that the answer to the third research question is that mindfulness does not affect teacher empowerment.

The fourth and final research question of this study was, What are the joint and unique relationships of an enabling school structure and mindfulness to teacher empowerment? The regression model was not statistically significant, indicating that an enabling school structure and mindfulness together did not predict teacher empowerment. In addition, neither an enabling school structure nor mindfulness was statistically significant on an individual basis. Therefore, the answer to the fourth research question was that an enabling school structure and mindfulness did not have joint or unique relationships with teacher empowerment.

In addition to the analyses performed to address each of the four research questions of this study, several unhypothesized analyses were performed. Specifically, the subscales of teacher empowerment were substituted in place of the overall teacher empowerment scale, and regression analyses were performed to determine if an enabling school structure and mindfulness were predictive of these subscale scores.

The results for the teacher empowerment subscales of decision making, status, and autonomy indicated that none was statistically significant. But for professional growth, impact,

and self-efficacy, the regression model was statistically significant when an enabling school structure and/or mindfulness were used as predictors on an individual basis or together.

## Discussion

The following is a discussion of the findings in this study. Discussion includes the stated research questions and their relationships. Also, a discussion is done for the unhypothesized analyses in which three of Short's (1994a, 1994b) six subscales of teacher empowerment predicted that a correlation exists between an enabling school structure and/or mindfulness.

This study began by establishing a need to improve teacher qualifications. It led to a general question: Given the increased expertise of teachers, are there some administrative actions that will lead to greater teacher empowerment?

### *Enabling School Structure and Mindfulness Relationship*

It was well established in the review of literature that an enabling school structure creates healthier environments and better collaboration and helps teachers to problem solve (Hoy & Sweetland, 2001). Through Hoy and Sweetland's (2000, 2001) development of the ESS Scale, it is possible to measure each school along a continuum from enabling to coercive by a unitary dimension. This allows each school to assess perceptions between hierarchies of authority and teachers.

Teachers ranked administrators at the higher end of the mindfulness scale as well. The ongoing scrutiny of existing expectations and their foresight indicate that teachers see their administrators as encouraging faculty to play with ideas, to create novelty in their classrooms, to feel safe to take reasonable risks, to experiment, and to be resilient.

This study helps maintain the ideal that if the hierarchy of authority is willing to work in a more collaborative spirit, a more positive outlook will result from teachers. A spirit of



cooperation is better maintained when teachers feel respected by their superiors. As Mintzberg (1979) indicated, whereas the machine bureaucracy relies on the hierarchical nature, the professional bureaucracy emphasizes authority of a professional nature—the power of expertise. Teachers are the experts of instruction. Structures designed to suppress and coerce teachers usually meet with opposition and faculty become disgruntled.

Teachers in this study indicated that they generally felt supported. Time set aside specifically for collaboration and direct communication with administrators may account for an enabling school structure and mindfulness, both indicating high support. The literature revealed that an enabling school structure and mindfulness have many similarities and traits. When teachers see their administrators actively participate with them, they begin an egalitarian relationship in which opinions and ideologies can be shared rather than dictated.

#### *Enabling School Structure, Mindfulness, and Teacher Empowerment Relationships*

A discussion and some suggestions as to why there was no positive relationship between an enabling school structure and mindfulness toward teacher empowerment are offered in this section.

Short and Rinehart (1993) wanted to support the assumption that teacher empowerment relates to greater organizational effectiveness. In their study, the objective was to investigate the relationship of participant perceptions of school climate and certain participant characteristics of empowerment. The authors used their School Participant Empowerment Scale (SPES) to measure teacher perception of empowerment and the School Climate Questionnaire (SCQ) totaling 94 items to measure climate and gather demographic information.

One of the findings was the indication that as teacher empowerment increased in areas like decision-making and autonomy, school climate was impacted negatively (Short & Rinehart,

1993). Before exploring this study, one might assume that as empowerment increased among teachers, climate would be positively impacted. However, their study implied creating organizations where participants feel greater empowerment may result in greater organizational conflict and a negative school climate (Short & Rinehart, 1993). It hinted that as teachers are given more power to make decisions and increase their autonomy and status, there is more opportunity for ideological disagreements, thereby negatively impacting the school climate.

