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MERCY CHARISM AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO EFFECTIVE SCHOOLING

A Dissertation
Presented to
The Faculty of the School of Education
Department of Catholic Educational Leadership

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education

By
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San Francisco
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This dissertation, written under the direction of the candidate's dissertation committee and approved by the members of the committee, has been presented to and accepted by the Faculty of the School of Education in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education. The content and research methodologies presented in this work represent the work of the candidate alone.

Dorothy J. McCrea — May 3, 2004

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Throughout my life I have always had the firm belief that when a student is ready the teacher appears. So often I have been blessed by this special aspect of life and, without question, during this process the right teacher was there for me. Sr. Mary Peter Traviss, you are the best! I cannot thank you enough for your patience, insights and wisdom. Thank you for making my visits to your office and my time in your classes so entertaining and memorable. I will miss our weekly encounters.

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of those wonderful folks at the three Mercy secondary schools that participated in this research.

The Friday night after my last class at USF I was heading down Highway 280 while absently listening to some music. I was experiencing that sort of numb feeling of personal disbelief in the realization that this dissertation process was finally over. My mind was blankly watching the road and I was driving as if by remote control towards my home in San Carlos. For some known, but unknown reason, I was struck by the lyrics of a particular song. They jolted me out of my stupor and at that very moment a deep irony was revealed to me. Suddenly I realized quite clearly that despite all the successes, failures and never ending engagement in educational complexities a simple truth still remained. This long remarkable journey had ended for me but there was still something for me to discover about myself. These words ring true in so many ways.....

I'm sitting down by the highway... down by that highway sign.

Everybody's going somewhere... riding just as fast as they can ride.

I guess they got a lot to do...before they can rest assured ...

Their lives... are justified.

Pray to God for me..... He will let me slide.

I've been up and down this highway as far as my eyes can see.

No matter how fast I run I can never seem to get away from ***me****.*

No matter where I am... I can't help thinking... I'm just a day away...

...from where I want to be. Now, I'm running home....like a river to the sea.

Jackson Browne, 1976

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents William and Gladys McCrea, my brother Bill McCrea and long time friend Sandi Stober. My mother is the only one left now and it is her optimism and eternal faith that is her greatest gift to me. All the others have gone to their rest. I wanted to make sure that I remembered them in some small way.

I also want to dedicate this dissertation to the Sisters of Mercy, Burlingame. The sisters have provided me with a window of opportunity to function as a woman within the Catholic Church, and to be a voice for other women. I am deeply grateful to them for entrusting me with such a priceless gift.

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CHAPTER I

THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

Statement of the Problem

At the mature age of 52, in the year 1831, Catherine McAuley became the foundress of a religious order known as the Sisters of Mercy. This new order of uncloistered Catholic nuns set out to help educate the working poor in Dublin, Ireland. The Sisters were especially concerned with the plight of women and children (Carroll, 1866). Savage (1955) contended that Catherine McAuley, the first Sister of Mercy, was a risk taker and bold woman of vision. She brought to the poor and middle classes of Ireland new and unprecedented ideas for education. In addition, Carroll asserted that Catherine McAuley was progressive in her thinking when it came to addressing the educational needs of the time. Throughout Ireland the Sisters of Mercy grew in numbers and established schools and foundations for the children of the middle classes. Carroll illustrated this point in her biography, *Life of Catherine McAuley:*

> In looking over the numerous conventual establishments in Ireland, the keen penetration of the Foundress saw that they were all too exclusive. There were Ursuline Schools for the rich, and Presentation Schools for the poor; but no provision was made for the middle classes. This was also the case for male institutions. There were Jesuits for the upper classes and Christian Schools for the lower, while boys of a middle grade, who could not afford to go to the first, and whom an honest pride would prevent going to the second, were unprovided with Religious teachers. (p. 217)

In 1841, Rev. Michael O'Connor, a young American priest about to become the new Archbishop of Pittsburgh, approached the Sisters about coming to a hardship post on the American frontier. Reverend O'Connor had become familiar with the

ministry after translating the Mercy rule into Latin and he sensed that these "walking nuns" (Fialka, 2003, p. 35), a name bestowed upon them for their refusal to embrace the vow of enclosure, were exactly what he needed for his new assignment. The Sisters arrived on the new continent in 1842, and since that time, they have had a successful history of establishing secondary schools. Today, as Webber (1998) reported, there are 42 Mercy secondary schools. These schools are located throughout North and South America and, for the most part, focus on the education of women (Appendix A).

In a profile completed for the Network for Mercy Education, Webber (1998) noted that 66.7% of Mercy schools continued to serve young women in single gender institutions. Webber also indicated that the Sisters of Mercy still sponsored most of these institutions as separate corporations. She wrote that of the 42 secondary schools, 84.5% were accountable to a regional community that maintained certain reserved powers for governance. The governance responsibilities held by the regional community include approval of the budget and capital projects, selection of board members, and appointment of the principal. However, in the same 1998 profile, Webber indicated that the number of Sisters of Mercy actively involved in secondary organizations had dramatically declined. Her study concluded that 88% of the faculty and staffs currently serving at Mercy secondary schools are laywomen.

The predominance of secular staff members in Mercy schools, who are not directly linked to the vision of Mother McAuley through religious life, presents a challenge with regard to the operation of the Mercy charism. This dynamic was clearly articulated by Sister Carolyn Wheeler (1991). As a Sister of Mercy who

served as the principal of Mercy High School in Baltimore, Maryland, Wheeler identified the complexity of this problem. In an address to Mercy secondary educators she provided an articulate and logical framework for understanding the difficulties in maintaining and preserving the operation of the charism in Mercy schools.

> Even if we assume that our lay colleagues want to do this - and this may be a fair assumption, for we know so many of you who understand and value the tradition as much as Sisters of Mercy do – even if we assume that you want to do this, how do you do it? We need to acknowledge, for example what you already know, the center of your life is not religious life in the Sisters of Mercy; you have been called to another vocation. Even if you understand your commitment to teaching as a vocation even to teaching in the tradition of Catherine, your primary vocation is at least one step removed. (p. 209)

If as Wheeler claimed, the preservation of the charism is now in the hands of the laity, it becomes important to understand how the charism currently operates within the schools. The operation of the charism has a direct connection to the culture of the organization, and if the educational institutions are to remain truly Mercy, then it is important to understand how the charism is practiced and understood by the laity. In addition, to further assist the secondary schools as they transition into a new era of leadership, it will be necessary to comprehend the impact the charism has on the effectiveness of Mercy secondary organizations. Therefore, there is a need to explore the relationship between the core values of the Mercy charism, the organizational culture it fosters, and its relationship to the effectiveness of the school.

In addition, there are other essential elements relative to organizational culture that need to be considered. Schein (1985) pointed out that as an organization matures, there is a dark side to preserving the culture. The heroic efforts of lay ministers and

remaining sisters to instill the charism of Mercy may preserve the glories of the past, dictate the rituals and religious traditions as well as enhance the self-esteem of the school; however, Schein suggested that if the culture becomes too entrenched, it may become a constraint to innovation and creativity. The organization may not be capable of moving forward to face future challenges and changes that need to be made to ensure survival of the organization. This, too, presents a concern about educational effectiveness and the heritage of core values within Mercy secondary institutions.

A strong charism may be operating through rituals and traditions; however, Dessler (1998) pointed out the dangers that strong organizational cultures may face, especially in times when the existing fabric of the organization is experiencing transformation. These organizations may have a singular view of their environment and find it a challenge to enact dramatic change. It may be difficult for these organizations to adapt to a changing context.

Weick (1979) theorized that organizations that make strong statements about who they are and what they do often have difficulty becoming something else. These organizational cultures can become rigid and slow to respond to changes and opportunities. Weick argued that organizations with tenacious cultures can be backward, conservative instruments of adaptation. He insisted that schools that cling to their culture may program the minds of the people working within the organization in such a way that they lose touch with the true reality of what is going on within the school. Schools that operate within the charism of Mercy need to ensure the preservation of the charism, as well as provide innovative and creative environments

that foster a culture and climate of effectiveness. In addition, McDonough (1993) maintained that revitalizing rituals, traditions, stories and symbols of the charism may not be enough to guarantee the effectiveness of the community. Therefore it is important to understand how the charism impacts the educational effectiveness of the school.

As Sergiovianni (1991) suggested, effective schools possess a strong culture, have an unusual clarity of purpose, and "there is little disagreement within them and little discrepancy between what they say they are doing and what they actually are doing" (p. 87). If this is the hallmark of effective schools, then the charism of Mercy and the qualities of an effective culture and climate should mutually exist. The charism, at the heart of the mission, is the vehicle by which the culture and climate in the school are formed. Therefore, the secondary schools that call themselves Mercy need to understand to what extent the operation of the charism, as originally intended by Mother McAuley, ensures the presence of effective educational practices within the culture of the school.

Purpose of this Study

This study investigated how the values of the Mercy charism as originally defined by the foundress of the Sisters of Mercy, Catherine McAuley, and contemporarily articulated by the Mercy Secondary Education Association (MSEA) and the Network for Mercy Education currently operate in Mercy secondary schools. This study also explored the extent to which a relationship exists between the operational values of the Mercy charism and the correlates of effective schools.

Background and Need for this Study

McArdle (1979) reported that between the 1960s and 1980s secondary schools sponsored by the Sisters of Mercy had experienced a dramatic decline in the numbers of Sisters of Mercy working in these institutions. This decline has been attributed to three factors. In 1965, the drastic and unforeseen changes to religious life as a result of the Second Vatican Council in 1963 led religious congregations to reexamine their institutions and purposes. This time of renewal began a period of doubt and questioning by the women who had chosen consecrated life. Increasing numbers of vowed members withdrew from the Mercy order and the recruitment of sisters became increasingly difficult. McArdle explained the problem in her monograph, *Mercy Undaunted, 125 Years in California:*

> As religious congregations throughout the world began this serious pilgrimage of renewal, there was inevitable upheaval. Expansion not only came to a complete halt, but commitment to existing institutions was deeply questioned and reduced. Doubts and confusion were reflected in increased withdrawal of members and plummeting recruitment. From a peak membership in 1966, the number of Sisters in the United States dropped 29%. (p. 25)

The second factor attributing to the decline in numbers occurred following the Second Vatican Council. As the Mercy Sisters began to expand their ministries in social services and housing, the numbers of Sisters working in education declined even more rapidly. McArdle (1979) described the problems created by this transformation in the Church and concluded that these events had a direct impact on the traditional ministries sponsored by the Sisters of Mercy in her region.

> One effect of the search for creative ministry is a general shift away from the traditional corporate apostolates of teaching and nursing. A move away from traditional classroom teaching seems clear. Only half of the Sisters assigned to the four high schools and elementary schools are classroom

> teachers. The others serve in administration, counseling, campus ministry, parish work, coordination of religion teaching and other special education services. (p. 26)

Finally, considering the decline in numbers and the difficult task of recruiting new members into the order, the natural course of longevity for a working sister had become an issue. Wheeler (1995) noted that by 1994 the average age of the Sisters of Mercy was 67 years. In addition, that same year, the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy had only 130 members under the age of 45. In an address to MSEA in 1995, Wheeler asserted:

> What does this mean for the future of Mercy secondary education? At the very least it isn't going to work the way it's been working up to this point in history. Actually we have heard a response to this question given in settings before this one. It has been said more than once: If the Mercy charism is to be carried forward, if the Mercy tradition in secondary education is to continue, it will be primarily our lay colleagues who will do this. (p. 208)

As the secondary schools grappled with the issue of preserving the charism and mission of Mercy, forces within the field of Mercy secondary education have organized themselves in an effort to address the problem. The Sponsorship Committee for Mercy Secondary Schools has undertaken the formation of the Network for Mercy Education. Currently, all member schools are in a discernment process with regard to future models of governance. Their mission, as defined by Webber (1998) in the Mercy Sponsorship Study is as follows:

> We envision a network of Mercy high schools which share the spirit of Catherine McAuley, the common Mercy tradition and values and commitment to the Sisters of Mercy Institute Direction Statement. This network will be characterized by partnership among lay and religious colleagues. (p.3)

In this time of transition in Mercy secondary education, the preservation, understanding and operation of the charism is a vital link for the future of single gender educational institutions established by the Sisters of Mercy. The charism of the religious order as imprinted in a secondary school is a driving force for maintaining the Mercy identity in the school community. Thus, in order to remain authentically Mercy, the schools need to be guided by the original intentions and underlying values of the charism. As these values are operationalized within the schools, the culture and climate of the organization will be impacted. It is important for future Mercy educators to understand to what degree the operation of the charism impacts the culture of the school in terms of effective educational practices.

From their founding in 1831, the Sisters of Mercy embraced a charism that imparted values for an educational philosophy. Bolster (1989) claimed that Catherine McAuley had a passion for educating women from all social classes. She was not concerned about educating women for the purposes of social correctness. In addition to pledging vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, the Sisters of Mercy took a fourth vow (Fialka, 2003). Catherine McAuley had all of her sisters' promise "service to educate the poor and to help women, who, she felt were the first victims of poverty and the last to be rescued" (p. 29).

In contrast to other religious orders of the time, Catherine focused her educational mission on the middle classes. In addition to founding schools for the poor, in each new foundation a pension or tuition-based school for girls was established for the working middle class. The literature revealed that Catherine's

educational philosophy was clear. As Savage (1955) noted, Catherine McAuley regarded education as one of the "first works of Mercy" (p. 267).

Her vision was to educate women who could produce serious social change for the lives of women and those in need. Catherine's manuscript, *Familiar Instructions* (1888), included these salient comments which confirm this belief. She wrote:

> To discharge well and profitably that important duty of our Institute, which obliges us to the instruction of poor girls, we must be intent on the virtues prescribed by our holy rule, assiduous and preserved in the practice of these, charity, humility, purity of intention and confidence in God. (p. 8)

In an attempt to rearticulate Catherine's vision for education in a modern context and after a two year discussion among the member schools, MSEA defined a set of core values for the charism and the organization (Herberle, 1990). Today these foundational qualities are the hallmarks of a Mercy secondary education and are the operational and defining values of the charism for the secondary schools. These broad working definitions are an attempt by the Association to encapsulate the charism so that the organization can move forward in their work with the secondary schools. These values provided a workable guide for the organizations primarily staffed by a majority of lay ministers.

The six values for Mercy secondary education as agreed upon in 1990 by the MSEA executive board and association members are: 1) concern for women and women's issues, 2) educational excellence, 3) spiritual growth and development, 4) compassion and service, 5) collaboration and 6) world vision and responsibility. These values recreate Catherine's original vision and ideals about education and, in

addition, provide a framework for the operation of the charism within the secondary schools. (MESA, 1996)

The values of the charism as interpreted by Mercy secondary educators are the suggested operational codes for Mercy secondary schools today. They are prescriptions for shaping the institutional culture and climate. However, these defining values, which are the legacy of Mercy, should also shape the qualities needed to ensure effective education within the secondary school. Contemporary research from the effective schools movement has asserted that effective educational institutions possess distinctive characteristics, or correlates, that become part of the school's culture and climate. Therefore, the exploration of how the values of the Mercy charism impact the school culture with regard to effectiveness becomes an important question.

Lezotte (2000) reported that the effective schools movement started with some basic beliefs about the nature of schooling. The *Equality of Educational Opportunity Survey*, conducted by Coleman, Campbell, Hobson, McFarland, Mood and Weinfeld (1966) concluded that the family was the primary factor in student success. This conclusion led to a search by educators to find some evidence that schools really do make a difference in students' lives. Edmonds (1979a) was one of the first researchers who formulated a response to Coleman's study. After extensive research in schools that were perceived to be effective based on student achievement on standardized tests, Edmonds formed a different conclusion from that of Coleman. He found that these schools had distinctive defining qualities that made them effective. These

schools, he reasoned, succeeded regardless of the socioeconomic and family backgrounds of the student population.

Once these effective institutions were identified and isolated, common characteristics, or effective school correlates, were defined. Effective school correlates explained common philosophies, policies, and practices these certain schools possessed. The Association for Effective Schools (1996) defined the correlates as "characteristics found in schools where all students learn and are correlated with student success....this body of correlated information began what is now referred to as Effective Schools Research" (p. 1).

However, as Lezotte (2001b) explained, a second generation of correlates gradually evolved to add new meaning and scope to the original correlates. The redefined correlates included: equity for children from differing socioeconomic classes, gender, ethnicity, family structure, and curricular outcomes. Emphasis on school culture and climate and understanding of empowerment has provided, over time, important dimensions to effective school research and policy. The second generation of the effective school correlates focuses more explicitly on the needs of the learner.

According to Lezotte (2001b) the second generation of correlates included: 1) instructional leadership, 2) clear and focused mission, 3) safe and orderly environment, 4) climate of high expectations, 5) frequent monitoring of student progress, 6) positive home school relations, and 7) opportunity to learn and student time on task. These correlates have been used to define effectiveness in the public school system and are still part of an ongoing movement for school improvement.

In considering the evolution and distinctive values of the correlates, it is important to note that Lezotte (2000) suggested a direct relationship between positive school culture and school effectiveness. Therefore, this study will explore how the operation of the Mercy charism infuses the qualities of effective schooling within the culture of the secondary school.

Summary

As reported by Webber (1998) the numbers of Sisters of Mercy who are actively involved in the secondary schools is less than 10% percent of those working in the secondary schools. Lay ministers are now responsible for leading the schools into the 21st century, and with this transformation of the workforce there is a genuine concern about maintaining the charism of Mercy. Burke (1998) articulated this premise in her speech to Mercy secondary educators in Savannah, Georgia.

> I stand before you today as a Regional Community Leader. I take the opportunity to challenge the other 17 Regional Community Leadership Teams and Mercy Secondary Educators who sponsor and serve within our schools to prioritize the direction of this sacred trust in the next three months. How are we and will we navigate the course of our secondary educational ministries, while concurrently preparing ourselves and co-ministers to ride the tides of change into the 21st century? (p. 272)

Mercy secondary schools face the challenge of preserving the charism. At the same time they need to move forward as effective educational institutions. In addition, current research (Edmonds, 1979a, 1979b; Lezotte, 2000, 2001a, 2001b; Taylor, 1990) conducted in schools has pointed out that certain characteristics should exist in a school in order to insure its success as an effective educational institution.

Theoretical Rationale

Mercy secondary schools are shaped by the charism of Catherine McAuley and this charism has a direct influence on the culture of the school. Therefore, as a starting point, the conceptual framework for this study suggests that a school culture consists of deep patterns of values, beliefs and traditions that have formed throughout the history of the school. According to Deal and Peterson (1990) organizational culture is embodied and transformed by shared values, rituals, ceremonies, stories and networks. Sergiovanni (1987) magnified these ideas when he asserted that a strong culture is one of the most important characteristics for successful schooling. He suggested that the essential components of the culture are the norms and values that provide for cohesion and identity. Sergiovianni stressed that schools with strong cultures create a unifying moral order or ideology from which teachers and students derive direction. In addition, he wrote that schools that display a culture of effectiveness make powerful statements, both in word and practice, about their mission. There is no discrepancy between what they do and what they say about their values. They are confident schools that stand for something special. In these schools, decisions are made based on the values that are present in the culture of the school. And, of particular importance, the successful school manifests a culture that has a high level of caring for the students.

Understanding how these values manifest themselves in Mercy schools was essential to this particular study and illustrated to what extent the charism influenced the culture of effectiveness in the school. Based on this research, this study explored

the ways in which the charism of Mercy impacts the secondary organization in relationship to school effectiveness.

Research Questions

This study addressed the following research questions:

1. What were the defining values of the Mercy charism, as identified from the original documents of and about Catherine McAuley, the Mercy Secondary Education Association and the Network for Mercy Education, and to what extent did they operate within the culture of the three schools selected for this study?
2. To what extent were the correlates for effective schools present in the culture of the three Mercy secondary schools participating in this study?
3. To what degree did a relationship exist between the Mercy charism and the effective school correlates as they operated within these schools?

Limitations of this Study

Delimitations

Delimitations are factors that are imposed by the researcher to narrow the scope and purpose of this study. They provide boundaries. The generalizibility of this study was limited due to the sample size of the specific population that was surveyed. This study was conducted in 3 of the 42 Mercy secondary schools. The target population for this study consisted of faculty, staff and administration at the selected schools.

Since no face-to-face contact was included in this study, questions for further clarification were not included in the data. The survey was conducted online;

therefore participants needed to have access to a computer and an active e-mail address. In light of this requirement participants were expected to have a working knowledge of computers and e-mail functions.

Geographically this study was limited. The schools selected for this research represented the western, mid-western and southern parts of the United States. Therefore, participant responses reflected the local influences and perceptions of the area. All regional leadership teams, comprised of Sisters of Mercy, operate their administration from the motherhouses located in each particular region. Two of these schools are located on the motherhouse grounds. The responses to the survey reflected the relationship that the Sisters of Mercy as a corporate entity have with each particular school and represented local governance practices that exist between the school and the Regional Leadership Team. This visible influence and presence of actual Sisters of Mercy at the schools may have impacted the results of the data.

