

A Reaction Paper to the Following Article:

*Measuring the Health of The School Climate: A Conceptual Framework*

EDU 7211 Data Analysis II

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In the article *Measuring the Health of The School Climate: A Conceptual Framework*, Hoy and Tarter explain that “organizational climate” refers to perception of their work environment by teachers and how it is influenced by formal and informal relations, personalities of participants and leadership in the organization. The authors use “health” as a metaphor to examine the well-being of the interpersonal relationships in the school citing that at the publication date, 1992, this was a recent practice.

The framework was based upon the theoretical analyses of Talcott Parsons and his colleagues (1951, 1967). An organization must solve four basic problems to develop and prosper: they must cope successfully with their environments, attain their goals, maintain solidarity of the work force, and develop a cohesive value system. Schools seek these objectives at three levels—the teacher, the administrator, and the board (Hoy & Tarter, 1992, p. 75). The authors give a thorough explanation as to what is necessary at each of the levels. They explain that a healthy school is one in which the teachers, administrators, and the board are in harmony, and the school meets both its organizational and people needs as it pursues its mission.

There are seven aspects of a school’s health that are conceptualized and measured using this framework. The first aspect is on the board level, institutional integrity. The next three are on the administrative level and they are initiating structure where the principal leadership behavior that is starkly task and achievement-oriented, consideration where principal leadership behavior supports harmonious interpersonal relationships and resource support which is principal managerial behavior that ensures the availability of necessary classroom supplies and lastly on the administrative level is principal influence which is the ability of the principal to influence superiors. Finally on the teacher level morale and academic emphasis, the extent to which the school is driven by a quest for excellence, are measured.

Hoy and Tarter define a healthy school as one which is protected from unreasonable community and parental pressures. The principal of a healthy school is a dynamic leader, integrating both task-oriented and relations-oriented leader behavior. Teachers are committed to teaching and learning. They set high but achievable goals for students, maintain high standards of performance and promote a serious and orderly learning environment.

They describe an unhealthy school as one that is vulnerable to destructive outside forces. Teachers and administrators are bombarded by unreasonable parental demands, and the school is subject to the outcries of the public resulting in low institutional integrity. Schools are without an effective principal. Teachers feel good neither about their colleagues nor their jobs. Instructional materials, supplies, and supplementary materials are not available when needed. Neither teachers nor students take academic life seriously.

In order to measure the health a school uses the “Organization Health Inventory (OHI)” (Hoy, n.d.) which is a 44-item questionnaire in which educators are asked to describe their behavior. Hoy and Tarter have experienced that a principal’s perceptions of the health or climate of the school is frequently at odds with the perceptions of teachers. Basic issues of comparison are to find the root causes for the discrepancy in perceptions. They have found that teachers act on their beliefs and perceptions. Principals must understand the basis of the beliefs of the teachers so they can respond.

## References

Hoy, W.K., & Tarter, C.J. (1992) Measuring the Health of the School Climate: A Conceptual Framework. *NASSP Bulletin* 1992, 76: 74

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Parsons, T. (1951). *The Social System*. Glencoe III.: Free Press