In another study, Rinehart and Short (1993) presented findings at an educational conference in Atlanta, GA, indicating that the more teachers there were in leadership positions, the higher the measure of job satisfaction. Reading Recovery Teacher Leaders perceived their role as being important and thereby job satisfaction was higher than did Reading Recovery Teachers and Regular Classroom Teachers. The authors implied that as teachers trained for higher leadership positions, their perception of job satisfaction improved.

In both studies, Short and Rinehart (1993) suggested teachers need a systematic plan of training in problem-solving and implementation skills before empowerment can succeed. Borrowing this suggestion, the lack of a positive relationship between an enabling school structure and mindfulness toward empowerment could be from a lack of training in empowerment skills. Currently there are no programs that specifically target empowerment in this district. Teachers may not readily see a connection between supportive school structures as the model for empowerment. They require training that first identifies empowerment skills and training that leads to empowerment.

Short and Rinehart (1993) wanted to show greater organizational effectiveness through attributes of empowerment. What they discovered led them to conclude that training was a necessary requirement before empowerment follows. Perhaps the majority of participants in this

study need more training in empowerment before they can feel comfortable with an enabling school structure and mindfulness as environments for empowerment to flourish.

Furthering the discussion of training, this researcher did not divide teachers by those in leadership positions and those in regular classroom positions like the example given by Short and Rinehart's 1993 study. Perhaps demographic information such as leadership positions, teaching years of experience, and educational level would have yielded more favorable data between an enabling structure and mindfulness toward empowerment. It would have been interesting to factor perception between teachers of leadership positions and those in regular teaching positions. Perhaps it would extenuate the argument of training that would include other factors.

Another reason for an enabling school structure and mindfulness having no positive correlation to teacher empowerment could be the teachers' satisfaction with the present system of authority. In other words, teachers are satisfied with their system's authority and see no need or have no desire to empower themselves. An argument can be made that teachers in this study have enough confidence in the present school authority and have no desire to distribute that leadership between teachers and administrators. Because an enabling structure and mindfulness have a positive relationship, it may follow that teachers feel the mission and goals of the school are being met, and there is no need to adjust the hierarchy of authority. Perhaps a lack of training, mentioned previously, has a link to the teachers' viewpoint as well. Without the proper training and information, teachers may feel satisfied with a status-quo situation.

Another relatable reason could be teachers are unwilling to subject themselves to the rigors of training in order to achieve a more empowered position. Training takes time and effort that some teachers are unwilling to obligate. It may be that the amount of training time is unreasonable, or teachers may fear personality conflicts with their colleagues and the authority of

the school. Teachers may be apprehensive before they begin seeing the positive outcomes of empowerment.

Kelley, Heneman, and Milanowski (2002) looked at school-based performance award (SBPA) programs and their motivational effects on teachers. They collected data between 1995 and 1998 by a series of surveys and interviews in several school districts. The research suggested that teachers associated a variety of positive and negative outcomes with the programs, including pay bonus that indirectly affected their decision-making ability. Teachers were reluctant to subject themselves to the rigors of training in order to make school decisions.

Smylie (1992) found that teachers are sometimes reluctant to participate in decision-making strategies because they lack confidence and professional experience. Smylie found that decision-making strategies increases job satisfaction and loyalty among teachers, but there is no clear evidence of how participation relates to the quality, implementation, and outcomes of those decisions.

Rosenholtz (1987) described the now-defunct career ladder program of Tennessee as being ill-conceived. Part of the original idea was to help teachers gain professional mobility and self-autonomy and increase teacher empowerment. But over one third of the teachers interviewed felt that self-autonomy was weakened by the career ladder process. Teachers were reluctant to the program's goals and resistant to the rigors of training. Training sometimes involve years of development to arrive at the level of confidence needed to lead others.

Lastly, perhaps there is a lack of an egalitarian relationship between administrators and teachers. Communication between administrators and teachers can vary from school to school. As teachers become more familiar with local authority, a positive bond of support can develop, generating trust and reliability. Although teachers in this study ranked high in their support of

school authority, perhaps the lack of a joint and unique relationship between an enabling structure and mindfulness toward empowerment comes from a lack of relationships that build confidence and freedom to speak their minds.