Limitations

Although 33% of the Mercy secondary schools are coeducational, this study was conducted in all girls' schools. Of the three schools selected for this study, none of the institutions has a population of more than 600 students or a staff comprised of more than 65 people. This limits the study in that the results were not generalizable to other Mercy schools with larger enrollments or to schools that are co-educational.

The population for the study was faculty, staff and administration who were willing to participate and therefore this sample was not generalizable to other faculty and staff at Mercy high schools. There was diversity among the institutions and participants that were surveyed. Factors such as school staff demographics,

enrollment, history, governance structure within the religious community and diversity of the school population were not segregated in this study.

Although the survey was administered in three Mercy secondary schools, the participants had varying degrees of experience. The data collected were self-reported responses and may have not measured completely the true feelings about the questions asked in the survey. The results of the research were confined to the data collection used in the survey instrument which was administered online using the Zoomerang software platform. Data from the surveys varied in sample size, as each school had different survey populations. The return rate of the research survey from each school varied in number. This variation in the participant responses may have had an effect on the results from school to school.

All of the schools in this study were members of the Network for Mercy Education, nevertheless responses to the survey varied depending on the level of influence this organization had on a particular school. This was especially true with regard to the staff development and orientation programs about the Mercy charism provided by the Network staff to a particular school. In addition, each school in this study possessed a unique organizational culture and climate based on its local influences, history and leadership. In addition, the varied technological infrastructure within each school affected the results of the survey responses.

The correlates for effective schools used in this study to create research questions for the survey were general characteristics that provide benchmarks for school effectiveness. However these correlates do not provide a specific prescription for measuring the effectiveness of a school. Rather for this study they offered a

roadmap of indicators that could be used to ascertain the presence of the values of the charism and the correlates for effectiveness.

Finally, the results of this survey were compiled online via the Internet. Given the pace of change in technology and the differing levels of capability of those who use it, it is almost impossible to get an accurate measure of how individuals reacted and responded to completing surveys online. Those with greater technological skills may have been more confident about and capable of completing the survey than those who were unfamiliar with using an Internet survey software platform. Technological support within each school varied, therefore participants that experienced access problems to the URL address were subjected to some emotional stress which may have impacted their responses.

This study was limited in scope by the use of a survey instrument. Responses were dependent upon the individual's emotional disposition at the time the survey was completed. A guarantee of a positive attitude while taking the survey and motivation for thoughtful completion of the questionnaire was not guaranteed. In addition, some participants may not have read the questions thoroughly or may have responded too quickly to the survey. Some of the participants could have mixed up the order in the Likert scale and this may have had some effect on the results.

This survey was administered online; therefore respondents may have experienced a degree of eye strain when taking the survey. The researcher recommended that respondents look away from the screen to avoid this problem. This may be distracting, causing a respondent to skip a question. However, all the

questions on the survey needed to be answered before a questionnaire could be submitted.

An additional limitation to this study is that for each value of the charism and effective school correlate only eight questions were used to describe the characteristics for these indicators. This is limiting in that, within the scope of eight questions, only general questions were used with regard to each value and correlate. Obviously, each specific value for the charism and effective school correlates could have been probed more deeply and with more specificity as to their operation within the school. This survey provided information on only general indicators for both the charism and the correlates.

Significance of this Study

The secondary schools sponsored by the Sisters of Mercy face the challenge of preserving the operation of the charism and maintaining the schools in the future as effective educational institutions. When the schools were fully staffed by Sisters of Mercy, the impact of the charism was assumed and justified by their visible presence. However today, contemporary Mercy schools are predominantly staffed by lay ministers. Therefore it is important to understand if these lay leaders and ministers perceive that the Mercy charism is present and operational in the school. In addition, it will be of value to explore whether a relationship exists between the presence of the charism in the culture of the school and the correlates for effectiveness.

This study has important significance for Mercy secondary schools and for other Catholic secondary institutions that are sponsored by religious orders. Little work has been done with regard to the relationship between the operation of the

charism in the schools and its relationship to effectiveness. This research provided more data with regard to the nature of charism and its presence in Mercy secondary schools. It will shed more light on the Mercy charism and its relationship to school effectiveness. Further understanding of these characteristics and qualities will provide valuable information to those who wish to move contemporary Mercy schools forward as effective educational institutions that will meet the needs of students in the 21st century.

In addition, this study added to the body of research already available about Catherine McAuley and the charism of Mercy. This research also added to the body of knowledge with regard to the effective schools correlates and its impact on Catholic school culture. Since the correlates for effectiveness were exclusively defined for public schools, more study will be needed to explore the existence of these correlates in private educational institutions. This research may stimulate further research on the subject.

With the formation of the Network of Mercy Schools a new initiative for alternative governance structures is being developed for Mercy secondary schools. If, in the future, a new governance structure exists, the results of this study will be most helpful to those who assume sponsorship responsibility for the schools. It will both provide a guide for understanding how the charism operates within the secondary schools and will give further insight into the effective qualities found in the culture of the organization. It will also be a valuable guide to future board members in understanding Mercy school culture and charism.

This study provides significant data to Mercy high schools and other Catholic school administrators as they move the schools into the 21st century. It is especially relevant for new administrators in Mercy schools as they will have access to research data that highlights the extent to which a relationship exists between the charism and the correlates for effectiveness. In addition to adding a body of knowledge for Mercy educators, this study also provides insight into the qualities of effective schooling, which are important indicators for all Catholic school educators to understand and practice.

Finally, this study provided a springboard for further detailed study on the charism of Mercy as it operates within the secondary school. The extent to which each core value of the charism is operative in the school may lead to other research that pertains to the specific ways in which a core value manifests itself in specific activities or programs within a school. The results of this study may also lead to further discussion as to how a Mercy school could strengthen their focus on a specific value of the charism. And, the 48 questions about the charism could be used by individual schools to ascertain the degree to which these values are present in a particular Mercy school. This research will assist Mercy educational associations, especially the Network for Mercy Education, in conducting further research on the operation of the Mercy charism, especially in schools that may be struggling with cultural identity, or schools that are assuming new governance structures.

It remains to be seen if the operation of the Mercy core values will survive into the next century with exclusively lay leadership, faculties, staff and Boards of Directors. This study helped to facilitate understanding as to what values need to be

present in the schools so that they remain truly Mercy, yet at the same time continue to exist as effective educational institutions poised to take on the future. This study resulted in further questions about the relationship between charism and effective schooling. Raven (1999) articulated these potential challenges when she wrote: "Together let us continue this mission. Let us together learn more, that the future might belong to all committed to be faithful to the tradition and willing and able to discern the signs and the needs of the times" (p.1).

Definition of Terms

Culture	Values, norms and behaviors that are common to an organization and perpetuate themselves over time (Dessler, 1998).
Effective School Correlates	Philosophies, policies and practices that effective schools have in common (Lezotte, 2000).

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

The review of the related literature identified the core values of the Mercy charism for education as originally articulated by Mother Catherine McAuley. In addition the review examined the translation of these core values into contemporary Mercy secondary schools as suggested by the current literature published by the Mercy Secondary Education Association (MSEA) and the Network for Mercy Education. This review also explored the defining characteristics of the correlates for effective schools and described how these characteristics operate within a school. Finally, the review of the literature outlined the characteristics of effective school culture as defined by the researchers cited in the theoretical rationale.

Sources for this literature review originated from manual and computer searches of databases and websites. These included: Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) and databases such as Elton B Stevens Company (EBSCO) and University Microfilms (UMI) dissertation services. In addition, the researcher obtained literature from online sources that included: California Center for Effective Schools (Chrispeels, 2002), The Association for Effective Schools (Lezotte, 2000), Effective School Products (Lezotte, 2001a, 2001b) and the National Center for Effective Schools (Taylor, 1990). The researcher also reviewed documents and materials published by the Mercy Secondary Education Association (MSEA) and the Network for Mercy Education (Raven, 1999; 2000; 2001a; 2001b; 2002; 2003). In addition the researcher borrowed

materials related to Catherine McAuley from the archives of the Sisters of Mercy library located at Mercy Center in Burlingame, California.

The review of the related literature about Catherine McAuley includes biographies of her life and copies of original letters compiled by Bolster (1989) and Neumann (1969). A collection of keynote addresses presented at the MSEA conferences 1983, 1985,1991, 1994, 1996 and 1998, in *With Fidelity* (MSEA, 2001), were utilized to elucidate the history and insights shared with countless Mercy educators over the years. This work served as a standard for the history and charism of Mercy in the contemporary secondary schools. Finally, the literature review was comprised of commentary and insights from leading scholars in the field of education.

Mercy Charism and Catherine McAuley

Many of today's American Catholic schools are marked by fidelity to a charism of a religious congregation. Raven (2000) wrote that Catherine McAuley, the foundress of the Sisters of Mercy, brought this special educational gift to the Church. It is expected that the charism of Mercy will be present in the schools that are owned, operated and sponsored by the Sisters of Mercy. Charism is a term that has been widely used in the Catholic Church, especially since the Second Vatican Council (1963). In particular, the specific term was used in relation to the renewal of religious life and subsequent exploration of the original intent and purposes for religious orders (Regan & Keiss, 1988). According to Abbott and Gallagher (1966), the word "charism" within the context of the Church refers to "special graces among the faithful of every rank" (p.101). McBrien (1994) asserted that the Catholic Church has never imposed rigid uniformity for

the formation of charisms, but has thrived on the variety of gifts and missions offered by its members. However, McBrien maintained that the three chief characteristics of a charism are that it is unusual, spontaneous and creative. The unique nature of the charism of the Sisters of Mercy emerged from the time, 1778 to 1841, in which Catherine McAuley lived. At a time when education for women was not a priority, Bolster (1996) explained that Catherine McAuley believed that the education of women was likely to produce serious social change. In a study of the Sisters of Mercy in higher education, Bouey (1963) reiterated the trigeminal intention of the roles that the Sisters are intended to play in their apostolic life:

> The sister has several roles to play in her apostolic function. Being a good teacher, a good nurse, or a good social worker, is perhaps her primary apostolic role and she will exert an influence on society only in proportion to the degree that she fulfills this basic role effectively. (p. 42)

Raven (2000) claimed that the unique history, tradition and charism of the Sisters of Mercy were handed down over the years through the ministry of education. "It is Mother Mary Catherine McAuley's fidelity to the Gospel of Jesus, her example of living out her mission within the Catholic Church, which is the legacy given to today's Mercy educators" (p. 3). An exploration and review of the related literature about Mother McAuley's background provided insight into this educational legacy.

Catherine McAuley's Background

Catherine McAuley was born in Dublin, Ireland in 1778. Savage (1955) wrote that Catherine's father, a devout Catholic who modeled for his daughter a compassion for the poor, passed away, leaving her mother with three small children. At the age of 11 Catherine's mother died, resulting in the orphaned McAuley children being moved from

home to home until they were adopted by a wealthy family from Dublin, Mr. and Mrs. William Callaghan. Bourke (1987) claimed that the relationship with the Callaghan family would prove to be the one of the most important element in the formation of Catherine's character and ultimate direction in life. Catherine nursed and cared for Mrs. Callaghan until her death and the grateful Mr. Callaghan, upon his own death, amply rewarded Catherine. Callaghan recognized Catherine's charity and knew she was special. When he died, William Callaghan left his entire family fortune to Catherine. In her biography of Mother McAuley, Mother Austin Carroll (1866) explained his reasoning:

> And of all who ever knew her, not one appreciated her more highly than the benevolent, philosophical William Callahan, who staked his thousands and tens of thousands on her virtue, leaving her his whole fortune, without a single clause to limit her in the application of it. (p.5)

After receiving the inheritance from the Callaghan family, Catherine McAuley's work with the poor of Dublin began in earnest (Bolster 1996). Catherine established and converted the fashionable Baggot Street house she had inherited and invited poor young women into the home to learn skills that would help them gain employment and independence from poverty. However, Savage (1955) noted that there was much criticism of Catherine's work from the local community and Church. During the 1800s, Carroll (1866) maintained that it was not usual for a secular woman to be working in such a manner with the poor of Dublin. This was especially true in a neighborhood which was, by the standards of the day, considered to be wealthy and upper class. Degnan (1957) wrote that Catherine, in order to continue her work in this neighborhood and within the context of the Catholic faith, was directed by a local bishop to form a religious congregation. Savage (1955) argued that it was never McAuley's intention to enter

religious life. She entered the novitiate, with two other novices of the Presentation Sisters and in 1831, after taking her own simple perpetual final vows, McAuley formed her new order and became the first Sister of Mercy. Bourke (1987) wrote, "At the mature age of fifty-two years Catherine, believing that God was directing her through the call of the Archbishop, overcame her prejudice against religious life" (p. 22).

Bourke (1987) noted that Catherine's chief reason for not originally aspiring to congregational membership was that she did not want to embrace the vow of enclosure. Catherine, in establishing her innovative and unique charism, made it clear that before she would enter any religious order her Sisters would work among the people, and not be subjected to a cloistered life. Failka (2003) explained that the vow of enclosure was a common tradition for women religious of the era; however, Catherine was determined to create a special group of religious women or "walking nuns" (p. 20). This identity became a key characteristic of the Sisters of Mercy. Catherine's refusal to embrace a cloistered life created difficulty for the Presentation Sisters; Degnan (1957) related how the problem was solved.

> The Presentation Sisters decided to lay their difficulty before Archbishop Murray. How could they in conscience give vows according to *their* rule and constitutions to religious that would not observe enclosure? This was no mere nicety, for even yet solemn vows are not permitted to uncloistered religious women. Archbishop Murray resolved the difficulty by proposing a form of simple perpetual vows to effect the transition. (p. 131)

Upon accepting these unique vows, Catherine immediately went back to the house on Baggot Street and began the work of the newly formed Sisters of Mercy (Carroll, 1866).

Wheeler (1991) reported that Catherine had three primary goals for her newly formed religious congregation. First and foremost, she was determined to build a refuge

for women who were in need. Second, as the order expanded, the education of both the poor and middle classes became a priority. Finally, Catherine also expressed the imperative of caring for the sick and dying. Wheeler maintained that Catherine used education as the key to propelling forward all of the Mercy ministries. Wheeler stated that from Dublin's Baggot Street House in the early 1800s Mother McAuley began her ministry with these three goals as the foundation of her mission.

Mercy Educational Foundations

McAuley (1888) wrote:

> To discharge well and profitable that important duty of our Institute, which obliges us to the instruction of poor girls, we must be intent on the virtues prescribed by our holy Rule, assiduous and preserving in the practice of these, viz., charity, humility, purity of intention, and confidence in God. (p. 8)

Savage (1955) argued that Catherine McAuley possessed a strong conviction about the importance of educating women, especially the poor and middle classes. Savage theorized that because of Catherine's independent spirit and life experience her concern for women was paramount. Savage suggested that Mother McAuley believed that any potential for social change rested in the careful and patient instruction of young women. Carroll (1866) elucidated why this value became the major focus of her mission and ministry:

> Mother McAuley considered all society to be in the hands of women; if wives were good they could save their husbands; if sisters were good they could convert their brothers; if mothers were good they could rear their children well. (p. 452)

In her book, *A Woman Sings of Mercy*, Bourke (1987) wrote that Catherine's exposure to the Quaker religion through the Callaghan family was vital in forming her

own personal spirituality and eventually the charism of the Sisters of Mercy. Bourke noted that Catherine read the Callaghan's Protestant Bible at a time when none of the Catholic laity or religious congregations of women were allowed to read Scripture in the vernacular. Degnan (1957) theorized that considering Catherine's life and other experiences, it would be quite natural for her to create a charism that required new freedoms for her Sisters and to emphasize the importance of educating women.

Regan and Keiss (1988) reported that with each new institute founded by Catherine a free school for girls was established. It was the custom of each institution to make sure the young women had training in a skill that could provide them a career in life. Regan and Keiss elaborated on Mother McAuley's reasoning for this philosophy. They wrote: "Houses and schools of Mercy provided job training and basic education for the poor that made possible a life of more personal independence" (p 91). Carroll (1866) maintained that during the 1800s personal independence for women was not a quality embraced by society. Catherine's steadfast focus on educating women was inherent in her own persona and personal spirituality and brought attention to an issue that was to become the hallmark of the Mercy charism.

Savage (1955) described that, in her unique and spontaneous fashion of adjusting to the needs of a community, Catherine opened pension schools for the daughters of townspeople who were from the middle class. The funds earned from these schools enabled Catherine to establish schools for the poor. Although her focus was to educate the poor, Mother McAuley believed that educating the daughters of the middle class would form their consciousness for the plight of others. Carroll (1866) expanded on this

idea when she explained that Catherine also believed that the pension school was fertile ground for attracting women to religious life. Savage (1955) noted that Catherine's vision for her new order of religious women would first and foremost provide education to those who were in need. He wrote:

> From their foundation the Sisters of Mercy have devoted a great deal of their energies to educational work. They have followed the lead given them by Catherine, who regarded education as one of the first works of Mercy. (p. 267)

Kelly (1978) explained that one of the distinctive characteristics of the Mercy charism, the gift that Catherine brought to the Catholic Church, was the mission to educate young women from all socio-economic classes. In *Familiar Instructions,* McAuley (1888) stated that it was the focus on the "careful education of women" (p. 88) that was the defining characteristic of the Mercy charism.

Raven (2000) reported that one of the primary challenges for Mercy education, even though some schools are coeducational, was to address concerns for women and women's issues. This was translated into today's secondary schools as a core value by the Mercy Secondary Education Association in the 1980s.

As Wheeler (1991) asserted, Mother McAuley was determined to build a refuge for women most in need through the vehicle of education. Burns (1985) wrote in *Some Lasting Efforts*, that from these original works and foundations of Mercy, six contemporary core values for Mercy education evolved: 1) educational excellence, 2) collaboration, 3) spiritual growth and development, 4) concern for women and women's issues, 5) compassion and service, and 6) world vision and responsibility. The literature elaborated on the characteristics of these values

Educational excellence.

Catherine's convictions about educational excellence were evident throughout the literature. In the revised *Guide for the Religious Called Sisters of Mercy* (Sisters of Mercy 1962) McAuley's own statement is documented.

> The secular subjects whom the sisters teach are to be carefully prepared and well taught. While these studies are not directly necessary to religious training, they are an indirect and very powerful means of attracting the children and of enabling them to effect much future good. The schools conducted by those consecrated to God should not be inferior to those directed by seculars. (p.19)

Hoey (1991) reported that Catherine visited many of the outstanding schools in France as well as in Ireland to examine academic excellence and contemporary instructional strategies for her schools. Bourke (1987) wrote that in 1832, Catherine placed Mercy schools under the National Board of Education so that students would be more motivated to improve in order to pass the required national examination. It was expected that the schools founded by Mother McAuley would be educational institutions that were ahead of their time and esteemed places for learning.

In addition to this educational mission, Catherine understood that her educational institutions needed to collaborate with the local community. McConomy (1922) asserted that Catherine McAuley understood clearly the importance of community links and foundations in furthering the works of Mercy.

Collaborative education.

In 1838, Mother McAuley, wrote in an original letter (as cited in Neumann, 1969) to Sister Mary Francis:

> The House of Mercy opens on Monday. The collections of children are very well received, priests and people very much pleased. What would I do or say to have a Carlow Priest at the ceremony on the fourth. Try all the influence you possess, it would comfort and delight me to see them. (p. 146)

Bolster (1996) described how the connection between educational excellence, academic rigor and collaboration was accomplished by Catherine McAuley. In 1831 the National School System was established in Ireland. Bolster explained that Catherine viewed this system as an "apostolic challenge" to her school on Baggot Street (p. 29). In 1834 Catherine requested that her schools be affiliated with this system. She was the first leader of a religious congregation to affiliate a Catholic school with the secular educational association. Bolster claimed that Catherine's collaborative efforts in education were ahead of her time. She established home liaisons which enabled her Sisters to adapt their instructions to the immediate needs of pupils who were kept at home for extended illness or family problems. Bolster theorized that today's Parent Teacher Associations may have been said to have been started thanks to Catherine's pastoral and educational vision.

Regan and Keiss (1988) described the value of collaboration that has been handed down by Catherine to the secondary schools. This value comes directly from Catherine's original work in establishing foundations throughout Ireland.

> As she grew in experience of making foundations, Catherine discerned those practices which argued for success of the new institute of walking nuns, the importance of presenting the nature of the Sisters of Mercy to the inhabitants of a new town without delay. (p. 79)

It is apparent that the value of collaboration comes directly from Mother McAuley's own personal determination to spread the works of Mercy throughout Ireland.

Kelly (1978) noted that between 1831 and 1841 she personally opened 12 of the 14 original convents and foundations. Kelly suggested that not withstanding her personal perseverance, this growth could be attributed to close collaboration with a community of neighbors, donors and newly professed Sisters. Savage (1955) stated that the value of collaboration was important to the growth of Mercy foundations. However, it is in the writings of Catherine McAuley that one finds the primary reason for her involvement in education.

Spirituality and education.

In the pages of *Familiar Instructions* (1888), Catherine McAuley shared a vision for the spiritual development of the students in the care of her Sisters. She insisted:

> As the duty of instructing and saving, as it were the souls of the children is a divine employment, the same that engaged Jesus Christ on earth - it requires a great deal of humility; and the saints understood this duty with a holy delight, regarding their young charges as the representatives of the Infant Jesus, as such esteemed themselves honored in being allowed to serve them. Oh! what happiness for us to be called to the same noble mission. What care we should take in all that regards the simple education of these little ones. (p.11)

In addition, Bolster (1986) maintained that Catherine's methodology for education had the same spiritual thrust that characterized her whole approach to her Mercy ministries. Bolster (1989) wrote that Mother McAuley was very careful of those she selected as teachers. Mother McAuley (1888) wrote (as cited in Bolster, 1989), "Oh What happiness for us to be called to the same noble mission. What care we should take in all that regards the simple education of the little ones" (p.9). Bolster maintained that Catherine believed that teaching skills were secondary considerations to religious considerations. Bolster claimed that the mainspring of her life was the love of God and

through that love Catherine's educational institutions became the "obedient daughter of the Church" (p.33). Furthermore, Wheeler (1991) expounded on how this spiritual dimension operated in Catherine's reality.

> There is further comment which should be made here regarding these primary concerns - for the poor, for women, and for the sick and dying. That is, Catherine McAuley's concern was always a combined concern for both the physical and spiritual well-being of persons. She functioned at the same time in the practical order and the order of faith. Indeed, so much so were these two dimensions combined that it may be said that in practice she did not see them as separable. (p. 5)

Mother McAuley established schools so that her congregation could provide a spiritual education for those in need. In *Familiar Instructions* (1888), McAuley wrote: "Supported by such exalted virtues, we shall aid in saving many amongst Christ's little ones whilst without them we shall spoil and ruin all, and retard instead of promoting God's glory" (p. 9). However, there was one particular group that was the clear focus of Catherine's mission. Burns (1985), Kelly (1979) and Savage (1955) all insisted that throughout her life, the education of women was a passion and the driving force for the foundress and the new congregation of Mercy Sisters.

Education of women.

Bolster (1989) reported that nearly 200 letters written by Catherine have survived and they evidence the reality of Catherine's passion for the women with whom she lived and to whom she provided education. In an early letter (cited in Bolster, 1989) dated 1830 to Cardinal Capellari requesting approval from the Holy See for her work in the House of Mercy; Catherine explained the apostolate in which she wished to engage. She wrote: "They employ themselves in striving as much as they possibly can to give a

Christian and truly Roman Catholic education to poor wretched girls who could not otherwise produce or obtain it" (p. 3).

McAuley continued:

> They bring together and lodge poor servant girls who, owing to the prejudices of heretical employers or other misfortunes, find themselves deprived of employment; as well as others who, though they have some trade or profession, are unfortunately not able to find work and therefore stand in need of food and help. (p. 3)

Wheeler (1991) and Burns (1985) wrote that Catherine was consumed with the idea of helping and educating women from the poor and middle classes. Wheeler asserted that Catherine McAuley believed that the education of women was the link between the upper and lower classes. Burns argued that, according to Catherine, the education of women had to be the primary motive if there was to be any serious social change in Ireland. Burns (1985) suggested that Catherine was a realist and a shrewd observer who responded to the needs of her times. One of her first acts as the new head of the Sisters of Mercy was to open a school for poor women. She felt strongly that the only way to change the current conditions for the poor women of Dublin was to provide educational opportunities for them. Her belief that the education of women was paramount to this plan was not "a value highly regarded in nineteenth century Ireland" (p. 7). Bolster (1996) noted that Catherine's goal was the "protection of distressed women of good character" (p. 184) and that the first House of Mercy housed about 70 women who stayed an average of three to four months. Bolster indicated that they were not encouraged to stay long as great care was taken to put them in situations of employment that matched their abilities. In addition, Bolster maintained that they were instructed in religious duty,

taught needlework and laundry-work and were trained in "whatever they seemed best suited for" (p.185).

In addition to placing women in jobs throughout the city, Regan and Keiss (1988) maintained that the students and sisters were also committed to serve others in need. The schools were places that prepared women, whether they entered the religious congregation or not, to move about the community doing the works of Mercy.

Service and compassion.

In 1834, Archbishop Murray of Dublin sent a letter to Cardinal Pedicini in Rome, describing the positive work of Catherine McAuley and her companions. He wrote of her ministry: "... which is to be devoted entirely to the pious work of instructing poor girls, of caring for women in danger and of visiting the sick" (Bolster, 1989, p. 13). As Wheeler (1991) maintained, these three activities were the pillars of Mercy as established by Mother McAuley. In addition, Wheeler noted that Catherine's innovative approach to service was unique for the time in which she lived.

> The very basic project which she initiated, the House of Mercy at Baggot Street, was entirely untypical: unmarried ladies who were not religious gathered together responding to the needs of poor people in the middle of an affluent area of Dublin, going through the streets to do good works unaccompanied by men. (p. 6)

Wheeler (1991) argued that it was this innovation and creativity that set Catherine apart. Failka (2003) asserted that Catherine was a woman who not only revolutionized the concept of education but adapted to the desperate needs of her time. Bolster (1996) expanded on this point when she noted that, "Catherine's charism of Ecumenism was the instrument which enabled her to build bridges, where others were erecting barricades" (p. 17).

World vision and responsibility.

Bolster (1996) referred to Catherine as a prophet and asserted that she had a long term view and vision for her mission and ministries. She claimed that McAuley's intent was to establish a legacy to be handed down to her Sisters for many years to come. As Burns (1985) claimed: "We participate in an enterprise begun by the energies of one Catherine McAuley who created a future she had not imagined" (p. 5). Bolster (1986) theorized that Catherine's charism of "vision and awareness" (p.22) proclaimed her as a great Church woman of her era.

Failka (2003) noted "the Irish had never seen anything like it, Catholic women from the upper class, no less, risking their lives to help the poor" (p. 29). As a result, Failka explained, Bishops from other areas of Ireland began appearing on a regular basis at Catherine's door requesting her to start a convent in their community. Catherine was eager to assist them for she knew that "the countryside was where the real victims of the Penal Laws lived" (p. 29). This was the humble beginnings of a religious response to a specific need and a ministry that would eventually span the globe.

Wheeler (1991) asserted that Catherine was a woman ahead of her time, envisioning a future filled with good works on behalf of women and children and leaving a heritage of values forceful enough to keep the Sisters of Mercy moving into the future. A review of the contemporary literature revealed that these values continue to operate in forms relative to the present and that within the context of these core values, certain distinguishing, ideal characteristics, rooted in the heritage of Mother McAuley have been identified and prescribed as the operating values for Mercy secondary schools.

Values of Mercy Secondary Education

Direct empirical research about the operation of the charism in Mercy secondary schools is limited. Therefore, the following characteristics were identified from the documents published by MSEA and the Network for Mercy Education and they provided the prescribed indicators for the ideal Mercy secondary school. By organizing and identifying these characteristics from the secondary associations, this study focused on the operation of the values of the charism in the secondary school.

In order to identify these characteristics, the researcher reviewed printed and electronic documents published by the Network for Mercy Education. In addition, the researcher utilized MSEA meeting minutes, published works, keynote addresses and convention proceedings in order to articulate the suggested characteristics of the core values. Finally, the researcher used data from a sponsorship study (Webber, 1998) conducted prior the formation of the Network for Mercy Education to describe the prescribed characteristics for the secondary schools. The particular publications used to articulate these operational characteristics were compiled by MSEA and the Network for Mercy Education in direct cooperation with the 42 Mercy secondary schools. They supplied the materials from their local school site for the publications sponsored by the two associations.

Contemporary Foundations

Herberle (1990) reported that in 1981, an invitation was sent out to educators interested in establishing formal collaboration among Mercy secondary schools. Herberle noted that 40 individuals responded to this call. Following this initial meeting of

educators, a questionnaire was sent to Mercy congregations, individual Sisters, schools and provincial administrators. This questionnaire was designed to assess interest in further, formal collaboration. "A steering committee was formed, which met for the first time in October, 1981, to start planning the first Mercy Secondary Education Conference" (p.298). The Mercy Secondary Education Association (MSEA) was officially established in 1983 in Madison, Connecticut. This organization had a specific vision in mind. "The Mercy Secondary Education Association is an organization founded by the Sisters of Mercy to provide a national forum to enhance and further the Mercy charism in secondary education" (Herberle, 1990, p.1).

One of the primary purposes for founding MSEA was "to further the Mercy Charism in secondary schools" (MSEA, 1996, p.5). Herberle (1990) noted that the first secondary education conference hosted by MSEA in 1982 consisted of secondary educators, both lay and religious, from across the country. The structure and purposes for the Mercy Secondary Education Association, as proposed by the executive committee of the association, were affirmed at this meeting. In addition, the vision statement outlining the mission of the MSEA was directly tied to the heritage and charism of Mother McAuley.

> Rooted in the tradition of Catherine McAuley, foundress of the Sisters of Mercy, it seeks to bond together Sisters of Mercy and their colleagues in the ministry of secondary education. This educational association fosters the development of value-centered education in the Roman Catholic traditions with particular concern for young women and the poor. (Herberle, 1990, p.1)

Sheehan (1986) contributed to the collective dialogue about collaboration among Mercy educators by conducting a study of opinions and attitudes of the Sister of Mercy in

education. Her 45-item questionnaire was sent to members of Mercy higher education, MSEA, and Mercy Elementary Educational Network (MEEN). Sheehen reported that five recommendations surfaced from this research. Two of these recommendations have relevance for this study, namely that respondent feedback from the survey suggested that the there should be two priorities for the continued mission of the secondary schools: 1) educational excellence, and 2) a concern for women and women's issues.

In her historical review of the Association, Herberle (1990) reported that after a two year period of deliberation by the MSEA membership, a set of core values was finally affirmed in 1990. Rooted in the teachings of Catherine McAuley, and prescribed as the values to be held in common by the schools, these six core values included: (a) collaboration, (b) concern for women and women's issues, (c) educational excellence, (d) world vision and responsibility, (e) compassion and service, and (f) spiritual growth and development.

Cahill (1996) reported that MESA distributed to member schools a charism mission integration instrument that was based on these values of the charism and could be used by the local schools.

> What is essential to the future vitality and viability of a mission driven organization is the integration of the mission into the programs, policies practices and accountability of the organization - only then will there be an assurance that the mission will endure with fidelity and integrity. (p. 1)

This tool, used in three pilot Mercy secondary institutions, included questions regarding each core value of the charism. According to Cahill, the leaders at the schools were asked to form ad hoc committees of faculty, administration and staff to identify the "current indicators in your school and future indicators in your school" (p. 12). School leaders

were asked to design their own approach as to how to use the integration instrument. Results of the mission integration surveys were used exclusively at the local sites and the data was not shared with the Association. A sample of this charism tool is included in this study (Appendix B).

A reading of the MSEA (2002) executive board minutes underscores that the Association had functioned strictly as a membership organization for Mercy secondary school educators. The Association hosted annual conferences and commissioned several publications that included (a) monographs of keynote speeches from annual conventions, (b) a comprehensive text of all MSEA keynote addresses (*With Fidelity*, 2001), and (c) a book of prayers written by Mercy students for use in the schools. Webber (1998) noted that until 1999, MSEA served as the primary educational association for Mercy secondary educators.

Raven (1999) reported that in 1996 the annual conference was preceded by a meeting on sponsorship issues and concerns. Over 50 representatives from 33 schools gathered to discuss the possibility of forming a Mercy Educational System. In her study, *A Profile: Mercy Secondary Schools Today,* Webber (1998) indicated that the Sponsorship Committee for Mercy Secondary Education began meeting in 1997. At that time, the committee developed a working budget and commissioned a study of the 42 Mercy secondary schools. The study was based on models provided by other religious communities such as the Jesuits, Xaverians, Dominicans and the Religious of the Sacred Heart. According to Webber this study was qualitative and diagnostic rather than quantitative and predictive. Webber wrote that three survey instruments were designed

and distributed to regional communities, administrators and board members. Seventy-one percent of the surveys were returned. In addition, face to face interviews were conducted throughout the year. The results of this study produced a clear agreement among the schools, "that the process would facilitate an alliance of schools that clearly reflects the vision and values of Catherine McAuley" (p. 44).

Sister Corrine Raven (1999), who served as the first president of MSEA and currently serves as the Executive Director for the Network of Mercy Education, wrote that the Network for Mercy Secondary Schools was formed as a response to the survey findings. Raven noted that this was a collective commitment by secondary educators to ensure the future of Catholic secondary education in the Mercy tradition. Raven maintained that the goal was:

> ...establishing a network of Mercy secondary schools with a structure to provide support and accountability for the integration of mission in our secondary schools. This network will share in the spirit of Catherine McAuley and the common Mercy tradition and values. (p. 1)

The Network for Mercy Education provided the secondary institutions with a comprehensive website which links the 42 schools together. Other Network services include: board orientation materials; professional development opportunities; regular publications detailing the history and mission of Mercy; CD-ROMS for orientations that demonstrate the operation of the core values within the schools; annual reports; and regular newsletters. (Network for Mercy Education, 2003)

Wheeler (1995) asserted that the six core values of the Mercy charism, as defined by MSEA and reiterated by the Network for Mercy Education, were expected to be part of shaping the culture of the organization and influence the climate for a secondary

school's fidelity to Mercy. The values of collaboration, concern for women and women's issues, educational excellence, world vision and responsibility, compassion and service, and spiritual growth and development are based on Mother McAuley's own prescription for the purpose of Mercy.

This Chapter identified the characteristics for the Mercy charism and their prescribed operation within the secondary school. The qualities describing these characteristics were gleaned from materials published by MESA and the Network for Mercy Education. They included: *With Fidelity, A Collection of Keynote Addresses 1982-2000* (MSEA, 2001); *Connected in Mercy,* CD-ROM, Network for Mercy Education (Raven, 2000); *Within the Circle of Mercy,* CD-ROM, Network for Mercy Education (Raven, 2002); *Houses of Mercy*, CD-ROM, and the Network for Mercy Education Web Site (2003). These materials, compiled in cooperation with the 42 schools, were distributed to the local school sites. They are used for board education, student orientations, admissions and marketing in Mercy secondary schools.

Collaboration.

The construct of collaboration is vital to all schools, both public and private. As Raven (2001b) suggested, leaders at local levels need advice, ministry and support.

> Mercy administrators need the advice, wisdom, counsel and support of board members. The demands on leadership in Mercy secondary education today are many. Faced with responsibilities for legal affairs, educational programs, planning, finance, and development, interaction with Church and civil authorities, an administrator needs the board. Leadership, rewarding in its moments of giving life to a vision, still take a toll. Leadership needs support. (p.7)

In addition, Raven (2000) reported that in 1991 the Sisters of Mercy gathered together all the various groups in the western hemisphere to form a new governance structure. This organizational change resulted in a new institute that included all of the regional communities on two continents. The new organization was named The Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas. The Sisters of Mercy Constitution (1991) for this newly formed organization articulated the meaning of collaboration for their sponsored works.

> By collaborating with others in works of mercy we continually learn from them how to be more merciful. We carry out our mission of mercy guided by prayerful consideration of the needs of our time, Catherine McAuley's preferential love for the poor and her special concern for women, the pastoral priorities of the universal and local church and our talents, resources and limitations. (p. 3)

The Network for Mercy Education (2001) maintained that, in addition to collaborating in works of Mercy, the secondary schools were being challenged to collaborate within their communities and with other Mercy schools. In a keynote address to Mercy secondary educators, Wheeler (1995) explained the meaning of collaboration for Mercy secondary schools.

> The continuance of the tradition is a dynamic and ongoing process. It could be likened to a conversation; it doesn't happen just once and for all. We continually pass it on to one another reinforcing, challenging, and enlivening one another. This time and this energy yield a mutual communication of values. There is a sense of belonging that happens when people communicate values to one another. This sense is vital if the tradition is to thrive and be passed on. This is the sense of community we often speak of. The Mercy community is bigger than the Sisters of Mercy. It is something born of people understanding the tradition, valuing the tradition, working together out of the tradition, and contributing to the continuance of the tradition. (p. 211)

Burns (1985) suggested that the values of collaboration were vital to Mercy secondary schools. Burns insisted that this value was the vehicle by which the traditions

of each individual school, in collaboration with the local community, and other Mercy schools, were preserved. Raven (2000) maintained that Mercy secondary schools are called to build a unified community of faith, worship and service that is intrinsically linked to the value of collaboration. Raven (2000), writing for the Network for Mercy Education, suggested that in the ideal contemporary Mercy secondary schools, collaboration should take place with the following groups: regional Leadership Teams, Boards of Trustees, civic organizations, business community members, local elementary schools, local associations and agencies, institutions of higher education, parents, alumnae and Mercy educational organizations. Other researchers, such as Coleman and Hoffer (1987), have asserted that this is the quality of "social capital" (p. 228) in Catholic schools that has a lasting impact on the communities.

Notwithstanding the value of collaboration, Mercy secondary schools are challenged to offer a quality education. This heritage and tradition comes directly from the foundress. Bolster (1989) claimed that Catherine "was the most outstanding educator of her time" (p. 18). Contemporary Mercy secondary schools are called to continue that tradition (Network for Mercy Education, 2003).

Educational Excellence

As a contemporary response to the heritage of Catherine's vision for her schools, MSEA (1986) affirmed academic excellence as a hallmark of the secondary school by making it one of the six core values. The characteristics of this value were outlined in the following documents: *Some Lasting Efforts* (Burns, 1985*), A Mercy Education: What Does It Truly Cost?* (Wheeler, 1995*)* and *The Ministry of Board Service,* (Raven, 2001).

Raven (2000) recommended that Mercy schools should challenge themselves

> ...to offer a disciplined academic environment and sound liberal arts background that prepares graduates for college, career pursuits and to provide an environment that will stimulate a desire for virtue, for scholarship and for leadership. We challenge ourselves to produce prepared, compassionate, responsible women and men. (p.3)

In an address to Mercy secondary educators Burns (1985) implied that secondary schools established in the Mercy tradition should also commit themselves to ongoing school improvement.

> The call does not suggest uncritical imitation of the latest techniques and theories but rather a constant awareness of the new in order to evaluate and adapt the better parts/insights. For this reason, Mother McAuley traveled to France to study the French Catholic educational system, and within Dublin, to schools of the monitorial system and the Kildare Place Society. (p. 8)

The Network for Mercy Education (Raven, 2002) emphasized that ideal Mercy secondary institutions should be committed to: (a) the development of the whole person, (b) the success of all students regardless of ability levels, (c) meeting the challenges of technology, and (d) unleashing creative energies in the pursuit of knowledge. Hoey (1991) asserted that this education was, as Catherine McAuley always intended, "to be the best education possible" (p. 142).

Although educational excellence is a primary value for Mercy secondary schools, Costello (1991) maintained that Mercy secondary schools are also challenged to anchor themselves in the faith development of their students. She suggested that this value should permeate the fabric of the secondary institution.

Spiritual Growth and Development

Gottemoeller (1993), former President of the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas, contended that Mercy schools are part of a larger picture and should aspire to become ministering communities, expressions of both the Church and the Sisters. Gottmoeller wrote:

> The phrase "ministering community" could also be a shorthand definition of the Sisters of Mercy. Isn't that what Catherine McAuley created on Baggot Street over 150 years ago...A Mercy high school is a ministering community because it teaches and embodies a spiritual center, a moral authority and practical experience. (p. 171)

Gottemoeller concluded that Mercy high schools are challenged to teach, "what women of Mercy are to become, what they must do, and how they must do it" (p. 171).

Amos (1983) suggested that spiritual development should be the defining value of the institutional culture of a Catholic school founded in the tradition of Mercy.

> Catherine McAuley, as all of us know, did not start out to found a religious institute. But after initiating the original House of Mercy she came to regard its insertion into the church in an official way as it is key to its endurance. Institutions sponsored by the Sisters of Mercy are linked unmistakably to the Roman Catholic Church. (p. 22)

The Sisters of Mercy (1991) claimed in *Constitutions* that the sponsorship of institutions organized in their name are founded to address enduring concerns and to witness to Christ's mission. The Network for Mercy Education (Raven, 2000) suggested that the ideal Mercy school should provide a quality educational experience permeated with Gospel values and rooted in the unique charism of Mother McAuley. Raven also specifically reported in *Connected in Mercy*, CD-ROM, that schools provide students an experience of liturgical celebrations, daily prayer, retreats, and community service and

campus ministry programs. Ideally, these activities were rooted in the six values of the charism.