Smylie (1994) looked at school and teacher work redesign programs, including career ladder plans; mentor, master, and lead teacher programs; and participative decision-making initiatives. The initial evidence indicates that teacher status and relationships remain unchanged and unequal, resulting in administrators continuing to set the agendas for student instruction. On the other hand, the study revealed that after teacher leaders and their principals became more egalitarian in their relationships, teacher leaders felt more freedom and flexibility to express opinions concerning instruction and other school activities. Smylie concluded that a correlation existed between teacher empowerment, the type of leadership, and the organizational health of the school.

#### *Unhypothesized Analyses and their Relationships*

In addition to the analyses performed to address each of the four research questions of this study, several unhypothesized analyses were performed. Specifically, the subscales of teacher empowerment were substituted in place of the overall teacher empowerment scale, and regression analyses were performed to determine if an enabling school structure and mindfulness were predictive of any subscale dimensions.

Short (1994a) derived six dimensions of teacher empowerment taken from a study of schools across the country between 1989 and 1992. She identified them as (1) involvement in decision-making, (2) teacher impact, (3) teacher status, (4) autonomy, (5) opportunities for professional development, and (6) teacher self-efficacy. Each of the six dimensions has

established frameworks as the mechanism by which teacher empowerment can be achieved. Each of the dimensions was thoroughly discussed in the review of literature in this study.

Of the six defined dimensions of teacher empowerment, this study found that an enabling school structure and/or mindfulness were predictors of three dimensions: professional development, self-efficacy, and teacher impact. Because this researcher has offered a discussion of why an enabling school structure and mindfulness did *not* predict teacher empowerment, only the three dimensions that *did* predict that a positive relationship exists are offered.

#### *Professional Growth and its Relationship*

Professional growth as a dimension of empowerment refers to the school providing opportunities to grow and develop teaching skills (Short, 1994a, 1994b). Based on the regression analysis in this study, there is evidence that a positive relationship exists between an enabling school structure and mindfulness when professional growth is used as the dependent variable. It indicates that teachers feel they have opportunities afforded them for professional development and feel supported by the hierarchy of authority.

Fullan (1982, 2001) felt teachers need acceptance among their own colleagues in order to build relationships and improve professional growth. He insisted that organizations have invested heavily into technology and possibly training, but little is done in the way of knowledge training for professional benefit and growth.

Hoy and Sweetland's (2000, 2001) plan to transition from strict adherence to an enabling system rests on key ideas such as flexibility and professional judgment. They maintained that enabling rules and procedures are flexible guidelines reflecting "best practices" and enable subordinates to deal with surprises.

As with most school districts, there are scheduled activities that provide teachers with opportunities to attend meetings for professional growth-enhancing leadership and instructional skills. In addition, there are practical activities that occur that can provide professional growth when mindful school authority chooses to incorporate teachers' opinions and expertise. For example, when school administrators allow teachers to devise a modified schedule for state testing days, teachers gain an opportunity to expand their problem-solving skills and develop professionally. When teachers are given the task of producing a schedule that includes the relocation of students and teachers, insure that special education modifications are being met, rotate testing coordinators and proctors, devise a workable lunch schedule, and assure state materials are secured and confidential, they gain real lessons of practical use and expand the mutual respect from administration.

#### *Self-Efficacy and its Relationship*

Self-efficacy refers to teachers having the skills and ability to help students learn, be competent in building effective programs for students, and effect changes in student learning (Short, 1994a, 1994b; Short & Johnson, 1994). Having achieved a teaching degree is only the first step in teachers being qualified to teach. An enabling structure coupled with mindfulness did predict self-efficacy. It indicates that teachers feel that the authority of the school supports the notion they possess the skills and the ability to teach. Woolfolk-Hoy and Hoy (2003) stated, "Teachers with a higher sense of efficacy are more motivated, set higher goals, and are less afraid of failure, and find new strategies when old ones fail" (p. 128).

An enabling structure and mindfulness promote flexibility and collaboration between the hierarchy of authority and teachers. Leadership by way of support allows teachers the ability to discover new innovative ways of teaching and not be afraid of the consequences. Hoy and

Woolfolk (1993) demonstrated that the constructs of general and personal teaching efficacy were separate sets of beliefs. They examined the two specified dimensions with healthy school climates and found that a development of teacher's beliefs was enhanced when supported by good principal leadership.