Concern for Women and Women's Issues

Webber (1998) reported that 89% of Mercy secondary schools continue to serve young women as single gender institutions. Catherine's core value of concern for women is a major priority for Mercy secondary schools as well. Hoey (1991) maintained that the concern for women, their education and their needs as members of the world's society, still has contemporary ramifications for Mercy secondary institutions.

In a *Direction Statement,* the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas (1995) reaffirmed their commitment to women:

> Animated by the gospel and Catherine McAuley's passion for the poor, we, the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas, are impelled to commit our life resources to act in solidarity with the economically poor of the world, especially women and children; women seeking fullness of life and equality in church and society; one another as we embrace our international and multicultural reality. (p. 2)

In her address to Mercy Secondary Educators, Kelly (1978) reiterated that thousands of women who have heard the story of Catherine McAuley and learned of her work have been struck by her insights and purpose. Kelly indicated that the Institute of Mercy established by Catherine had become a training place for women who sought to move freely through the Church in several continents. She theorized that contemporary Mercy secondary schools should be part of this heritage. In a similar presentation to MSEA, Costello (1991) expanded on this concept when she noted that, "As Mercy educators whose charism identifies women as a special care, we promise a tremendous ideal" (p.153).

The Network for Mercy Education (Raven, 2000), CD-ROM, *Connected in Mercy,* reported that the study of women and women's issues were included in the curriculum of Mercy secondary schools. Raven (2002) suggested that this correlates with the MSEA value about what it means to be a contemporary woman in today's society. Wheeler (1995) stated that students in Mercy secondary schools should be instructed to value their life, as Catherine did, as women who function for themselves and create systemic change in society.

Elliott (1994) elucidated this challenge to Mercy secondary schools when she noted the needs of young women in contemporary times and especially in single gender schools.

> Women are by nature concerned about relationships and relatedness. Carol Gilligan in her book, *In a Different Voice*, Harvard University Press, 1982, notes that when women approach moral decision-making they are often perceived as indecisive, when in fact, they are attempting to ascertain the impact of decisions on others. (p. 186)

In addition, the Network for Mercy Education suggested that women's issues should permeate the curriculum. Raven (2000, 2002) suggested that the ideal curriculum in a Mercy school should include study about (a) women's health issues, (b) abuse and violence against women, (c) discrimination and oppression, and (d) the multicultural reality facing women in today's world. Raven (2000) implied that the schools are also called to prepare women to take their full and equal place in Church and society. "The challenge is not only intellectual but interpersonal as well" (Raven 2000, p.8).

Fennell (1984) noted that American women religious have built an educational system that is reflective of their value stance. Fennell maintained that the women

religious of the Mercy secondary system, in partnership with the laity, have formed an educational system that is not mediocre, but rather a system that challenges the status quo of society, especially for young women.

Compassion and Service

Wheeler (1995) argued that the challenge to Mercy educators included a commitment to forming schools that are filled with compassionate women. In her address to Mercy secondary educators she elucidated the need for Mercy educators to be mindful of their role, not only as academic institutions, but as places where acts of Mercy can be seen operating through compassionate service to the community.

Amos (1983) articulated the connection between Mother McAuley's visions for her ministry into the future. She wrote:

> The identity we share with sisters and works that today bear the name of Catherine McAuley's foundation connect us to a strong and proud tradition with a reputation for leadership, professionalism and – of profoundest significance - the distinctive characteristic of mercy, compassion. (p. 21)

Hoey (1991) proposed that Mercy secondary schools should be marked by their commitment to service. Raven (2000) noted that secondary schools established in the tradition of Mercy should include service requirements for students as a part of their graduation requirements. Hoey (1991) maintained that the curricular standards in an ideal Mercy school should include outreach and service projects that assist students in understanding poverty and its causes. She wrote:

> Students in Mercy secondary schools are developing the habits of mind and heart which they will bring with them into adulthood. Such habits are, we hope, influenced by the charism of Catherine McAuley and for our students, as for ourselves, the charism is a gift to be given

> away. It is a wonderful experience to meet graduates of our Mercy schools who are committed to working in effective and often sacrificial ways for the poor, for those who are kept from fullness of life and equality. For some of these graduates it is a full time occupation; for many others it is an activity of competence and compassion which extends beyond their primary responsibilities. (p. 148-149)

The Network for Mercy Education (Raven, 2002) specified that students in ideal Mercy secondary schools were involved in local community work that connected them to the core values. Raven (2000) and the Network for Mercy Schools reported in the CD-ROM, *Connected in Mercy*, that students from members schools worked at residences for battered women, served food at the local missions, volunteered in parishes or assisted at local elementary schools. Raven also noted that graduates of ideal Mercy secondary schools are called upon to understand the value of service that is ideally rooted in the charism. Raven noted that Mercy graduates are groomed to become Christian leaders who are committed to the value of compassion and service.

Wheeler (1995), a Principal at Mercy High School Baltimore, noted that Mercy secondary schools must be committed to expanding their responsibility beyond the local community. In addition The Network for Mercy Education, CD-ROM, *Within the Circle of Mercy,* Raven (2002) reported that Mercy schools were places where there is recognition and urgency for nurturing students into individuals who will make a broader impact on the world.

World Vision and Responsibility.

The Network for Mercy Education (Raven, 2000) prescribed that the secondary schools founded in the tradition of Mercy should be responsible for producing students who are "faith filled, future orientated adults" (p.8). The network described the ideal

Mercy course of study and indicated that students should be exposed to issues regarding the environment, multicultural awareness, global studies, social responsibilities and respect for all life. Raven explained that students should be provided an education that focused on a "sense of justice and communicate a sense of global awareness and responsibility" (p. 7). Costello (1991) suggested that, in essence, a Mercy school is expected to become a part of something greater then itself. In an address to Mercy secondary educators entitled "A School with a Soul"; Costello implied that these values should become embedded within the culture of the school. She asserted that schools which do not prescribe to basic values become out of touch with the charism and will ultimately lose their way. Costello noted that the quest to define the soul of a school is on-going and is a testimony to the vitality and adaptability of the organization. She suggested that preoccupation with trying to understand the original values of the charism in its contemporary framework is a healthy process.

The six values of the Mercy charism, collaboration, spiritual growth and development, educational excellence, compassion and service, concern for women's issues and world vision and responsibility, prescribed by MSEA and the Network for Mercy Education have provided the roadmaps for predicting behaviors, assumptions and beliefs for the operation of the charism within ideal Mercy secondary schools. With this in mind, the researcher will use the described characteristics of the six pillars for Mercy Secondary Education as the criteria for developing the questions for the survey to be used in this study.

Effective Schools

The review of related literature on effective schools provided (a) the background leading to the development of the effective schools movement, (b) identified the correlates for effective schools, and (c) defined the specific characteristics of the effective school correlates as they operate within the school. The specific documents used in this literature review included 12 case studies that were compiled and edited by Taylor (1990) in conjunction with the National Center for Effective Schools Research and Development. This research was conducted in 11 school districts and one resource center in different geographical areas throughout the United States. In addition, the researcher used materials and documents published by Chrispeels (2002) for the California Center for Effective Schools, Lezotte (2000, 2001a, 2001b) and documents from the Association for Effective Schools. In addition the researcher used articles from Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. In particular, the works of Sheive and Schoenheit (1987) and Sergiovianni (1987) were utilized. The literature review also relied on scholarly opinions and research within the field of education, leadership and management and organizational behavior. These works included: Barth (1990, 2001), Deal (1987), Deal and Kennedy (1982), Deal and Peterson (1990, 1994), Littleford (2002), Schein (1985), Senge (1996), and Sergiovianni (1987, 1991).

Background of the Effective Schools Movement

In a landmark governmental study, *Equality of Educational Opportunity,* Coleman, Campbell, Hobson, McFarland, Mood and Weinfeld (1966) concluded that schools had little to do with bridging the achievement gaps between rich and poor or between more

able and less able students. Coleman et al. theorized that family background, not the school, was the major factor in student learning and achievement. One of the major factors cited by the Coleman report was that the education of the mother was a determining factor for student success. Lezotte (2001a) noted that

> Coleman was foremost among a group of social scientists who, during the 1960's and 70's [sic] believed that family factors such as poverty or a parent's lack of education prevented children from learning regardless of the method of instruction....These programs focused on changing student's behavior in order to compensate for their disadvantage and made no effort to change school behavior. (p.1)

The research of Edmonds (1979a) and Brookover and Lezotte (1979) challenged Coleman's findings. In *Effective Schools for the Urban Poor*, Edmonds (1979a) maintained that the family had some impact on student achievement; however, Edmonds suggested that schools do control the factors necessary to assure student success and that common characteristics of effectiveness exist within these schools. Edmonds did not discount the importance of the family on student learning. He argued that while schools may be primarily responsible for whether students function adequately in school, the family is probably critical in determining whether students flourish in a school.

In similar research, *Fifteen Thousand Hours*, conducted in secondary schools within the United Kingdom, Rutter, Maughan, Mortimore and Ouston (1979) noted that a pattern of correlated characteristics for effectiveness began to emerge. The researchers' conclusions were nearly identical to those studies conducted in the United States by Edmonds (1979b) and Brookover and Lezotte (1979). This research also concluded that there were common characteristics that operated in effective schools. Lezotte (2001a)

described these characteristics as the "philosophies, policies and practices" (p.2) that schools had in common.

Chrispeels (2002) noted that the effective schools movement started with some basic beliefs about the nature of schooling. She reported that early effective school researchers identified elementary schools that were perceived to be effective based on student achievement levels on standardized tests. These schools were located in both large and small urban communities. In studies within these designated schools, Edmonds (1979a) found that high student achievement correlated very strongly with strong leadership, high expectations for achievement, and an orderly school environment. In addition, Edmonds maintained that basic skill acquisition and frequent monitoring of student progress were also important to instructional effectiveness. Edmond's original correlates, now considered first generational, were the initial frameworks that propelled forward the effective schools movement. Bolender (1997) maintained that, over time, the parameters of the correlates have expanded in meaning and application. In *Correlates of Effective Schools: First and Second Generation*, Lezotte (2001b) described the generational differences between the correlates. He wrote:

> There are two underlying assumptions to keep in mind. First, school improvement is an endless journey. Second, the second generation correlates cannot be implemented successfully unless the first generation correlate standards are present in the school. In one sense, the second generation correlates represent a developmental step beyond the first and, when successfully accomplished, will move the school even closer to the mission of Learning for All. (p.1)

In her study of evolving image and perceived effectiveness in a new school context, Bolender (1997) maintained that the second generation of correlates included

considerations for the specific image and culture in the school. Bolender concluded: "A positive school image is influenced by the effectiveness of learning and teaching with the school. Consequently, educators trying to positively influence the school's reputation must focus their attention on factors associated with successful and effective schools" (p. 1).

Lezotte (2001b) asserted that the individual needs of the learner were not paramount in the first generation of indicators. He explained that the second generation of correlates placed emphasis on high expectations for success in terms of teacher behavior and attitudes towards the teaching-learning situation. Lezotte maintained that the operation of a second generation correlate in an effective school assured "learning, not instruction" (p. 2).

Taylor (1990) defined the effective schools model as a school reform framework based on evolving research from empirical and case studies in schools. The primary intent is to teach a curriculum to all students, regardless of the diversity that exists within the organization, and assure that all of these students can succeed. Lezotte (2001a) noted:

> It is expected that all children (whether they be male or female, rich or poor, black or white) will learn at least the essential knowledge, concepts and skills needed so that they can be successful at the next level next year. Further it has been found that when school improvement processes based upon the effective schools research are implemented, the proportions of students that achieve academic excellence either improves or at the very least remains the same. (p.1)

The effective school correlates to be used in this research study were published by the Association for Effective Schools (1996). The second generation of correlates for effective schools includes the following characteristics: (a) instructional leadership, (b) clear and focused mission, (c) safe and orderly environment, (d) climate of high

expectations, (e) frequent monitoring of student progress, (f) positive home-school relations, and (g) opportunity to learn and student time on task.

In a review of the most influential research of the past 50 years, Cawelti (2003) maintained that the original research conducted by Edmonds (1979a, 1979b) on effective schools has influenced thousands of educators. Cawelti noted that the influence was most notable in schools in which "students from low income families tended to achieve less well than others" (p.19).

Noted scholars such as Barth (2001), Chrispeels (2002), Lezotte (2000, 2001a, 2002b) Senge (1996), Sergiovianni (1987, 1991), Taylor (1990), and educational research organizations (California Center for Effective Schools, 2002; The Association for Effective Schools, 1996) provided case studies, quantitative research and qualitative data that described the characteristics of effectiveness as they operated in the school. Based on the research of contemporary studies (Bolender, 1997; Butler & Dickson 1986; Cole 2003; Epps, 2002; Freeman & Sweatt, 2001; Stolp, 1994) the following will describe the characteristics of these correlates and how they manifest themselves within the culture of an educational institution.

Instructional Leadership

In the partnership effort between the California Center for Effective Schools and the Oxnard School District, Chrispeels (2002) reported that leaders in effective schools take on certain characteristics that ensure the success of the school. Chrispeels suggested that leaders were the "key to increased effectiveness" (p. 5). This assertion confirmed Schein's (1985) notion that leadership was vitally linked to effective school culture. He

noted that "they are two sides of the same coin, and neither can really be understood by itself" (p. 2).

In her introduction to 12 case studies conducted by the National Center for Effective Schools, Taylor (1990) maintained that general characteristics displayed by leaders included: playing a vital role in supporting teachers, enabling and not controlling the environment, taking on risks when developing school improvement plans, empowering teachers to share in decision making, and modeling an ethic of caring.

In a study of strategies used to improve scores on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills, Epps (2002) collected data via interviews, surveys, observations of the school improvement plan and test scores. Epps concluded that the qualities of effective leadership included skills in which principals: (a) gradually implemented change, (b) improved the school climate, (c) built trust with the community, (d) allowed teacher's instructional freedom, (e) used up to date materials, and (f) maintained open communication with the stakeholders in the school. Epps argued that the principal is a builder of positive culture within the school and reiterated the ideal characteristics that identified effective leaders.

In his book, *Learning by Heart,* Barth (2001) asserted that schools have greater harmony when the leaders orchestrate change through collaborative efforts with the school community. In a recent study of school principals, Saskatchewan School Trustees for Research and Development (SSTA) (2001) pointed out that effective school principals have a "fierce commitment to teacher empowerment through collaboration" (p. 5).

Sergiovianni (1991) claimed that "one rarely finds a successful school without an effective principal" (p. 16). Bolender's (1997) study of image and school effectiveness suggested that "observed in action, the instructional leader is seen interacting with teachers, making learning and teaching a priority" (p. 5). Murphy and Wayant (1990) reported in a study of the schools in Prince George's County, Maryland, that as part of the implementation and action for planning school improvement, principals assured staff participation in developing and maintaining effective schools programs in their buildings.

The Association for Effective Schools (1996) suggested that instructional leadership by the principal manifested the following specific attributes: (a) the principal acts as the instructional leader, (b) the principal persistently communicates the mission of the school to the community, (c) the principal understands and applies the characteristics of instructional effectiveness, (d) the principal is responsive to faculty and student needs, and (e) teachers receive adequate materials for ensuring student success.

Keller (1998) reviewed the research literature on leadership for the previous 20 years, 1977 to 1997, and noted that principals made a big difference in shaping the education that occurs in a school. Keller maintained that this view emerged largely from studies of successful schools. She claimed that, "as scholars thinking about how school effectiveness evolved, so did their understanding of the principal's role" (p. 1). Keller claimed that the researchers did not look for heroes, but they did observe that successful schools usually have outstanding leaders.

In *Schools that Learn*, Senge (1996) asserted that the one thing that individuals want from their leader is an answer to the question:

> Where are we trying to go and why? In short, what people are looking for is not the leadership of exhortation, it's the leadership of clarification... executive leaders have a new responsibility to contribute to the quality of thinking throughout the organization. (p. 6)

This initial question about leadership, as posed by Senge, provided a path for analysis of the second correlate for effective schools. Barth (2001) theorized:

> The underlying logic appears to be simple and straightforward: a school with a vigorous soaring vision of what it might become is more likely to become that; without a vision, a school is unlikely to improve. Therefore, every school should have one. (p. 195)

Clear and focused mission

In 1989, Glendale Union High School District (GHSUD), Arizona, began their eighth year of school effectiveness planning and assessment. The district consisted of nine four-year high schools with an enrollment of 14,000 students. Taylor (1990) reported that 17% of the students in this district were from minority backgrounds. Taylor wrote that as a starting point to developing its plan the district created its own local mission statement for school effectiveness:

> An effective school in the Glendale Union High School District is one which assures that the following criteria are in place; (1) measurable academic achievement and (2) observable growth in emotional maturity, physical well being, and social responsibility by all students. (p. 81)

In a related study, Murphy and Wayant (1990) reported that Prince George's County, Maryland schools played an important role in the development of the Effective Schools Research. Taylor (1990) noted that this was the first time a very large school district, 710,000 students, embarked on a county wide school improvement plan.

> A clearly defined mission and school system, improvement goals, higher levels of student achievement, positive results from audit advisory team visits, increased accountability, greater levels of teacher involvement in decision making, and

> implementation of an instructional management system with criterion referenced tests are some of the many indicators the Effective Schools Process is well on its way toward full, successful implementation in Prince George's County Public Schools, and most significantly to improve the achievement of minority students. (p. 36)

Sergiovianni (1991) asserted that a school characterized by a clear sense of mission "convincingly communicates its viability and effectiveness to its school community and other important groups, other evidence notwithstanding, if the school does not obtain such legitimacy, it cannot be considered effective" (p. 86). In addition, he suggested that a vision should not be construed as a strategic plan that acts as a road map. He maintained that the vision should be viewed more as a compass that points a direction for the school, or "that inspires enthusiasm" (p.180) for the mission.

In a study of 13 elementary schools, Cole (2003) used the correlates of effective schools as a predictor of magnet school success. She argued that the clear sense of mission was instrumental in creating the perception of the school among students and parents. Cole maintained that magnet schools are often thought of as a place for the "brightest and smartest students" (p. 1) when in fact these schools often perform in the median range on standardized tests. Cole asserted that the presence of the correlate for a clear sense of mission was important to the perceived effectiveness.

Taylor (1990) maintained that empirical evidence from the studies conducted in 11 school districts throughout the United States indicated that there are focal points for school improvement that involve leadership. Support of a central office and the local site for teacher improvement as well as personnel improvement plans mirrored the need for a defined mission.

> Teacher improvement needs a clearly defined mission, time and resources; school improvement is a complex and ongoing process; and the effective schools process works best when schools and districts disaggregate and display their student performance data. The case studies illustrate common practices, describe the more pervasive barriers and opportunities encountered, and show that shared decision-making in a collaborative enterprise leads to improved staff and student morale. (p.1)

In a study conducted in New York of 12 school leaders who were deemed to be exceptional, Sheive and Schoenheit (1987) focused their research on the leader's relationship to the school's mission and vision. The researchers theorized that leaders and schools with a clear mission and purpose displayed an "organizational vision and a universal vision" (p.96). Sheive and Schoenheit described an organizational vision in terms of a school that was striving to be "superb" (p. 96). The institutions guided by the leaders surveyed in this study expressed a clear sense as to where they were going. They reported that these leaders had a clear sense of organizational direction and that this quality permeated the school culture. Sheive and Schoenheit noted that the universal vision was reflected in the principal's ability to have a vision that extended beyond the local school. These leaders had a broader vision for education in general. These same researchers also suggested that there is a second, more universal purpose to a school, and "that purpose is equity" (p. 97). Sheive and Schoenheit theorized that effective organizational leaders embrace the notion that there is a great educational future for everyone, even though the target groups may differ. They maintained that school leaders who have a universal vision do not allow for mediocrity or complacency from those individuals who work within the school.

Lezotte (2001a) maintained that a clear and focused mission would be evident in a school if "you asked each stakeholder: what does this school care about? To the extent that there are many answers to this question, the school would be said to lack a shared sense of mission" (p. 4). In a study related to improving school culture at Centennial High School, Butler and Dickson (1986) maintained that establishing a priority for "people working together for a common goal" (p. 3) is the first step towards establishing this correlate's operation within the school. Butler and Dickson suggested that all school improvements plans were hinged upon the mission and vision of the school.

Lezotte (2001a) theorized that "in the effective school there is a clearly articulated school mission through which the staff shares an understanding of and commitment to the instructional goals, priorities, assessment procedures and accountability" (p. 3). The Association for Effective Schools (1996) suggested four characteristics for identifying this correlate within a school: (a) there is a clearly focused mission through which the community shares a commitment, (b) this mission is directly related to instructional strategies, procedures and accountability, (c) the staff at effective schools accept responsibility for student learning and curricular goals, and (d) the mission of the school is seen as the focal point for decision-making.