Good hierarchical leadership, giving teachers more responsibility, can be seen in many examples. One practical example in this school district of study was the effect teachers had on at-risk students when they were allowed to develop a tutoring program with administrators. It was accomplished through a series of committees in which everyone participated.

One committee desegregated data, developed teaching strategies, and was responsible for implementation. A second committee set a schedule, divided teaching subjects, made assignments, and accommodated teacher preferences. A third committee collected data, communicated with parents, and made recommendations to the administration. Such a program gave full ownership to teachers and administrators by working together, promoting growth and development, and demonstrating a collaborative spirit.

### *Impact and its Relationship*

Impact refers to teachers' perceptions having an effect and influence on school life (Short, 1994b). Teachers' self-esteem grows when they feel they are doing something worthwhile, that they are doing it in a competent manner, and that they are recognized for their accomplishments.

Teachers want to feel appreciated and respected not only by their students and colleagues, but by their working superiors as well (Short, 1994a, 1994b; Short & Johnson, 1994). Lightfoot (1986) reflected that teachers in her study of good schools grew from the respect they received from parents and community as well as the support they felt for their ideas.



There are numerous ideas that can be shared between teachers and administration. The following came from the school district in this study. After a mandate by the local board of education to allow students opportunities to retake tests and recover grades, one local high school devised a program that became the model for others. The program was an idea of the teachers and supported by the administration. Teachers devised a rotating schedule so that 15 minutes each day was set aside specifically to address recovery for failing grades. By doing so, teachers were able to tutor individual students, review concepts and standards, and devise plans for retesting. Students were given a second chance, administrators met the local mandates by empowering their teachers, and teachers directly impacted learning. The teachers demonstrated examples of innovation, collaboration, flexibility, and trust, all attributes of an enabling school structure and mindfulness.

The administration would normally devise the program that would be used for all teachers in the example mentioned. But by involving teachers in developing their own program, it not only impacted learning, it allowed teachers to develop confidence and respect.

#### Limitations of the Study

This study is subject to the following limitations:

1. There may be unexamined factors affecting the outcome of an enabling school structure and mindfulness toward teacher empowerment not accounted for in this study.
2. Caution should be used when generalizing the results of this study due to the number of school districts participating in this research. The study consisted of one school district located in the state of Georgia with 30 schools, K-12.
3. The accuracy of the responses depends on the ability of the respondents to recall their perceptions in answering the survey.

4. This study was designed to discover relationships that could exist between an enabling school structure, mindfulness, and teacher empowerment. It was not an attempt to establish cause-effect relationships.

5. This study is cross-sectional. Data was gathered during one interval and may not relate with longitudinal data gathered during multiple intervals.

#### Implications for Practice

This study was an attempt to explore possible avenues for teachers to meet the requirements of having better qualified educators by means of enhancing empowerment. Empowerment is a dominant theme in all types of organizations (Short & Rinehart, 1992). An enabling school structure was explored in the review of literature as a possible setting for empowerment to grow. Likewise, mindfulness was shown to have similarities to an enabling school structure. Coupled together the prediction was to have a unique relationship with teacher empowerment. As a result of the data from this study, the prediction of a positive correlation between an enabling school structure and mindfulness to teacher empowerment was discounted. It implies there was no clear evidence the three variables were closely bonded.

However, this study can serve as further evidence that an enabling school structure relates to mindfulness. It implies support in studies done by Hoy and Sweetland (2000, 2001), Hoy (2003), and Hoy et al. (2004) that these variables have similarities and a positive relationship.

Hoy and Sweetland (2000, 2001) showed that an enabling school structure has a perception of leadership that fosters collaboration, innovation, and trust among participants. Its rules and procedures are flexible and promote problem solving rather than coercive means of conformity. Hoy and Sweetland developed the ESS scale and successfully measured schools along a continuum from hindering to enabling. This current study used the ESS scale as well and

had the same favorable results (3.94 out of a 5 scale), implying teachers felt that a positive connection exists between the hierarchy of authority and themselves.