Chrispeels (2002) added another dimension to this concept. She insisted that strategic planning that included the local community is a vital part of a school's mission. Serving as a faculty member at the California Center for Effective Schools at the Gervirtz Center School of Education, University of California Santa Barbara, she wrote:

> In this article, I tell the beginning of the story of how Effective Schools Process works using as my example our initiative with the Oxnard, California,

> School District (K-8). In 1999 the District adopted a strategic plan for school improvement, which included reaching out to community resources for assistance such as neighboring community colleges and universities. (p.3)

Safe and orderly environment

A mission statement and strategic plan may be the starting point for effectiveness; however, Butler and Dickson (1984) claimed that in addition to providing a clear and focused mission, effective schools must ensure that the environments within the organizations were places where there were "pleasant conditions for learning" (p. 4).

Lezotte (2001 a) suggested that schools that demonstrated a safe and orderly environment displayed the following characteristics:

> In the effective school we say there is an orderly, purposeful, businesslike atmosphere, which is free from the threat of physical harm. The school climate is not oppressive and is conducive to teaching and learning...The second generation will place increased emphasis on the presence of certain desirable behaviors. The second generation schools will be places where students actually help one another. (p. 1)

Lezotte maintained that there are two conditions that must be accepted by the adults in the school if this correlate is operational within a school. Teachers understand that they are "on duty all the time" (p. 5) and rules in effective schools are enforced with absolute consistency. In *Case Studies in Effective Schools Research,* Taylor (1990) noted that schools that operate with a safe and orderly environment are "neat, clean and physically safe" (p.79). Taylor suggested that in these schools students adhere to rules. She also noted that the school reinforces positive behavior. Lezotte (2001a) clarified how this worked in reality:

> Rules must be enforced with absolute consistency across all teachers and administrators in the school. Inconsistency will quickly undercut and destroy the orderly environment of a school. Students will be quick to pick up on

this and quite frankly, they're right. (p. 5)

The Association for Effective Schools (1996) affirmed this notion when they suggested that a safe and orderly environment is vital to the effectiveness of a school. The Association for Effective Schools divided the qualities of this correlate into five categories: (a) there is an orderly, organized, professional environment and climate in the school; (b) the school climate is conducive to teaching and students experience a sense of community within the school; (c) the school is clean, and radiates a sense of care for the facilities and students respect the surroundings; (d) the school environment reinforces positive behavior; and, (e) as part of the daily routine students, understand, respect and follow the school rules.

Bolender (1997) argued that safe and orderly schools operated with a climate "where anxiety and uncertainty surrounding what to do and what not to do, what is appropriate or what is not, is gone" (p. 6). In research about Ganado Primary School, Arizona, Cromwell (2002) noted that despite being located in one of the poorest counties of the United States, this school boasted a vibrant professional community that valued the professional learning environment.

Within the context of establishing this correlate within the school there is a corresponding correlate that is crucial to ongoing effectiveness. The Association for Effective Schools (1996) noted that effective schools should also display a climate of high expectations if they are to sustain effectiveness.

Climate of high expectations

Taylor (1990) asserted that there are specific criteria for creating a climate of high expectations within the school: (a) the staff believes and demonstrates that all students can learn, (b) student academic progress is monitored on a regular basis and a variety of assessment techniques are used to measure student success, (c) teachers give students appropriate assignments and practice along with prompt feedback for performance, and (d) teachers help students before, during and after school. Taylor also noted that parents of students in effective schools have multiple ways in which to communicate with the staff about student progress.

Sergiovianni (1991) suggested that effective schools make an effort to serve all students and create support networks to assist students with their learning. Lezotte (2000) maintained that there were critical criteria for recognizing the operation of this correlate within the school:

> High expectations for success will be judged, not only by the initial staff beliefs and behaviors, but also by the organization's response when some students do not learn. For example, if the teacher plans a lesson, delivers the lesson, assesses learning and finds that some students did not learn, and still goes on to the next lesson, then that teacher didn't expect the students to learn in the first place. If the school condones through silence that teacher's behavior, it apparently does not expect the student to learn, or the teacher to teach these students. (p.2)

Taylor's (1990) summary of research in twelve schools that implemented an effective schools model noted that schools that display a climate of high expectations will reflect and demonstrate a belief that all students have the capacity to learn and that the staff can be of help to everyone regardless of ability level. Barth (2000) theorized that successful schools have a pervasive and caring atmosphere which leads to an atmosphere

that accepts differences in students' abilities and that these differences are transcended by the adults in the building.

In *A Case Study for Equity and Quality: How One Team Is Making It Happen in Norfolk, Virginia,* Carter, Madison, Hall and Lockamy (1990) made the following comment:

> The major problem in applying the research of the Effective Schools Movement has been the acceptance of the belief that, "All Students Can learn". Great strides are being made to strengthen the belief system of both staff and students through professional growth activities. Instead of giving "lip service" to the notion, staff members are demonstrating behaviors to prove that belief. (p. 49)

This study involved Norfolk, Virginia, public schools, which had initiated the effective schools process in 1982. These researchers reported that, at that time, the school district served 276,000 students from middle to lower middle class families.

In their summary of progress with the effective schools process for the Alma Public School District located in the state of Michigan, McKinstry and Gibbs (1990) noted that the use of data that is disaggregated for local needs is vital to the monitoring and sustainability of a culture of high expectations.

Working through the California Center for Effective Schools to implement the effective schools process in the Oxnard School District, California, Chrispeels (2002) described a new process that is taking place with regard to the role of teachers and school improvement. She pointed out that in contemporary effective school processes leadership teams of teachers were developed to ensure that the school culture reflected a climate of high expectations. Chrispeels wrote:

> Together the principal and the leadership team guide the staff in setting

> improvement targets and developing action plans. These plans are designed to move the school toward the effective schools correlates, especially high expectations for student's success and a safe and orderly environment that promotes student learning. (p. 6)

Chrispeels also maintained that once established, these correlates become the first steps in building positive relationships with the parent community.

Positive Home-School Relations

Lezotte (2001a) noted that:

> In the effective school, parents understand and support the basic mission of the school and are given opportunities to play important roles in helping the school to achieve its mission.... I can also tell you that it is much easier if parents are part of the collaborative team and are seen by the school as partners in the education of their youngsters. (p. 6)

In addition, Taylor (1990) claimed that parents have a role in communicating the mission of the school to the community. Taylor asserted that in effective schools parents regularly attend school events and help the school achieve its mission by participating in the school as equal partners. This quality is important to the school culture and creates positive relationships with all the stakeholders.

In 2002, Godber conducted a study entitled *School Climate: Understanding Parent Perspectives to Strengthen Family School Relationships.* Godber interviewed 27 randomly selected elementary school parents in Minnesota and concluded that parent involvement, if included as a primary component of the school climate, is a vital link to social emotional outcomes for students. Bolender (1997) contended that the image of a school is influenced by the parent teacher relationship. Bolender maintained that "demands are increasing for schools that communicate regularly and effectively with parents and are accountable to the public" (p. 11). Bolender concluded from her research

that complacency has no place in the mindset of today's educators and that parents must act as partners in their children's education.

McKinstry and Gibbs (1990) described the characteristics of this correlate in their report for Alma Public Schools, Michigan. This district serves seven townships within the state. McKinstry and Gibbs reported that 33% of the students were from low income families. The school district proposed the following definition for home school relations: "Parents are given the opportunity to understand and support the basic mission of the school and schools actively encouraging a positive and constructive relation between the school and the community" (p. 53).

The Association for Effective Schools (1996) identified the following as characteristics for this correlate's operation in the school. The research association stated that parents understand and support the school mission, and in addition, parents are given the opportunity to play a role in helping students achieve the school's mission. Reconfirming these ideas, Taylor (1990) maintained that in an effective school: (a) parents attend school events, (b) there is ample communication with the parent community, (c) parents share responsibility for achievement and discipline, (d) teachers encourage and appreciate volunteering in the school, and (e) there is a formal and informal communication network for parents within the school.

Since the 1980s the research involving school districts and the effective school correlates have shed new light on the concepts and how they function in an organization. Deal (1987) asserted that the concept of shared values with all the stakeholders in a school community has an important impact on the culture of the school. However, he

also cautioned that following prescribed practices may not be practical for each unique local situation. He wrote:

> The effective-schools movement and state reform initiatives create external pressures often interpreted as a need to significantly change the culture of public schools. At times such alternatives may be needed but rather than following the prescriptions suggested or imposed by others, schools need to look inside themselves, both historically and contemporarily. (p. 14)

In her article *The Effective Schools Process: Alive and Well,* Taylor (2002) noted that the Effective Schools Process has become the language of school improvement and reform. However, Taylor asserted that in the late 1980s and early 1990s, proponents of the correlates broke off certain elements of the plan and overemphasized them to the detriment of the entire process. In particular, Taylor cited educational movements such as Outcomes Based Education (OBE) and the Accelerated Schools Project as examples of other school improvement plans that were too narrowly focused. In summary, Taylor (2001) wrote:

> Today we really do know how to reform schools, districts and local and state policy for schools, and we know how to help all those interested in producing high-quality education for all our children. Indeed the elements that Edmonds called for in 1982 have been used to create schools that are able to renew themselves and continue to change over time. Schools districts and state departments of education have realized these goals by using the Effective Schools Process. (p. 378)

Freeman and Sweatt (2001) summarized the concerns for many with regard to the application of these correlates as prescriptive solutions for school improvement. "What works in one school may not work in another school and unless school improvement or reform efforts allow for this fact attempts at transplanting standardized school improvement plans have very little chances of success" (p. 7). Against this background

there is a need to describe other research with regard to the overall characteristics of a healthy organizational culture.

Culture and Shared Values

The rationale for this study was selected because it provides the link between the charism of Mercy and its impact on the culture of the school. Deal and Peterson (1990) asserted that the culture of a school is transformed by the shared values within the organization. As the values of the charism operate within the school the characteristics of effectiveness should be evident with the culture of the organization. Understanding how these values manifest themselves, in both healthy and unhealthy ways, is logically linked to the theories and research with regard to organizational culture. In his research on school culture, Sergiovianni (1991) articulated this connection when he wrote:

> Teachers, parents and students need answers to questions such as these: What is this school about? What is important here? What do we believe in? Answering these questions imposes an order on one's school life and is derived from a sense of purpose and enriched meanings. (p. 109)

Characteristics of Healthy Organizational Cultures

The review of the literature identifies the characteristics of healthy school culture as described and suggested by the researchers Deal and Peterson (1990) and Sergiovianni (1987, 1991). This review presents an overview of the researchers' conclusions about healthy school culture. In addition, it describes the aspects of school culture that occur when a school is perceived to have a toxic or unhealthy culture. This review is based on the work of Butler and Dickson (1984), Cromwell (2002), Deal and Peterson (1990, 1994), Detert (2001), Littleford (2002), Senge (1996), Sergiovianni (1991), Shein (1985), Stolp (1994), and Weick (1979).

Healthy School Culture

Schein (1985) and Sergiovianni (1991) asserted that the most observable aspects of school culture were represented by artifacts that make up the components of a culture in any organization. Deal and Peterson (1990) described these artifacts as things people say, how they behave or how things look in a particular organization. Sergiovianni (1991) maintained that these artifacts were the keys to understanding the nature or character of a school and that these indicators were embedded within the culture of the institution and may be difficult to change.

Schein (1985) inferred that beliefs can be best understood from examples of current practices. In addition he pointed out that organizations must solve two basic problems if they are to develop a healthy culture. The first problem, Shein suggested, is one that deals with internal integration, and the second involves external adaptation and survival. Sergiovianni (1991) affirmed this idea:

> As issues of external adaptation and internal integration are solved, schools and other organizations are better able to give full attention to the attainment of their goals and have the means for allowing people to derive sense and meaning from their work lives - to see their work as being significant. (p. 219)

In a study entitled *A Cultural Framework for Education: Defining Quality Values and Their Impact in U. S. High Schools,* Detert (2001) articulated some guidelines that identify quality statements for values that should exist in a healthy school. Schools that are healthy have a long run vision and view of the future and the process for management is as important as the results achieved in the school. In healthy schools a systems approach to thinking is vital to high performance. Detert also noted that schools with positive cultures are also customer driven, meaning that customers, students and parents

are deserving of a timely response to concerns or problems. And finally, schools that exhibit good health are places where innovation and improvement are vital to the pulse of the organization (p.190). In their work, *Improving School Culture: Centennial High School,* Butler and Dickson (1984) commented on the inclusiveness needed for a healthy environment:

> All staff have been informed about the need for improvement, understand that improvement is of high priority and have been introduced to the effective schools research as a resource for improving instruction and student performance, and have in some way been involved in the improvement process. (p. 4)

In schools that displayed a healthy culture, Deal and Kennedy (1982) suggested that students and teachers in these institutions were more connected to the school's values and beliefs than to the management system. Senge (1996) asserted that strong cultures existed in places that were deemed as "learning organizations" (p.1).

Senge wrote:

> Eventually, integrating learning and working means asking tough questions and giving up long-held assumptions. And the more you have to give up, the more your psyche, your attitudes and beliefs are exposed. People tend to internalize an organization's culture, which for senior managers can mean internalizing a hierarchical culture of compliance rather than an inclusive culture of shared learning. (p. 5)

Senge proposed that asking the right questions is the best way to learn. The primary question for understanding culture, Senge argued, was, "What are our unifying values and what have we stood for over time?" (p. 5)

For 15 years, Littleford (2002) interviewed over 20,000 teachers in 1200 international and American independent schools on the subject of teacher compensation, attitudes and school cultures. Littleford concluded that healthy cultures develop in

schools under particular circumstances. Littleford reported that honest dialogue between teachers and administrators is vital to a healthy culture. In addition, teachers in healthy schools felt valued for their work and the primary focus was on what was generally good for children. In these schools principals knew their teachers and supported them professionally and personally. The heads of these schools were strong leaders who took steps to confront those who did not belong, or who undermined and damaged the culture of the school. Littleford maintained that these leaders were not afraid to counsel people out of their positions in the school.

Deal and Peterson (1994) suggested that school culture had significant impact on literacy. In these schools every teacher believed that students were to become readers and they encouraged this activity at school and at home. The researchers asserted that schools with effective cultures reinforced literacy in the informal networks: gossip, spies, storytellers, and historians. In addition, Deal (1985) concluded that these schools celebrated the achievement of student literacy through traditions and ceremonies that highlighted the importance of this skill.

Stolp (1994) indicated that school culture is important because it correlates strongly with increased student achievement and motivation, and with teacher productivity and satisfaction. In his book, *The Principalship, A Reflective Practice and Perspective*, Sergiovianni (1991) concluded:

> All schools have cultures, but successful schools seem to have strong and functional cultures aligned with a vision of quality schooling. Culture serves as a compass setting to steer people in a common direction; it provides a set of norms for what people should accomplish and how, and it is a source of meaning and significance for teachers, students, administrators as they work. (p. 108)

Sergiovianni provided a deeper insight into the concept of culture. He wrote:

> We are now at the very heart of what constitutes symbolic and cultural leadership. School cultures are concerned with the values, beliefs, and expectations that teachers, students and others share. Cultural leaders help to shape this culture work to design ways and means to transmit this culture to others, but more important, they behave as guardians of the values that define the culture. (p. 124)

Unhealthy School Cultures

Littleford (2002) in her work with independent schools concluded that school cultures are mainly determined by teachers and their attitudes. Littleford argued that school cultures that are not healthy have "a pervasive underlying cynicism or criticism in the culture" (p. 2). In these schools, Littleford claimed, the administration is seen as remote and unapproachable by the teachers and staff that work within the school. In a related article, Cromwell (2002) suggested that toxic school cultures have environments in which the staff does not believe in the ability of the students. In these schools, teacher relations are mired in conflict and a general negative attitude permeated the school. In addition, the staff and faculty have little faith that they will ever realize their goals as a school.

Gottfredson and Hollifield (1988) argued in *How to Diagnose School Climate,* that the culture and climate of the school determined whether the school can achieve excellence or will "flounder ineffectively" (p. 63). They developed the Effective School Battery (ESB) to meet objectives for measuring school climate. The 34 specific items of the instrument measured how safe a school is, whether students and teachers find the school a pleasant place to be, and whether there is tension between leaders and teachers.

Results from the use of the ESB in an urban junior high school provided data that identified characteristics for unhealthy environments. An unhealthy school was marked by low daily attendance, pervasive fighting and safety issues, and high turnover in staff. In these schools, inaction rather than conflict exists between faculty and administration and students view this school as an "uncomfortable place to be" (p. 67).

In addition, Sergiovianni (1991) noted:

> School culture represents a double-edged sword for principals. If allowed to emerge and progress informally, principals cannot be sure whether basic assumptions and ensuing practices will be aligned with goals and purposes that support teaching and learning. Sometimes informal or wild cultures actually result in the development of a norm system that forces teachers to work in ways that compromise official goals and purposes. (p. 222)

Schein (1985) suggested that strong institutional cultures that operate in an excessive ways are too committed to one way of doing things and this excessiveness takes away the possibility of rational action in solving the problems of the school. Overly strong cultures, Shein argued, become a constraint to innovation.

In a review of current literature regarding negative cultures, Cromwell (2002) summarized that schools with toxic cultures had the following characteristics: (a) the school lacked a clear sense of purpose, (b) existing norms reinforced inertia, (c) the staff blamed students for lack of progress, (d) collaboration was discouraged, and (e) there were often hostile relationships among the staff. Lambert (1987) added a caveat to this issue of unhealthy cultures when she concluded in *Building School Culture; An Open Letter to Principals:*

> The effective schools research, while interesting and somewhat helpful, concerns me. The outcomes revealed in the observations of such schools give us little notion as to how schools got there. The tip of the iceberg, as

> reported in these findings, may tell us that effective schools have, "strong reading programs", a "safe orderly environment", or even, "effective teaching", but you can bet this isn't what makes a school effective. (p. 54)

Lambert asserted that the way to school effectiveness and administrative sanity is only accomplished by building a healthy school culture. "My point is that a positive culture celebrates itself" (p. 62).

Summary

The review of the literature described the official and scholarly opinions of those who have written about Catherine McAuley and the Effective Schools Movement. The intent of this Chapter was to translate the operational characteristics of the Mercy charism for contemporary Mercy secondary education using the documents of the Mercy Secondary Education Association and the Network for Mercy Education. In addition, this review explored the history of the Effective Schools Movement and defined the operational benchmarks for the second-generation of correlates. The information contained in Chapter II underscored the literature that explained the correlates' operation within the culture of a school and in addition it examined works related to the theoretical rationale used in this study.

Finally, the literature review revealed and highlighted the importance of the initial questions and statements posed in Chapter I. The literature supported the intended statement of the problem and research questions that established the foundation for this study. It has provided evidence for describing the operational values of the Mercy charism and the effective school correlates within a school. In addition this chapter sets

up the criteria for determining if there is a potential connection between these two sets of variables.

The characteristics described in this chapter illustrate that there is a connection between a school's mission and its ability to operate effectively. Therefore, it is important to this study to ascertain if there is a potential connection between the Mercy charism and the correlates for effectiveness. There is limited research in the area and the research questions supported by the literature review will attempt to determine if there is a relationship between the Mercy charism and the qualities of effectiveness. The following chapter will describe the methodology for gathering data for the research questions posed in this study. These questions are specifically aimed at identifying the connection between these two variables.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Restatement of the Purpose

This study investigated the legacy of the Mercy charism for education as it was originally envisaged by the foundress, Catherine McAuley, and its current interpretation in contemporary secondary schools. In addition, this study examined the degree to which the charism and the correlates are present in the schools and it investigated the existence of a relationship between the correlates for effective schools and the Mercy charism.

Research Methodology and Design

The researcher utilized a thematic approach to ascertain the original values of the Mercy charism for education as intended by Catherine McAuley, foundress and first Sister of Mercy. The researcher consulted with the archivist of the Sisters of Mercy, Burlingame, a former president of the Burlingame Regional Community, the former director of Mercy International Center, Dublin, Ireland and the Regional Leadership Team for the Sisters of Mercy, Burlingame (Appendix C).

The following works of literature were recommended as a result of this consultation: *Life of Catherine McAuley,* (Carroll, 1866); *Familiar Instructions of the Reverend Catherine McAuley*, revised edition, (Sisters of Mercy, St. Louis, Missouri, 1888); *Catherine McAuley, The First Sister of Mercy,* (Savage, 1955*)*; *Mercy Unto Thousands, (*Degnan, 1957*)*; *A Woman Sings of Mercy*, (Bourke, 1987); *The Correspondence of Catherine McAuley,* (Bolster, 1989); *Catherine McAuley: Prophet*

of Mercy, (Bolster, 1996) and *With Fidelity, Keynote Addresses Presented to the Mercy Secondary Education Association 1982-2000* (MSEA, 2001).