Likewise, Hoy (2003) and Hoy et al. (2004) related the construct of mindfulness developed from individual and organizational settings and applied them to schools. The practice of mindfulness can improve foresight and functioning. Hoy et al. (2004) developed the Mindfulness (M-scale) scale and successfully related it to other variables such as faculty trust. The result in this current study helps support the mindfulness concepts (3.65 out of a 5 scale), as well as those existing in an enabling school structure.

Other implications come from the unhypothesized analyses performed in this study. Of Short's (1994a, 1994b) six identified dimensions of teacher empowerment, three were found to correlate when an enabling school structure and/or mindfulness were factored in. One of those implications says that an enabling school structure and mindfulness are predictable toward professional growth. Neither an enabling school structure or mindfulness separately predicted professional growth but when factored together, there is evidence that a correlation exists. This data helps support the notion that an enabling school structure and mindfulness can be predictive of some of the dimensions leading to teacher empowerment. In this case, it implies that teachers generally feel supported when it comes to opportunities for professional growth.

Likewise, the results of this study imply that there is a correlation between an enabling school structure and mindfulness toward impact. It implies teachers feel they have a positive influence on their students and community. They generally feel good about their hierarchy of authority, and as is evident from this data they feel supported and respected. It also implies teachers feel they have respect for the position they hold. They generally feel that they are held in high regard by the school authority, colleagues, students, and parents.

Self-efficacy positively correlating to an enabling school structure and mindfulness together and an enabling school structure individually implies a strong connection between the hierarchy of authority and teachers. It implies teachers perceive they have the skills and ability to help students learn, are competent in building effective programs for students, and can effect changes in student learning. In short, teachers generally feel they have the knowledge and confidence to teach along with the support of their school administration.

### Recommendations

There is a need to do more research in the relationship of the three constructs of this study: an enabling school structure, mindfulness, and teacher empowerment. This researcher looked at the literature of each construct, made predictions based on the similarities, and developed research questions. It is recommended that future studies be done that include more demographic information. Information such as years of experience, current leadership role, and educational level, as well as other information, could yield more comparisons between teachers in leadership positions and their perception of empowerment.

It should be noted that teacher empowerment is a process in which specific training is required. As discussed, Short and Rinehart (1993) suggested that teachers need a systematic plan of training in problem-solving and implementation skills before empowerment can succeed. Before any school system considers incorporating empowerment, they should begin with a thorough understanding of the problem-solving and implementation skills needed. A systematic plan should include expectations and flexible timeframes when teachers are afforded empowerment status.

It is this researcher's belief that a broader sample size would yield more favorable data. Due to the limitations of this study, data was collected in only one school district with 23 school

faculty participating. Perhaps school districts with more notable reputations for teacher empowerment could be compared and contrasted to less notable reputations for empowerment. This type of study could be especially valuable in yielding recommendations for training programs.

This researcher also feels that more attention is needed to prep participants before any scale is administered. Because this researcher was not present for any of the initial preparation at individual faculty meetings in order to avoid bias, it was left to each designated facilitator who had a less-vested interest in preparing participants. Perhaps in the future a better system of administering information and materials would yield more attentive results.

Lastly, the findings and conclusion of this research study support previous studies on the effectiveness of an enabling school structure, mindfulness, and teacher empowerment. Although there was no positive correlation between an enabling school structure and mindfulness toward teacher empowerment, this body of work can be significant to other groups of researchers interested in the relationship.

### Conclusions

Since the beginning of this study, there have been some successful adjustments to the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act in school districts across this country. However, there have been issues unresolved as well. Many school district leaders still struggle with appropriate implementation of programs to enhance teaching and learning. It was the intent of this study to explore the possibility of increasing teacher qualifications anchored by the NCLB mandates.

Hoy and Sweetland (2000, 2001) indicated that an enabling school structure motivates teachers, creates healthier working environments, and allows hierarchical authority to coexist with processes affecting daily instruction. This environment seemed conducive to empowerment,

a dominant theme in all types of organizations (Short & Rinehart, 1992). Hoy (2003) also related the construct of mindfulness developed from individual and organizational settings and applied them to schools. The literature established a construct of mindfulness as having complementary factors with an enabling school structure. Mindfulness works to strengthen the quality of the organization at the individual and collective levels.