Themes for the charism for education were identified from these documents. In addition, contemporary documents, suggested as resources, by two former presidents of the Mercy Secondary Education Association and the current Director of the Network for Mercy Education were used to identify the congruency between McAuley's original values and the current values that operate in the secondary school. This study also utilized the second generation of correlates for effective schools as defined by the Association for Effective Schools (1996). Each correlate was identified in terms of how the relevant research describes their operation within the schools. In addition, this study applied research from experts in the field of the effective school movement including researchers that published works for the following organizations: Association for Effective Schools (1996), Lezotte (2000, 2001a, 2001b); California Center for Effective Schools, (Chrispeels 2002) and the National Center for Effective Schools (Taylor 1990).

The six values of the Mercy charism as defined by MSEA in 1990 and the second generation of correlates for effective schools were the basis for forming the 96 question, researcher-designed survey. The survey was used to investigate the relationship between the effective school correlates and the values of the Mercy charism as they existed within the school. The questions used in this survey were formed using the characteristics defined in the literature review for the charism and the effective school correlates.

The researcher-designed survey was entitled, *Mercy Charism and its Relationship to Effective Schooling* (Appendix D). The schools that participated in

this study were: Mercy High School, Omaha, Nebraska; Mount St. Mary Academy, Little Rock, Arkansas; and Mercy High School, Burlingame, California. These three schools were selected because they are members of both the Network for Mercy Education and the Mercy Secondary Education Association. A second reason for their selection is because they were all single-gender institutions and were located in different geographical areas of the country. These criteria provided a benchmark for determining the extent to which the charism operated within the schools and whether the effective school correlates were present in the school culture. In addition, the selected secondary schools had historical diversity. The oldest school is 95 years old and the youngest has existed for 48 years.

The schools in this study are sponsored by three distinct regional communities of Sisters of Mercy: Saint Louis, Burlingame, and Omaha, which provided variety with regard to governance policies and practices. In addition, these three schools had varying numbers of employees and student populations. This survey was conducted with full time faculty, staff and administration at these three selected Mercy secondary schools. The questions on the survey were identical for each participant regardless of their professional role or length of employment in the school.

Table 1 lists the three schools that participated in this study and their geographical location. In addition this table shows the school's founding dates and numbers of full time employees.

Table 1

Mercy Secondary Schools that Participated in this Study

School	Founding Date	Enrollment 2003	Employees
Mercy High School, Burlingame, California	1931	462	61
Mercy High School, Omaha, Nebraska	1955	332	47
Mt. Saint Mary Academy, Little Rock, Arkansas	1908	544	49

Note. Data retrieved from the Network for Mercy Education, (2003) http:// www.networkmercyed.org.

The survey *Mercy Charism and its Relationship to Effective Schooling (*Appendix D) was administered online using Zoomerang survey software. Zoomerang, a division of Market Tools, is a global company for eResearch and eFeedback. Market Tools, the parent company, was founded in 1997 and is a full service marketing research Internet-based company. Zoomerang also provides advanced web-hosted technology and advisory services to help businesses or individuals conduct surveys in a secure environment. This service is offered through the use of professionally-designed templates which are customized for specific topics. The results are captured and presented in graphically intensive formats in real time. Users can measure incoming responses in a timely manner. All data is stored in a password and secure virtual environment which ensures the confidentiality of survey responses.

Population and Sample Size

The universal population for this study consisted of all faculty, staff and administrators at the 42 Mercy high schools throughout the United States sponsored by the Sisters of Mercy. The sample population included full-time faculty, staff and

administration at the three secondary schools selected for this study. The criteria for selection of these schools included population diversity, location and historical diversity and in addition the following other requirements were needed for participation: (a) Participants had to have an active school e-mail address so that the researcher could contact them via the Internet about participation in this research study; and (b) because the survey was administered online, participants had to have access to a computer and possessed competence in working on the internet and using e-mail.

Letters of permission to conduct this study were received from the three schools in August, 2003 (Appendix E). In January, 2004 a general letter of introduction and invitation (Appendix F) were sent to the principal of each school asking for a list of all employee e-mail addresses. Upon contacting each principal, the researcher verified that the e-mail service was active and available for employees. All employees at the three selected Mercy secondary schools who had a school e-mail address and Internet access were surveyed. The maximum sample population size was 157 total employees. Of that population 123 (79%) agreed to participate. The researcher kept a database identifying those who were sent an invitation and those who affirmed their participation.

Instrumentation

The study employed a 96-item questionnaire that contained five additional demographic questions (Appendix D). It was administered to employees at the three designated Mercy high schools. The survey questions were researcher-designed and based on the values for Mercy Secondary Education (MSEA, 1990) and the second generation of correlates for effective schools as identified by the Association for

Effective Schools (1996). No modifications in the questions were made to accommodate individual differences such as the length of service at the school, gender, lay or member of a religious order, or the religious affiliation of the participants.

The questionnaire was divided into two distinct sections. Section I included 48 questions about the Mercy charism and its operation in the school and was used to gather data to report on Research Questions 1 and 3. Section II contained 48 questions regarding the effective school correlates and their operation in the school and was used to gather data to report on Research Questions 2 and 3. In addition, five demographic questions were used for informational purposes only and were included in this survey. These questions pertained to the length of employment at the school, the position held by the employee, membership in a religious order or alumnae affiliation. Included with the survey was a synopsis of the nature and purpose of the research along with a statement regarding the confidentiality of the survey data (Appendix G).

The survey was administered online and took on average about 30 minutes to complete. A Likert scale response format was utilized with five possible answers: (a) *strongly disagree*, (b) *disagree*, (c) *not sure*, (d) *agree*, and (e) *strongly agree*. Participants completed the survey by clicking their preferred response for each survey item. Once the survey was completed, the participants clicked the "submit" button which forwarded the survey results to the secured Zoomerang site. This site was secured by a logon page and a specific password. In order to complete the survey, participants were sent a letter and instructed to log on to the Zoomerang secured URL address. The letter to participants outlined the security policy provided by the

software company and included a participant's Bill of Rights. Responses to the surveys remained confidential, but were identified by e-mail address and school site. Survey results were kept secure on the Zoomerang website and printed copies were kept in a locked cabinet in the researcher's office.

Based on the review of the related literature, specific sets of questions were matched because of similar characteristics they displayed when operating in the school. Table 2 provides the outline for the matching and analysis criteria for the survey questions and the corresponding question numbers.

Table 2

Values for Charism and Effective School Correlates- Matched Questions

Mercy Charism and Effective School Correlates Matched Questions	Survey Question Numbers
Concern for women and women's issues	1-8
Opportunity to learn, time on task	49-56
Educational excellence	9-16
Climate of high expectations, frequent monitoring of student progress	57-64
World vision and responsibility	17-24
Instructional leadership	65-72
Collaboration	25-32
Positive home/school relations	73-80
Spiritual growth and development	33-40
Clear and focused mission	81-88
Compassion and service	40-48
Safe and orderly environment	89-96

Human Subjects Approval

The application for permission to conduct this research involving human subjects was submitted to the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human

Subjects Committee (IRBPHS) at University of San Francisco, on September 4, 2003. IRBPHS recommended some cosmetic changes and asked for further clarification about the security of the survey software platform. This information was provided and final approval was granted on September 30, 2003 (Appendix H).

Validity

A validity panel of nine educational experts experienced in the areas of Mercy education, secondary education, Zoomerang software and effective schools were asked to critique the survey for content validity, construct validity and face validity. The panel was comprised of two Sisters of Mercy who are actively involved in secondary education and two women religious an Ursuline and a Sister of Notre Dame. There were five lay secondary educators on the panel. Five of the panel members held doctoral degrees in education and had demonstrated experience with surveys and validity panels. Six of the validity panel members had administrative and or teaching experience in Mercy secondary schools. Seven of the panel members were female and two of the panel members were male (Appendix I).

Each panel member was sent a cover letter (Appendix J) and a survey questionnaire that included 14 questions regarding validity. In order to experience the same research methodology as participants, panel members were asked to complete the survey and evaluation online using the identical Zoomerang software. None of the panel members was involved in the subsequent study. Eight of the nine panel members commented on the survey. Two of the panel members shared their feedback orally and one member sent a separate note with suggestions. All other validity panel members completed the survey on-line via the Zoomerang software.

Some cosmetic suggestions were made and one suggestion resulted in a question change in the effective school correlate section of the survey. The researcher added a more in depth question regarding the use of technology in the questions concerning educational excellence. One panel member suggested that there were too many questions that focused on the care and concern of students. This was taken into consideration and the researcher decided that these questions were important to the questions on the charism and they remained intact.

Reliability

Subjects for the reliability panel consisted of five faculty members at a Mercy secondary school not included in this study. The researcher solicited five participants with an e-mail request asking for participation on the reliability panel. This e-mail included directions and confidentiality disclosures (Appendix K). The researcher sent the first survey to the five participants and subsequently asked them to complete a second survey ten days later. All five of the panel members agreed to participate and completed both surveys in the prescribed timeframe.

Two types of reliability were calculated: Internal-Consistency Reliability for the individual survey items using RBANOVA and the sum of respondent scores. In addition, to provide further data, overall mean scores for matched sets of questions were calculated. Mean scores for matched set of questions were used to compare the six sets of eight questions each for both Mercy charism and the effective school correlates. The internal-consistency test measured the reliability of the survey as an instrument and also allows the researcher to gauge how reliable the responses of the survey were. The internal reliability results were consistent, indicating that the survey and the responses were reliable.

Table 3 indicates the values of the reliability coefficient which were calculated from the mean squares and resulted from a randomized-blocks analysis of variance. The mean squares were used in the calculation of the internal consistency reliability as well as the test-retest reliability. Overall the reliability was consistent across the entire survey.

Table 3

Test- Retest Reliability (RBANOVA)

Internal Consistency	Reliability
Pre-Test 1	.9916
Post-Test 2	.9956
Tests 1 and 2	.9931

The test-retest reliability for the entire survey had a reliability score of .984. In addition, Table 4 shows the overall means of the survey results for both survey trials.

Table 4. *Overall mean scores for both survey trials for all participants*

Survey Trial Number	Mean Score
Survey Application #1	4.44
Survey Application #2	4.57

Table 5 reports the sums of all the respondent scores on the survey. These scores reflect the summative differences in total scores between the surveys.

Table 5

Sum of all Respondent Scores by Respondent Number

Respondent Number	First Survey	Second Survey
1	441	470
2	467	479
3	472	472
4	366	367
5	389	406

Internal consistency and reliability was also tested on the sets of matched questions about the charism and the effective school correlates. Table 6 illustrates the mean scores for each set of matched questions, charism and effective school correlates, for both surveys.

Table 6

Overall Mean Scores for Matched Questions on Both Surveys

Respondent Number Score	1	2	3	4	5	Mean
Question Numbers						
1-8	4.9	4.9	5.0	4.1	4.4	4.6
49-56	4.4	4.9	4.8	3.8	4.1	4.4
9-16	4.9	5.0	5.0	3.8	4.6	4.7
57-64	4.8	4.8	4.9	3.9	4.2	4.5
17-24	4.9	5.0	5.0	3.9	4.3	4.6
65-72	4.9	5.0	5.0	3.6	4.1	4.5
25-32	4.8	5.0	4.9	3.4	4.1	4.5
73-80	4.6	4.6	4.9	3.8	3.9	4.4
33-40	4.8	5.0	5.0	3.9	4.0	4.5
81-88	4.7	5.0	5.0	4.0	4.0	4.5
41-48	4.8	5.0	4.9	3.8	4.1	4.5
89-96	4.5	5.0	4.5	3.8	3.9	4.4

Mean scores were reported for the six sets of eight questions that pertained to the Mercy charism for the administration of the survey to the reliability panel. The results of the data were illustrated in Table 7. In all cases the survey displayed consistency and reliability as there were not any noticeable outliers or skewed results between the administrations of the two surveys. Table 7 shows the results of the data analysis conducted for the sets of questions on charism.

Table 7

Mean Scores for the Six Sets of Questions on Mercy Charism and Effective School Correlates

Core Value/Correlate Correlation	Question Numbers	N	Mean
Women's Issues	1-8	5	4.7250
Opportunity to Learn	49-56	5	
Educational Excellence	9-16	5	4.2650
High Expectations	57-64	5	
World Vision	17-24	5	4.6500
Instructional Leadership	65-72	5	
Collaboration	25-32	5	4.4250
Positive Home/School Relations	73-80	5	
Spiritual Growth	33-40	5	4.5000
Clear and Focused Mission	81-88	5	
Service & Compassion	40-48	5	4.4750
Safe & Orderly Environment	88-96	5	

The results indicated a high degree of internal consistency for both administrations of the survey responses.

Data Collection

A 96-question researcher-designed survey, including five demographic questions, was used in this study to collect data. The researcher sent e-mail invitations to the identified population of participants (Appendix G). Once permission was received, the link to the survey was sent in a separate e-mail. The survey, entitled *Mercy Charism and its Relationship to Effective Schooling*, (Appendix D) was made available to participants via the Internet. From the demographic section of the survey information was gained regarding the years of employment, alumnae affiliation to a Mercy school, professional the level of the participants, and whether the participants

requested that the results of the data be sent to them. This data was used for informational purposes only. In addition, a pre-survey e-mail was sent to participants three weeks prior to the actual survey availability date. (Appendix L) This served as a reminder to participants of their commitment to complete the survey.

Participants were asked to complete the survey via Zoomerang software and then to submit the completed survey via the software platform. An acknowledgment expressing appreciation to the participant was included at the end of the survey and appeared when the completed questionnaire was submitted. Participants were informed of the confidentiality of the survey when the URL logon address was sent to them (Appendix D). This statement included information that protected the confidential nature of the study and identified the security of the Zoomerang software. It also confirmed that individual names were not used in any public forum, publication or report. Participants were also reminded that participation in this survey was voluntary. Depending on the return rate, an e-mail reminder (Appendix M) was sent two weeks later to those who had not completed the survey. If participants did not respond to the two reminders, an identical reminder was sent the following week.

Data Analysis

The research questions for this study explored to what extent the Mercy charism operated in the three selected Mercy secondary schools and to what degree the correlates for effective schools were also present in the school. In addition, this study identified to what extent a relationship existed between these two sets of values. The following research questions guided this study: Question: 1: "To what extent were the defining values of the Mercy charism, as identified from the original documents of and about Catherine McAuley and the Mercy Secondary Education

Association, present in the culture of the three schools selected for this study?" The following describes the analysis of this research question. This research question was analyzed using descriptive statistics, mean score analysis and Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha. Scores were calculated for each individual school and on the six sets of survey questions about the charism. Table 8 defines these sets of questions by values.

Table 8
Groupings for Charism Questions

Values for Mercy Charism	Survey Item Number
Concern for women's issues	1-8
Educational excellence	9-16
Collaboration	17-24
Spiritual growth and development	25-32
World vision and responsibility	33-40
Compassion and service	41-48

The internal consistency and reliability of the section of questions about the charism was assessed using Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha. In addition, a total mean score was calculated for each school's response to the charism questions. A mean for each set of eight questions about the charism was also provided.

The mean for each particular group of questions allowed the researcher to measure to what extent each particular value of the Charism was present in the schools. This also provided information about each particular school's perception of the charism and gave statistical data regarding specific scores on each single set of charism values.

Question 2: "To what extent were the correlates for effective schools present in the culture of the three Mercy secondary schools participating in this study?" Identical statistical analysis as used in Research Question 1 was utilized on survey items 49-96. The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics, mean score analysis and Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha. Scores were calculated for individual schools and on the six sets of questions about the correlates. Table 9 defines these sets of correlate items.

Table 9
Groupings for Effective School Correlates Questions

Values for Effective School Correlates	Survey Item Number
Opportunity to learn, time on task	48-56
Climate of high expectations Frequent monitoring of student progress	57-64
Positive home/school relations	65-71
Clear and focused mission	72-80
Instructional leadership	81-88
Safe and orderly environment	89-96

The reliability of this section was assessed using Cronbach's coefficient alpha. In addition a total mean score was calculated for each school's response to the correlate questions. Means for each set of eight questions about the correlates was also provided. In addition a mean score for each grouping of effective school correlates was provided in the analysis of the data. This allowed the researcher to measure to what extent each effective school correlate was evident in each of the schools.

Question 3: "To what degree did a relationship exist between the operation of the Mercy charism in the three selected Mercy secondary schools and the effective school correlates?" This question was analyzed in the following manner. At the outset an overall mean score and standard deviation was provided for both sets of questions on the charism and correlates. The next step for analysis involved the calculation of Pearson's Correlation Coefficient for each school and a total correlation for all three schools. Pearson's correlation analysis was also utilized to provide data on each school's response to all 96 questions and each set of matched questions. Overall means were also provided on each set of matched questions about the Mercy charism and the correlates for effective schools. Finally, scatter plots for mean scores on all survey questions were used to graphically illustrate the correlation between the two variables.

Summary

Chapter III described the methodology used in this research study. It identified the target population to be surveyed at the three selected Mercy secondary schools. It also described the prescribed plan for gathering data which was collected through the use of an Internet survey. In addition, this chapter discussed the strategies for analysis of the data. The results of these statistical calculations allowed the researcher to explore the extent to which a relationship existed between the Mercy charism and the effective school correlates. Chapter IV articulates the findings that resulted from the analysis of the survey responses.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Overview

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between the values of the Mercy charism and the effective school correlates as they operate within three Mercy secondary schools. This study examined the degree to which both the charism and the effective school correlates were present in three secondary schools. Finally, this study investigated to what extent a relationship existed between these two sets of operational values.

The analysis of the data answered the three research questions posed in Chapter I. Chapter II reviewed the literature used to conceptualize the research and construct the survey. Chapter III described the specific methodology utilized in this study and Chapter IV reports the findings that resulted from the survey data. This chapter is organized into three sections. First, the researcher provides a narrative and statistical description of the degree to which the values of the Mercy charism are operating within the three Mercy secondary schools that participated in this study. Secondly, this chapter reports the degree to which the effective school correlates operated within these schools. Lastly, the researcher presents an analysis of the data to ascertain whether a relationship exists between the previously identified values for the Mercy charism and the effective school correlates.

Demographics

This survey was conducted online using Zoomerang survey software service in three Mercy secondary schools with a total population of 157. Seventy nine

percent of the 157 personnel surveyed completed the usable survey. School A returned 88% of the surveys, School B had an 87% return rate and School C completed 62% of the questionnaires. The demographics included in this study were provided simply to give an overview of the population that participated in the survey. Demographic information was not used for analysis of the data nor was it incorporated into the findings posed by the research questions. This data outlined general information about the surveyed population. Table 10 describes the employment positions of the population that was surveyed.

Table 10

Breakdown of Demographics from Survey Results, Position Held at the School

School	Faculty	Staff	Administration	Other
School A	68%	16%	18%	5%
School B	78%	15%	7%	0%
School C	68%	16%	16%	0%

Table 11 indicates the length of service at the school and alumnae affiliation of the participants. The data revealed that School C has the largest number of personnel who are alumnae of a Mercy school.

Table 11

Demographic Information; Length of Service and Alumnae Affiliation

School	1-5 yrs	5-10yrs	10-15yrs	15-20yrs	20+yrs	Alumnae of Mercy Schools
School A	52%	9%	16%	16%	7%	7%
School B	51%	12%	15%	12%	10%	10%
School C	37%	24%	16%	3%	21%	21%

Statistical Findings

The research questions sought to answer three questions: The extent to which the Mercy charism was operational in the three schools the participated in this study, the extent to which the effective school correlates were present in these schools; and the degree to which a relationship existed between the charism and the effective school correlates. The statistical results for the three research questions are described in the following data.

Research Question 1

"To what extent is the Mercy charism operational in the culture of the schools?" First, statistical analysis was conducted to ascertain internal consistency of the survey questions as a measurement instrument. Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha was used to calculate the alpha for the charism questions, Items 1-48, for each school. Table 12 reflects the results of this calculation.

Table 12

Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha for all Charism Questions, 1-48, by school.

School	Cronbach's Alpha
School A	0.94
School B	0.95
School C	0.95
Mean for All Three Schools	0.95

The results of the data showed that there was a high degree of internal consistency and reliability for the overall survey responses. In addition to providing Cronbach's Alpha for the charism questions as a whole, the internal consistency was analyzed for each set of questions about the charism values. These scores indicated that the

questions with regard to the particular operational components of the charism were reliable and consistent in the application of the survey. Table 13 represents the scores on the sets of questions which pertained to the specific groups of survey questions about charism values. It is important to note that Table 13 revealed some diversity in specific responses to sets of questions about the charism. Table 13

Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha for each set of eight Charism Questions, by School.

Items	1-8	9-16	17-24	25-32	33-40	41-48
School	Women's Issues	Educational Excellence	World Vision	Collaboration	Spiritual Growth	Service Compassion
School A	0.74	0.81	0.70	0.84	0.76	0.84
School B	0.78	0.81	0.67	0.90	0.76	0.84
School C	0.77	0.66	0.90	0.86	0.74	0.85
Totals	0.76	0.76	0.76	0.87	0.75	0.84

Note. School A, $n = 44$
School B, $n = 41$
School C, $n = 38$

Table 13 indicates that Questions 9-16 sought to identify information about the Mercy charism value for educational excellence. In this particular set of questions, School C had a lower alpha score *($\alpha = .66$)* than the other two schools. The diversity in these scores resulted from several responses from School C *($n = 38$)* indicating *Not Sure* or *Disagree* to three of the items within this set of questions. On survey item number 13, 26% of the respondents from School C responded *Not Sure* and 8% *Disagree* that the school was utilizing a research based instructional program. Survey item number 15 asked about whether there was a variety of assessment strategies used in the school. On this question for School C, 21% responded *Not Sure* and 11% *Disagree* that assessment strategies varied within this school. Question 16 asked whether a variety of instructional techniques were practiced in the curriculum. The

survey revealed that 21% of the respondents were *Not Sure* if this was a reality in the school. On survey items 9-16, the data showed that School C had an overall lower Alpha score. This can be summarized in that these three specific items in this section of questions revealed a high degree of disagreement or uncertainty among School C respondents for this charism value; however, the data showed that, in spite of the discrepancies in some Alpha scores, the charism was operational within all three schools.

The only other low Alpha score (α =.67) on Table 13 came from School B in the survey items that pertained to the charism value of world vision and responsibility. In this particular set of questions there were a small numbers of respondents that indicated *Not Sure* or *Disagree* to particular questions about preserving global resources, recycling and education about other cultures. These small percentages were large enough to lower the Cronbach's Alpha, but the responses were spread throughout the questions so that no specific items stood out as notable for low scores. In summary, there was internal consistency in the survey questions for each of the schools individually and for all of the schools as a whole.

The data analysis also examined mean scores for each of the charism values. The mean scores indicated the degree to which the charism was perceived to exist in a particular school. The low scores for School C from Cronbach's analysis also translated into lower mean scores for some sets of questions on the Mercy charism. Table 14 shows the mean scores for each group of eight survey items by specific sections and by school. This table also indicates the overall mean for all schools.

Table 14

Scores for Sets of Questions on the Charism

School	Items 1-8	Items 9-16	17-24	Items 25-32	33-40	41-48
	Women's Issues	Educational Excellence	World Vision	Collaboration	Spiritual Growth	Service Compassion
	Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean
School A	4.46	4.38	4.43	4.23	4.57	4.49
School B	4.52	4.41	4.40	4.00	4.48	4.59
School C	4.11	4.20	4.11	3.97	4.14	4.21
All Schools	4.30	4.30	4.30	4.02	4.41	4.43

The data revealed that there was a strong presence of the Mercy charism within these three schools. The highest charism value resulted for the values of service and compassion and spiritual growth and development with a mean score M = 4.43 and M = 4.41, respectively. The lowest mean was reflected in the value of collaboration, M = 4.02. The overall mean score for all charism values was M = 4.33 with a standard deviation of 0.38. It is evident from the statistical data that there was a high degree of operation of the charism within these three schools.

Research Question 2

"To what extent were the effective school correlates operational within the three schools participating in this study?" The same statistical measurement as applied to Question 1 was applied to this question. First, statistical analysis was conducted to determine internal consistency and reliability of the survey questions as a measurement instrument. Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha was used to calculate the alpha for the effective school correlate questions, Items 49-96 for each school. Table 15 displays the results of the Alpha score for each school and an average total score.

Table 15

Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha for the Effective School Correlate Questions

School	Cronbach's Alpha
School A	0.96
School B	0.97
School C	0.96
Mean for three schools	0.96

It is evident from these scores that the questions about the effective school correlates displayed reliability and consistency across these sets of questions.

In addition to providing Cronbach's Alpha for the effective school correlates questions as a whole, the internal consistency was analyzed for each set of survey items, which consisted of eight questions, for the correlates. Table 16 represents the scores on these sets of questions. As the data reveals there is internal consistency and reliability within this set of questions about the effective school correlates.

Table 16

Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha for each set of eight Correlate Questions, by School

Items	49-56	57-64	65-72	73-80	81-88	89-96
School	Learning	High Expectations	Leadership	Positive Relationships	Focused Mission	Safe Environment
School A	0.88	0.77	0.91	0.89	0.83	0.82
School B	0.86	0.80	0.92	0.88	0.91	0.84
School C	0.77	0.80	0.90	0.91	0.89	0.86
All Schools	0.84	0.79	0.91	0.89	0.88	0.84

Note. School A, $n = 4$
School B, $n = 41$
School C, $n = 38$

It appears from the data that the values of the effective school correlates were operating within in these three Mercy secondary schools.

Data analysis also was also used to measure the mean scores for each of the effective school correlate values. The mean scores indicate the degree to which the

correlates are perceived to exist in a particular school. Table 16 indicates the mean scores for each set of questions by school and the overall mean for all three schools. The overall mean score for all three schools was $M = 4.23$ with SD= 0.53 based on 123 responses.

Table 17

Mean Scores for Sets of Questions on the Effective School Correlates

Items	49-56	57-64	65-72	73-80	81-88	89-96
School	Learning	High Expectations	Leadership	Relationship	Focused Mission	Safe Environment
	Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean
School A	4.38	4.22	4.33	4.44	4.51	4.19
School B	4.31	4.39	4.04	4.54	4.40	4.30
School C	4.00	4.64	3.89	4.21	4.22	4.07
Mean	4.23	4.24	4.05	4.39	4.37	4.18

The highest correlate value was $M = 4.39$ for positive home and school relationships. The lowest overall means $M = 4.05$ pertained to the questions about instructional leadership, questions 65-72. In this set of questions, School C reflected notable responses of uncertainty or disagreement with regard to several of these questions. This school is consistent in being inconsistent. For School C, the highest degree of overall disagreement or uncertainty resulted on instructional leadership questions 65-72. The lowest mean score occurred on the following questions. First, on an item that asked about the administration's role as the instructional leader of the school, 11% *Disagree* and 32% were *Not Sure.* Secondly, on the item that requested an opinion about the administration's ability to weed out mediocre teaching, 18% *Disagree* and 24% were *Not Sure.* On a third item, 13% *Disagree* and 16% indicated

that they were *Not Sure* that the administration provided a clear sense of direction for the instructional program.

The following statistical evidence describes the data for School C with regard to questions 49-56, which pertained to the correlates opportunity for learning. On a specific item related to the operation of a comprehensive school wide plan for instruction, 26% of the respondents indicated that they were *Not Sure* that this was a reality, and 3% *Disagree* that this was a primary goal for the school. There also was disagreement and uncertainty for School C on item number 52. This item asked if students could achieve in this school regardless of background and ability. Twenty-nine percent answered that they were *Not Sure* if this philosophy was evident in the school, and 24% *Disagree* that this was the reality at the school. On item number 54 which pertained to allocating significant classroom time to a variety of teaching strategies, 32% of the respondents from School C were *Not Sure* if this was happening, and 5% indicated that they *Disagree* that this was an operational value for the school. It is evident from the data that the diversity of responses on these questions resulted in the lower mean $M = 4.0$ for School C on this set of questions.

In summary the empirical data indicated that for the first two research questions there was consistency with regard to the presence of the values of the charism and the effective school correlates within the schools that participated in this study. The only notable areas of discrepancy occurred on the particular sets of questions as described in this section and the overall lower scores for School C than for the other two schools.

Research Question 3

"To what extent does a relationship exist between the Mercy charism and the effective school correlates?" The following procedure for statistical analysis was used to answer this question. This question was analyzed in two parts using descriptive statistics. The data resulting from the statistical calculations indicates the degree and direction of linear correlation between the Mercy charism and the effective school correlates.

First, the mean scores for the scale Charism (Items 1-48) were compared with the mean score for the scale Effective School Correlates. (Items 49-96). Secondly, each set of eight questions about the Charism and Effective School Correlates were correlated using Pearson's Correlation Coefficient.

Table 18 indicates the means for all three schools in a side by side comparison based on the total sets of questions for each operational value. This table shows the extent to which charism and the effective school correlates based on the responses for all of the survey questions are operational in all three schools. The results indicated that the Mercy charism and the effective school correlates were operational to a high degree within all three of these secondary schools.

Table 18

Mean Comparisons of Charism and Effective School Correlates.

	Charism		Effective School Correlates	
	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation
All Three Schools	4.46	0.38	4.23	0.54

Table 19 displays means and standard deviations for paired samples for each set of matched questions and the overall means for all the sets of questions. It is evident from this data that there is a high degree of consistency between the two values.

Table 19

Means for Matched Set of Questions on the Charism and Effective School Correlates.

Paired Number Questions	Mean	Standard Deviation	Overall Mean Score
1 Charism	4.38	.43	
1 Correlates	4.23	.52	4.30
2 Charism	4.34	.44	
2 Correlates	4.25	.50	4.29
3 Charism	4.33	.45	
3 Charism	4.07	.72	4.20
4 Charism	4.08	.59	
4 Correlates	4.36	.49	4.22
5 Charism	4.41	.44	
5 Correlates	4.39	.51	4.40
6 Charism	4.42	.46	
6 Correlates	4.17	.51	4.29
Total Mean Score Charism		.38	4.33
Total Mean Score Correlates		.46	4.24

Pearson's Correlation Coefficient was used to analyze the matched sets of questions for the charism and the effective school correlates. The value of Pearson's Correlation Coefficient measures the degree to which questions relating to the charism correspond to those relating to the effective school correlates.

Table 20 represents Pearson's scores for the matched questions for each school. This table also indicates the overall Pearson Correlation Coefficient score for the three schools combined on the sets of matched questions.

Table 20

Pearson's Correlation for the Charism and Effective School Correlates for sets of Matched Questions.

School	Pearson's Correlation for Charism and Effective School Correlates
School A	0.90*
School B	0.90*
School C	0.70*
All Three Schools	0.85*

Note. *Significant at $p < .01$, two tailed.

Although the Pearson score for School C, $r = .70$ was lower than School A, $r = .90$ and School B, $r = .90$, the results in Table 20 confirm that there is a significant degree of correlation ($p < .05$) between the values of the Mercy charism and the effective school correlates. The overall score, .85 for all three schools reveals a significant relationship ($p < .05$) between the two sets of matched questions on the Mercy charism and the effective school correlates.

The scatter plot and the direction of the sets of lines displayed in Figure 1 confirm that there is a high degree of linear relationship between the Mercy charism and the effective school correlates. The consistent linear directions of where the questions fall on the graph indicate that there is a potential correlation between the two universal sets of survey items, 1 through 48, the values of the Mercy charism and items 49 through 56, the values of the effective school correlates. This figure

graphically represents a plot of lines aligned in conjunction with responses to all of the survey questions and the consistent direction and space between the lines shows a significant degree of relationship between the two variables.

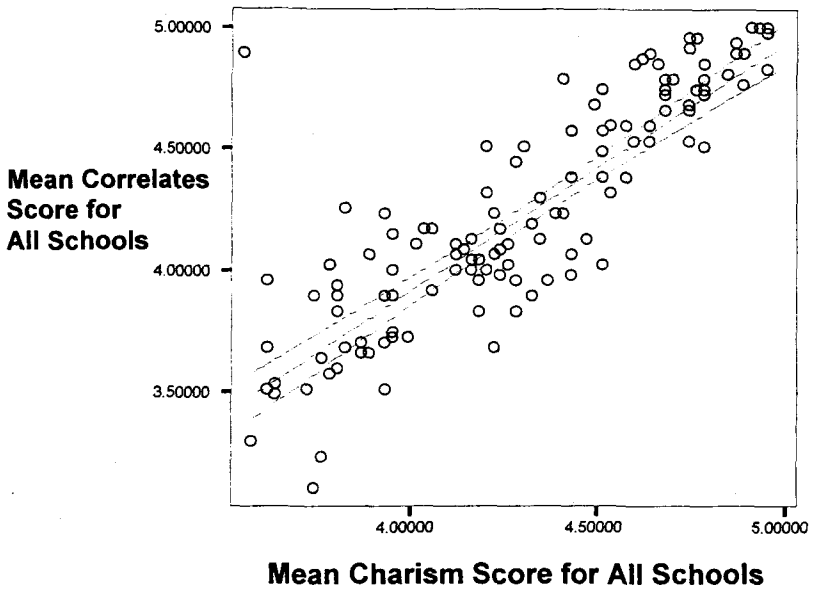

Figure 1. Scatter plot of Charism and Effective School Correlates Responses to Survey Questions.

Table 21 lists, for each individual school and for all three schools, Pearson's Correlation Coefficient scores between the matched sets of questions. Eight questions for the charism and eight questions for correlates were matched with each other for specific correlational analysis. This table also identifys the question numbers and topics for the Mercy charism and effective school correlates for matched questions.

Table 21 also provides the mean correlation for all three Mercy secondary schools as part of the data. This table revealed some interesting statistical data. In particular it is evident from this table that one specific set of matched questions on the

charism and the correlates, 1-8 and 49-56, had a low degree or correlation which is addressed in detail following the table.

Table 21

Pearson's Correlation Coefficient for each School and for all three Schools.

	Question 1-8 with 49-56	Question 9-16 with 57-64	Question 17-24 with 65-72	Question 25-32 with 73-80	Question 33-40 with 81-88	Question 41-48 with 89-96	Mean Correlation
	Women's Issues And Learning	Education Excellence And Climate	World Vision and Instruction Leadership	Collaboration and Positive Relationships	Spiritual Growth and Mission	Compassion and Service and Environment	
School							
School A	0.32**	0.81*	0.60*	0.65*	0.75*	0.69*	0.64*
School B	0.35**	0.61*	0.54*	0.59*	0.83*	0.68*	0.60*
School C	0.25	0.42*	0.27	0.64*	0.72*	0.65*	0.49*
All Schools	0.31	0.61	0.47	0.63	0.77	0.67	0.58

Note. * Significant at $p < .01$, two-tailed.
** Significant at $p < .05$, two tailed.

In Table 21, the sets of items 1-8 pertained to the charism value, concern for women and women's issues, and questions 49-56 were related to the correlate value of opportunity for learning. The scores on the individual sets of these questions were consistent when they were analyzed as a single set of data; however, the matching of these questions was not congruent in terms of how they related to each other for the purposes of this study. Since the charism value, concern for women and women's issues is usually specific to a single gender schools, it is evident that this value posed difficulties for correlation when applied to the effective school correlate. The effective school correlates were originated for co-educational schools and thus the correlation for these sets of questions do not appear to be compatible. The findings of

this study revealed that for the most part the qualities inherent in the values of the charism and the effective school correlates were operational in the schools selected for this study.

Another area of diversity in Table 21 manifested itself in the mean and correlation scores for School C which were slightly lower than the scores from School A and School B. This was especially true for the matched sets of questions 17-24 and 65-72 which had a correlation of r =.27 and negatively impacted the Pearson's correlation for all three schools. Figure 2 graphically represents the responses for all questions from each of the three schools surveyed in the study.

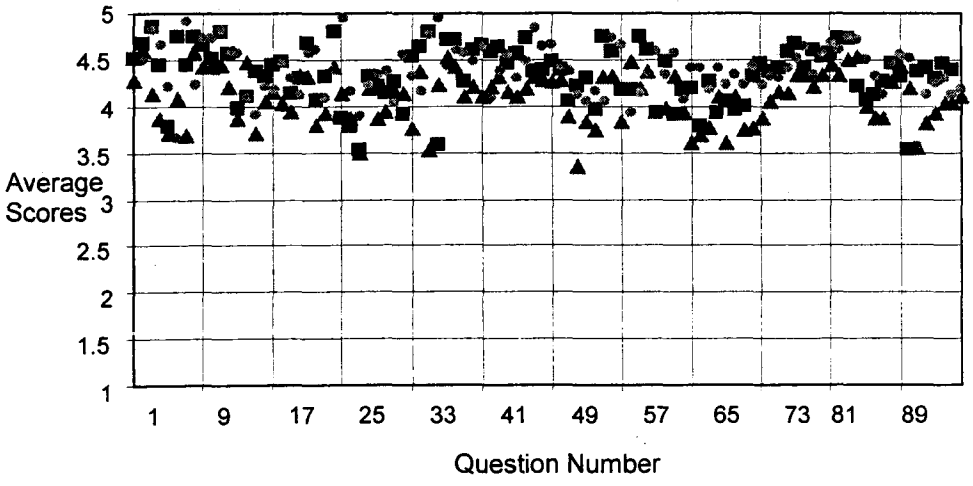

Figure 2. Average Score Plots from each School for all Questions on the Charism and Effective School Correlates.
Note. Green circles represent School A
Blue squares represent School B
Purple triangles represent School C

It is evident from this graph that School C had overall lower scores on each set of questions. However, it is important to note that technical difficulties with the computers at the School C site may have had an effect on the on line responses to the survey. Several participants reported that the URL address would not open and they required assistance to complete the survey. In addition, there was difficulty in e-mail responses due to a virus that hit this school prior to the administration of the survey instrument.

Figure 2 also shows that the average scores for the three schools were consistent except for three particular items which had overall lower scores. Item 5 had a mean score of $M = 3.72$. This charism question asked about the inclusion of women's issues in the course of study throughout the curriculum. Item 27 inquired about collaboration with civic groups and resulted in a mean score of $M = 3.86$. Lastly, question 90 had the lowest mean score of $M = 3.54$. This item asked the respondents if there was a positive approach to discipline in the school. The overall responses to these three questions, although acceptable may have surfaced implications for this study which will be discussed in Chapter V.

Summary

This study investigated the extent to which the values of the Mercy charism and the effective school correlates were operational in three secondary schools. In addition, the research focused on whether a relationship existed between these two variables; Mercy charism and the effective school correlates. For research Questions 1 and 2, the internal consistency of the questions as test instruments was verified as reliable. The empirical evidence presented in this chapter indicated that the values of

the Mercy charism and the effective school correlates were operational within the culture of each of the three schools that participated in this study.

The research results revealed that a significant relationship existed between the operation of the charism core values and the effective school correlates. However, the results also indicated that there were specific qualities of these overall values that were not as operationally evident. In particular, School C had lower overall scores for particular specific questions, sets of questions and correlated questions. Although this school did not have as high a degree of agreement with all the items on the survey instrument as the other two schools, it is evident from the data that the Mercy charism and the effective school correlates did operate within School C.

The following chapter of this dissertation, Chapter V, will describe the conclusions and implications from the research data. In addition, the researcher will make specific recommendations for future research that could be conducted for Mercy education and for Catholic education in general.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The purpose of this research was to investigate to what extent the Mercy charism and the effective school correlates operated in three Mercy secondary schools. In addition, this study sought to identify whether a relationship existed between these two variables. Chapter I of this dissertation identified the problem which laid the foundation for this research and also provided the background and need for the study. This chapter also provided a theoretical rationale for this work and three relevant research questions. In this study Chapter II reviewed the related literature regarding the Mercy charism, effective school correlates and the theoretical rationale. The methodology used for collecting this data was outlined in Chapter III. Chapter IV reported the statistical findings for the three research questions and provided data from the 96 question survey which included four demographic questions. In this chapter the researcher will draw conclusions from the research study, present relevant implications and subsequently suggest general recommendations for future research as well as recommendations targeted for Mercy secondary education and Catholic school educators.

Conclusions

This quantitative study involved the distribution of an on-line questionnaire to three Mercy secondary schools. The survey consisted of 96 questions. Questions 1-48 pertained to the Mercy charism and questions 49-96 inquired about the effective school correlates. The schools that participated in this research study were located in

Burlingame, California, Little Rock, Arkansas, and Omaha, Nebraska. One hundred twenty three respondents completed surveys resulting in an acceptable return rate of 79%. All of the surveys were sent online utilizing Zoomerang, a survey software platform. Completed participant surveys were returned via the Internet to the Zoomerang site where initial results were calculated by percentages. These results were subsequently analyzed using Microsoft Excel and SPSS statistical programs. The statistical analysis included the calculation of an Alpha score for each school with regard to the presence of the Mercy charism and the effective school correlates. In addition, Pearson's Correlation Coefficient was computed for each set of eight questions by school and an overall correlation score was calculated for the two variables.

One major conclusion that emerged from this study was that there was a significant degree ($p < .05$) of operation of the Mercy charism and the effective school correlates within these three schools. This was evident in the resulting mean scores for all three of the schools for both sets of questions on the charism and the correlates for effective schools. The average overall mean score was $M = 4.55$. In addition, there was a high degree of correlation between the two sets of values. Pearson's Correlation Coefficient score for all three schools for all sets of questions was $r = 0.85$. This indicated that a relationship exists between the operation of the values of the Mercy charism and the effective school correlates.

The data revealed that the mean scores for School C were lower than School A and School B for the two sets of questions. The mean score for this school on the set of questions relating to the correlates was $M = 4.19$ and the mean score for the charism

questions was M=4.12. However, it can be surmised that this School C did have an understanding of the two sets of values, and that these characteristics operated to a relatively high degree in this school. This conclusion can be supported in the fact that the difference between the mean scores on both sets of questions was .09. This indicated that both criteria were operational within the schools, including School C, and that a relationship existed between the two variables.