This study reinforces earlier studies that indicate that an enabling school structure can effectively coexist with mindfulness. The remaining research questions dealt with both constructs and their relationship to teacher empowerment. The data collected by this researcher found there was no positive correlation between the three constructs; however when some unhypothesized analyses were used, there was significance in three of Short's (1994a, 1994b) six dimensions of empowerment. There was significance in empowerment related to professional growth, impact, and self-efficacy. The findings in this study demonstrate the following:

1. There was a positive correlation between the constructs of an enabling school structure and mindfulness.
2. There was no positive correlation between an enabling school structure that significantly impacted teacher empowerment.
3. There was no positive correlation between mindfulness that significantly impacted teacher empowerment.
4. There was no joint or unique relationship between an enabling school structure and mindfulness toward teacher empowerment.
5. There was a positive correlation when an enabling school structure and/or mindfulness were used as predictors in three of Short's (1994a, 1994b) six identified dimensions of teacher empowerment: professional growth, impact, and self-efficacy.

Teachers in this study reported feeling comfortable with their school authority by ranking themselves more toward enabling rather than hindering on the ESS scale. Due in part to the similarities, the participants in this study also ranked high on mindfulness; meaning they felt that the school authority makes good decisions. They seem satisfied with the present system affecting daily instruction.

Likewise, although teacher empowerment was not shown directly, some of the dimensions of empowerment did show significance when an enabling school structure and/or mindfulness were used as predictors. It indicates that teachers feel supported when it comes to opportunities for professional growth, feel they have the power to influence all stakeholders (impact), and they possess the confidence and knowledge to impact learning (self-efficacy).

In a concluding thought, this researcher feels this study can be useful to others with an interest in the relationship of an enabling school structure, mindfulness, and teacher empowerment. To gain a more diverse perspective, it may be advantageous to incorporate both quantitative and qualitative research. The established surveys of this study coupled with open-ended questions allowing participants more declarative expressions of opinion might yield more favorable results and new insights into achieving empowerment.

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## APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A  
ENABLING SCHOOL STRUCTURE FORM

## Form ESS

The following statements are descriptions of the way your school is structured. Please indicate the extent to which each statement characterizes behavior in your school by recording the letter that corresponds with your choice by the appropriate number. **No names please.**

<b>Never</b>	<b>Once in a While</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Fairly Often</b>	<b>Always</b>
<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>

- \_\_\_ 1. Administrative rules in this school enable authentic communication between teachers and administrators.
- \_\_\_ 2. In this school red tape is a problem.
- \_\_\_ 3. The administrative hierarchy of this school enables teachers to do their job.
- \_\_\_ 4. The administrative hierarchy obstructs student achievement.
- \_\_\_ 5. Administrative rules help rather than hinder.
- \_\_\_ 6. The administrative hierarchy of this school facilitates the mission of this school.
- \_\_\_ 7. Administrative rules in this school are used to punish teachers.
- \_\_\_ 8. The administrative hierarchy of this school obstructs innovation.
- \_\_\_ 9. Administrative rules in this school are substitutes for professional judgment.
- \_\_\_ 10. Administrative rules in this school are guides to solutions rather than rigid procedures.
- \_\_\_ 11. In this school the authority of the principal is used to undermine teachers.
- \_\_\_ 12. The administrators in this school use their authority to enable teachers to do their job.



APPENDIX B  
MINDFULNESS SCALE

## M Scale

The following statements are about your school. Please indicate the extent to which you agree and record your choice by the appropriate number.

**Strongly Disagree**      **Sometimes Disagree**      **Agree**      **Sometimes Agree**      **Strongly Agree**  
**A**                                      **B**                                      **C**                                      **D**                                      **E**

- \_\_\_ 13. My principal often jumps to conclusions.
- \_\_\_ 14. When a crisis occurs the principal deals with it so we can get back to teaching.
- \_\_\_ 15. In this school teachers welcome feedback about ways to improve.
- \_\_\_ 16. Teachers do not trust the principal enough to admit their mistakes.
- \_\_\_ 17. The principal of this school does not value the opinions of the teachers.
- \_\_\_ 18. My principal is an expert on teaching and learning.
- \_\_\_ 19. Teachers in this school jump to conclusions.
- \_\_\_ 20. People in this school respect power more than knowledge.
- \_\_\_ 21. Teachers in my building learn from their mistakes and change so they do not happen again.
- \_\_\_ 22. My principal negotiates faculty differences without destroying the diversity of opinions.
- \_\_\_ 23. Too many teachers in my building give up when things go bad.
- \_\_\_ 24. The principal welcomes challenges from teachers.
- \_\_\_ 25. When things go badly teachers bounce back quickly.
- \_\_\_ 26. Most teachers in this building are reluctant to change.

APPENDIX C

SCHOOL PARTICIPANT EMPOWERMENT SCALE

School Participant Empowerment Scale  
Copyright Paula M. Short & James S. Rinehart

Directions: Please rate the following statements in terms of how well they describe how you feel. Rate each statement on the scale given below and record your answers by the appropriate number. **No names please.**

**A = Strongly Agree   B = Agree   C = Neutral   D = Disagree   E = Strongly Disagree**

- 1. I am given the responsibility to monitor programs.
- 2. I function in a professional environment.
- 3. I believe that I have earned respect.
- 4. I believe that I am helping kids become independent learners.
- 5. I have control over daily schedules.
- 6. I believe I have the ability to get things done.
- 7. I make decisions about the implementation of new programs in the school.
- 8. I am treated as a professional.
- 9. I believe I am very effective.
- 10. I believe I am empowering students.
- 11. I am able to teach as I chose.
- 12. I participate in staff development.
- 13. I make decisions about the selection of other teachers for my school.
- 14. I have the opportunity for professional growth.
- 15. I have the respect of my colleagues.
- 16. I feel I am involved in an important program for children.
- 17. I have the freedom to make decisions on what is taught.
- 18. I believe that I am having an impact.
- 19. I am involved in school budget decisions.
- 20. I work at a school where kids come first.
- 21. I have the support and respect of my colleagues.
- 22. I see students learn.
- 23. I make decisions about curriculum.
- 24. I am a decision maker.
- 25. I am given the opportunity to teach other teachers.
- 26. I am given the opportunity to continue learning.
- 27. I have a strong knowledge base in the areas in which I teach.
- 28. I believe I have the opportunity to grow by working daily with students.
- 29. I perceive that I have the opportunity to influence others.
- 30. I can determine my own schedule.
- 31. I have the opportunity to collaborate with other teachers in my school.
- 32. I perceive that I am making a difference.
- 33. Principals, other teachers, and school personnel solicit my advice.
- 34. I believe that I am good at what I do.
- 35. I can play with my schedule.
- 36. I perceive that I have an impact on other teachers and students.
- 37. My advice is solicited by others.
- 38. I have the opportunity to teach other teachers about innovative ideas.

APPENDIX D  
APPROVAL TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Application to Conduct Research  
Paulding County School System

Title of Research: Enabling Schools Date Submitted: \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher's Name: Don Watts

Targeted Audience: Researchers/Educators Dates of the Research: ~~XXXXXX~~ - ~~XXXXXX~~ Fall, 2008

University/Sponsoring Agency: University of Alabama

By signing below, you agree that you have completed all items on the checklist, read and meet the guidelines as outlined in Policy KIB and Administrative Procedure KIB-R Special Interest Materials Distribution. You also agree to submit any significant changes in the procedures of your project to the Superintendent's Office for prior approval.

Don Watts  
Name of Researcher(s) [Type or Print]

East Paulding H.S.  
Name of Department/School

Don Watts  
Signature(s)

7/21/2008  
Date

This research involving human participants, if approved will be under the direct supervision of the following representative of sponsoring University/Agency.

University of Alabama  
Faculty Advisor/Agency Representative [Type or Print]

Educational Administration  
Name of Department

C. J. Jarver  
Signature

7/21/08  
Date

By signing below, you agree to allow the above researcher(s) to conduct research within your building.

X [Signature]  
Signature of Principal

X 10/1/08  
Date

For Office Use Only

Date Received: 10/10/08

The attached request was reviewed by: Yvette Hill

Recommendation:  Approved  Deny

Reason:  
Yvette A. Hill Sch. Imp.  
Signature Department

.....  
For Superintendent's Use Only

Your recommendation has been accepted. Please notify the requestor of the status of their request. A copy of their research findings should be submitted to the Office of the Superintendent at the time of completion. 522 Hardee Street, Dallas, Georgia 30132

[Signature]  
Superintendent's Signature