The theoretical rationale for this study was based on the inherent characteristics that operate in a positive school culture. In effective schools, specific qualities exist and permeate the culture of the organization. Sergiovianni (1991) concluded that, "All schools have cultures, but successful schools seem to have a functional culture aligned with a vision of quality schooling" (p. 108). Since the qualities for a healthy organizational culture were embedded in the survey questions for the charism and the correlates, the researcher can conclude that these three schools have functional cultures which are guided by the values of the charism. In addition, this study revealed that the correlates for effectiveness are also functioning within the culture of these three secondary schools.

An additional major conclusion lies in the relationship between the charism and the correlates. It is evident from the overall results of this study that the Mercy charism and the effective school correlates are operational within the culture of School A, School B and School C. The findings from the empirical data also showed that there is a strong relationship between the two. This was evidenced by the high degree of correlation between these values for all three schools, r = 0.85. However, it

remains to be determined if these schools would be effective regardless of the presence of the Mercy charism, which presents a viable question for future research.

Implications

Several implications can be drawn from the results of this study. The following section of the dissertation describes the implications that are suggested by the data. First, as Catholic and Mercy secondary schools move into the future, the leadership of the laity within these schools will be critical for maintaining and preserving the traditions established by religious orders for a particular charism. Mercy secondary schools, as well as other Catholic schools, must find a way to communicate this heritage to future generations of educators. The values for the charism were usually handed down through the formation programs of the religious who operated the school. It will be vital for the future of these schools to find ways to pass along these values in a systematic and organized fashion. This implies that the professional development efforts of the two Mercy educational organizations, Mercy Secondary Education Association and the Network for Mercy Education, are essential to the future of Mercy secondary schools if they are to remain viable and effective educational institutions.

Another implication that surfaced as a result of this study is that the results of this research validated the recent work of the Network for Mercy Education and the Mercy Secondary Education Association. These organizations have captured and preserved in their documents the meaning for the operation of these values for secondary schools. This type of nationally organized effort may need to be duplicated and established by other religious orders so that the identities of all

Catholic secondary schools run by religious orders remain consistent. However, there needs to be direction and support for lay interpretations of a charism in order that the values and mission be practiced in a manner that truly reflects the reality of those ministering in these institutions.

One specific implication was evident on a particular survey item. Question 90 asked if the schools had a "positive approach to discipline". This question resulted in lower scores for all three schools with an overall mean score of $M = 3.54$. This may be an indication of an operational value that was not practiced or understood within these schools or it may have surfaced a personnel issue. On the other hand, this may imply that within these schools the faculty may not agree on the disciplinary methods used throughout the school. It also may be possible that a cohesive philosophy is not evident with regard to discipline policies.

In this study the highest mean scores for all three schools for the charism values occurred within the sets of questions that pertained to service and compassion, $M = 4.43$ and spiritual growth and development, $M = 4.41$. This indicated a strong presence of the core values of the charism within these three schools. This implication can be directly related to Chapter II, the review of the related literature. The primary original intention of Catherine McAuley for her schools was the development of spiritual change orientated women who provided service to those in need. Bolster (1996) clearly outlined this primary mission of Mother McAuley, "Catherine's educational ideal was seminal to her concept of Mercy as a reaching out in love to those in need" (p.26). The extent to which these particular values appeared

to operate within these schools indicates that the traditional heritage of the charism handed down by Catherine is still a part of the Mercy educational experience.

In this study, the data for School C indicated that they do not have the same degree of understanding of how the values of the charism and the effective school correlates operate within the school. The lower scores for School C across all sets of questions may have implications for how the charism and instructional programs are comprehensively communicated throughout this school. Ironically, School C is one of the schools located on the motherhouse grounds. This leads the researcher to ponder the relationship between the Sisters of Mercy and the school as they co-exist on the same campus. Assumptions cannot be made about the visible presence of Sisters of Mercy and the passing on of the values of the charism. Systematic methods and standardized professional development may be needed for this to occur.

The results of this study also revealed a broader implication with regard to the Catholicity of secondary schools. Charism as described by McBrien (1994) is a special gift to the church. Therefore, embedded within the values of a charism is the Catholic identity of the school. As Catholic schools move into the future, more concerted efforts for professional development will needed to be designed at national organizational levels with regard to how the Catholic identity of a school impacts its educational effectiveness.

One implication that emerged from this study was that the use of the online survey software platform afforded the researcher relative ease in communicating with the participants in this study. It was extremely easy to send reminders to those who had not responded to the survey and to download the survey results. There were some

minor technical difficulties; for the most part, however respondents were extremely successful in completing the online survey and responding to the requests for participation. It is evident to the researcher that another implication from this study is that use of technology for survey research will be a viable platform for future dissertations. In conclusion, the data resulting from this study led the researcher to outline several implications. The following section of Chapter V will describe specific recommendations and ideas for future research for Mercy and Catholic secondary educators.

Recommendations

Recommendations for Mercy Educators and Future Research

1. The statistical data resulting from this study showed that the Mercy charism is operational within these three selected schools. However the degree to which the charism is operational differed from school to school. As a result of this study the researcher recommends that a replication study be conducted involving all 42 Mercy secondary schools. This will provide Mercy educators with specific information about the degree to which the charism is present in each individual school. This information will enable the individual schools, the Network for Mercy Education, and the Mercy Secondary Education Association, to ultimately design standards for professional development about Mercy charism.
2. The results of this research indicated that there was a significant relationship between the values of the Mercy charism and the effective school correlates. The researcher suggests that all new lay leaders, administrators, board

members and parent groups of Mercy schools be provided with extensive in-service training about the values of the charism either through the regional communities, local school sites or Mercy educational organizations. This on-going formation will ensure that the charism is lived out in the schools and may further ensure that Mercy secondary schools will continue to provide effective educational experiences for their students.

3. The researcher recommends that the Mercy Secondary Education Association dedicate time at one of their annual conferences to an extensive in-service that focuses on the relationship between the Mercy charism and the effective school correlates.

4. The evidence provided in this study indicates that the Mercy charism is understood and practiced in these three selected secondary schools. The researcher recommends that the Network for Mercy Education share the results of this study with the governing boards of member schools.

5. From the results of this study, the data suggests that further study be conducted within Mercy secondary schools with regard to the use of positive approaches to discipline.

6. The researcher recommends that further in-depth study be conducted in Mercy schools for each specific value of the charism and its impact on the curriculum.

7. The researcher suggests that a general correlational study be conducted for all six Mercy values to determine which characteristics of the charism have the highest degree of relationship to each other. (Factor Analysis)

8. It would be beneficial to conduct research with students of Mercy secondary schools to determine if the values of the charism are understood and practiced.
9. Research should also be conducted with alumnae of Mercy secondary schools to see if the values of the charism are being lived out in the reality of the lives of Mercy graduates.

Recommendations for Catholic Educators and Future Research

1. The researcher recommends that an additional study be conducted to assess the degree to which a relationship exists between the religious charism of other sponsored schools and the effective school correlates.
2. Although religiously sponsored schools have a particular charism, the researcher believes it would be beneficial for diocesan secondary schools to also understand how their particular mission impacts the qualities of effectiveness within the secondary school.
3. The results of this study indicate that a relationship between effectiveness and charism exists within these three Mercy secondary schools. The researcher suggests that Catholic schools design ways to connect their particular charism/mission to educational effectiveness in marketing and public relations strategies so that the overall educational experience of a Catholic school is made known to those who are interested in Catholic education.
4. The impact of understanding the relationship between educational effectiveness and a school's particular mission is an important concept for Catholic educators to consider. Within that context, the researcher

recommends that similar research be considered for Catholic schools in general using the values of Catholic identity as the variable.

Final Summary

Contemporary Mercy secondary schools are for the most part staffed by the laity. It remains to be seen if the values of the Mercy charism as originally intended can remain viable as these schools move into the future. This study has helped in understanding how the values of the charism operate within three secondary schools. This research has also provided a glimpse into the relationship between the Mercy charism and school effectiveness and the results indicate that there is a potential for correlation between the two. It is important research in that this was a preliminary attempt at exploring two educational variables that have never been studied before. This study presents further implications for future research in this area.

The information contained within this dissertation will be a valuable tool for Mercy secondary education and educators. In addition, this study may lead to additional research with regard to Catholic schools and the qualities of effectiveness. This dissertation provided only a brief glimpse into the relationship between charism and effectiveness, however in the future it will be important for lay educators to understand the impact of a charism on the quality of education in Catholic schools. To this end, this research has provided a foundation for further study an in unexplored area and will help others to further investigate the relationship between charism and effectiveness.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

LIST OF MERCY SECONDARY SCHOOLS

MERCY SECONDARY SCHOOLS

INSTITUTE OF THE SISTERS OF MERCY OF THE AMERICAS

Academy of Our Lady of Guam	Hagatna, GU
Academy of Our Lady of Mercy	Millford, CT
Alpha Academy	Kingston, Jamaica
Assumption High School	Louisville, KY
Catherine McAuley High School	Brooklyn, NY
Catherine McAuley High School	Portland, ME
Colegio Santa Ethnea	Belle Vista, Argentina
Gwynedd Mercy Academy High School	Gwynedd, PA
Holy Cross High School	Lanao de Notre, Philippines
Instituto Maria Regina	La Ceiba, Honduras
McAuley High School	Cincinnati, OH
Mercy Academy	Louisville, KY
Mercy High School	Baltimore, MD
Mercy High School	Burlingame, CA
Mercy High School	Farmington Hills, MI
Mercy High School	Middletown, CT
Mercy High School	Omaha, NE
Mercy High School	Riverhead, NY
Mercy High School	San Francisco, CA
Mercyhurst Preparatory School	Erie, PA
Mercy Junior College	Manila, Philippines
Mercy Vocational High School	Philadelphia, PA
Merion Mercy Academy	Merion Station, PA
Mother McAuley Liberal Arts High School	Chicago, IL
Mother of Mercy High School	Cincinnati, OH
Mount de Sales Academy	Macon, GA
Mount Mercy Academy	Buffalo, NY
Mount St. Mary Academy	Little Rock, AK
Mount St. Mary Academy	Watchung, NJ
Mount St. Mary High School	Oklahoma City, OK
Muffles College	Belize City, Belize
Notre Dame High School	Elmira, NY
Our Lady Academy	Bay St. Louis, MS
Our Lady of Mercy High School	Rochester, NY
Our Lady of Mercy Academy	Syosset, NY
Our Lady of Victory Academy	Dobbs Ferry, NY
Saint Catherine Academy	Bronx, NY
Saint Catherine Academy	Belize City, Belize
Saint Mary Academy	Bay View, RI
Saint Vincent's Academy	Savannah, GA
Waldron Mercy Academy	Merion Station, PA
Walsingham Academy	Williamsburg, VA

APPENDIX B

MERCY INTEGRATION INSTRUMENT, MERCY CHARISM

THE CORE VALUES OF MERCY

SECONDARY EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

COLLABORATION

COMPASSION AND SERVICE

EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE

MISSION EDUCATION

CONCERN FOR WOMEN AND WOMEN'S ISSUES

WORLD VISION AND RESPONSIBILITY

SPIRITUAL GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

Used with permission, MSEA, December 2003

Core Value: Educational Excellence

1. Your school holds accreditation from a nationally recognized agency____
   _____Last year of accreditation_____

2. Students perform with excellence appropriate to ability according to standardized measurement systems.
   *Current Indicators in your school*_____
   *Future Indicators needed*_____

3. The library/resource center provides appropriate support for the learning program.
   *Current Indicators in your school*_____
   *Future Indicators needed*_____

4. Faculty and students are adept at appropriate applications of technology.
   *Current Indicators in your school*_____
   *Future Indicators needed*_____

5. The professional development program for your faculty and staff stresses Continuous learning and is adequately funded.
   *Current Indicators in your school*_____
   *Future Indicators needed*_____

6. Students provide feedback regarding their needs and experiences at the school
   *Current Indicators in your school*_____
   *Future Indicators needed*_____

7. The educational program stresses critical thinking.
   *Current Indicators in your school*_____
   *Future Indicators needed*_____

What does our Charism of Mercy call for in the area of Educational Excellence?

Core Value Mission Education

1. A program exists to educate various levels of the school community to the Mercy Charism. (Sample Indicators: significant Mercy events are celebrated, persons at various levels are invited to plan an active role in events and programs, Mercy Day, food baskets, service projects, etc.)
   *Current Indicators in your school*_____
   *Future Indicators needed*_____

2. All literature for marketing, education and other special or promotional activities speaks to the mission, identity and values of Mercy secondary education.
   *Current Indicators in your school*_____
   *Future Indicators needed*_____

3. Evidence exists that the curriculum and other school activities reflect the essential religious mission of the school.
   *Current Indicators in your school*_____
   *Future Indicators needed*_____

4. The policies and practices of the school are marked by ethical principles and evidence respect and dignity for all.
   *Current Indicators in your school*_____
   *Future Indicators needed*_____

5. Clear lines of decision making are in place and understood.
   *Current Indicators in your school*_____
   *Future Indicators needed*_____

6. Personnel practices are marked by justice in such areas as hiring, benefits, professional growth and development.
   *Current Indicators in your school*_____
   *Future Indicators needed*_____

7. Clear policies for resolution of differences are developed.
   *Current Indicators in your school*_____
   *Future Indicators needed*_____

What does our Charism of Mercy call for in the area of Mission Education?

Core Value: Compassion and Service

1. There are mechanisms in place to respond to the needs of the faculty and staff who may be in an emergency situation. (Sample indicators: emergency fund, food party.)
   *Current Indicators in your school*_____
   *Future Indicators needed*_____

2. New programs/events are considered with their impact on those who are poor. (Sample indicators: class trips, social events.)
   *Current Indicators in your school*_____
   *Future Indicators needed*_____

3. Adequate planning and research are involved in setting tuition and fees.
   *Current Indicators in your school*_____
   *Future Indicators needed*_____

4. A tuition assistance program exists for those students who require it.
   *Current Indicators in your school*_____
   *Future Indicators needed*_____

5. The concept of Christian service is integral throughout the school community.
   *Current Indicators in your school*_____
   *Future Indicators needed*_____

6. Service programs are available and the programs are adequately staffed.
   *Current Indicators in your school*_____
   *Future Indicators needed*_____

7. Service programs include a component of reflection.
   *Current Indicators in your school*_____
   *Future Indicators needed*_____

8. Service programs raise awareness of the need for systematic change.
   *Current Indicators in your school*_____
   *Future Indicators needed*_____

9. Faculty and staff participate in service projects.
   *Current Indicators in your school*_____
   *Future Indicators needed*_____

10. Faculty are available to assist students outside of regular assigned class.
    *Current Indicators in your school*_____
    *Future Indicators needed*_____

What does the Charism of Mercy call for in the area of Compassion and Service?

Core Value: World Vision and Responsibility

1. The curriculum reflects an awareness of and respect for the multicultural pluralistic nature of our world.
   *Current Indicators in your school*_____
   *Future Indicators needed*_____

2. Cultural, racial and gender differences are presented within the curriculum in ways that build mutual respect and understanding.
   *Current Indicators in your school*_____
   *Future Indicators needed*_____

3. Opportunities are present within the educational program that provide students With experiences that give them cultural identity and pride.
   *Current Indicators in your school*_____
   *Future Indicators needed*_____

4. Students are able to identify the unique contribution each gender makes to life and relationships.
   *Current Indicators in your school*_____
   *Future Indicators needed*_____

5. The curriculum addresses the study of ecology and its universal implications.
   *Current Indicators in your school*_____
   *Future Indicators needed*_____

6. Students identify and won their responsibility for stewardship for the earth.
   *Current Indicators in your school*_____
   *Future Indicators needed*_____

7. The environment and care of the school reflect care for the earth.
   *Current Indicators in your school*_____
   *Future Indicators needed*_____

What does the Charism of Mercy call for in the area of World Vision and Responsibility?

Core Value: Spiritual Growth and Development

1. The school provides opportunities for the spiritual growth and development of its faculty and staff. (Sample indicators: retreat days, retreat celebrations, of liturgical feasts, holidays, special events)
   *Current Indicators in your school*_____
   *Future Indicators needed*_____

2. Opportunities for spiritual growth and development are integrated into the curriculum.
   *Current Indicators in your school*_____
   *Future Indicators needed*_____

3. Opportunities for spiritual growth and development are offered to other Constituencies-Board of Directors, parents, clubs, alumnae, etc.
   *Current Indicators in your school*_____
   *Future Indicators needed*_____

4. Religious symbols are evident throughout the school.
   *Current Indicators in your school*_____
   *Future Indicators needed*_____

What does our Mercy Charism call for in the area of Spiritual Growth and Development?

Core Value: Concern for Women and Women's Issues

1. Opportunities for the development of young women are leadership are available.
   *Current Indicators in your school*_____
   *Future Indicators needed*_____

2. Academic programs that explore the components of women's development Identified in recent research and as they relate to areas such as: emotional, academic, physiological, social, spiritual, psychological and aesthetic are operative.
   *Current Indicators in your school*_____
   *Future Indicators needed*_____

3. Issues of gender bias are addressed in curricular and extra-curricular areas.
   *Current Indicators in your school*_____
   *Future Indicators needed*_____

4. Students are made aware of resources available that assist women in abusive/ oppressive situations.
   *Current Indicators in your school*_____
   *Future Indicators needed*_____

5. Students are able to identify and celebrate women's contributions to Church, society, family and intellectual life.
   *Current Indicators in your school*_____
   *Future Indicators needed*_____

   What does our Mercy Charism call for in the area of concern for Women and Women's issues?

Core Value: Collaboration

1. The leadership of the school natures a positive relationship with the Regional Community leadership and community members. (Sample indicators: regular program of communication is maintained with leadership, Sisters of Mercy are recruited for faculty and staff programs, Sisters of Mercy are welcomed to campus.)
   *Current Indicators in your school*_____
   *Future Indicators needed*_____

2. The school community sees itself as a member of the local community.
   *Current Indicators in your school*_____
   *Future Indicators needed*_____

3. The school participates in collaborative planning with other institutions in the community. (Sample indicators: provides events that neighbors may participate in, provides use of the facilities for local and civic events, beautifies property and provides for continual upkeep)
   *Current Indicators in your school*_____
   *Future Indicators needed*_____

4. The school participates in collaborative planning with other institutions in the community. (Sample indicators: local high schools, colleges and universities, civic groups, diocesan/archdiocesan offices)
   *Current Indicators in your school*_____
   *Future Indicators needed*_____

5. The school community collaborates in planning for the future of the school.
   (Sample indicators: long-range planning, financial planning, academic program planning)
   *Current Indicators in your school*_____
   *Future Indicators needed*_____

6. In academic program, students learn the skill of collaboration. (Sample indicators: cooperative learning)
   *Current Indicators in your school*_____
   *Future Indicators needed*_____

7. In extracurricular program, students develop the skill of collaboration.
   (Sample indicators: leadership training)
   *Current Indicators in your school*_____
   *Future Indicators needed*_____

What does our Mercy Charism call for in the area of Collaboration?

APPENDIX C

PANEL OF EXPERTS, MERCY CHARISM

PANEL OF EXPERTS

MERCY CHARISM

POSITON	SISTER OF MERCY, RSM
1. Archivist, Sisters of Mercy, Burlingame	X
2. Former Regional Community President	X
3. President, Regional Community, Burlingame	X
4. Former Director, Mercy International Center	X
5. President, Mercy Secondary Education Association	X
6. Regional Leadership Team Member, Burlingame	X
7. Member, Board of Directors, Mercy High School	X
8. Principal, Mercy High School	X
9. Regional Leadership Team Member, Burlingame	X

APPENDIX D

SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Mercy Charism and its Relationship to Effective Schooling.

Questions marked with an asterisk (*) are mandatory.

Introduction: This survey is being conducted in three Mercy secondary schools. There are 96 questions and 5 demographic questions. Your responses, based on your current experience of Mercy education is important to this study. This survey should take no more than 30 minutes to complete. Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Please answer all questions, including the demographic ones at the end of the survey.
This survey is divided into three components.

1. Mercy Charism and its operation in the school.
2. Effective School Correlates and their operation in the school.
3. Demographic information.

DIRECTIONS FOR COMPLETING THIS SURVEY.

Please respond to the following questions by highlighting the appropriate response. Be sure to check that all of the questions have been answered. Once you have completed the survey click the "submit" button on at the bottom of the last page of the survey.
Thank you for completing this survey.

Section 1 Mercy Charism and its operation in the school.

1 *Section I: Mercy Charism: Concern for Women and Women's Issues.

1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Not Sure	4 Agree	5 Strongly Agree

1. The school provides education exclusively for women because of a concern about the needs of women in our global society.

2. The mission of the school is to form strong independent women who will make a difference in the global society.

3. The school's admissions policies demonstrates a concern for providing educational opportunities to women from all socio-economic areas of society.

4. The school provides education about women's issues and society for example: (women and poverty, abuse against women, health issues, political struggles).

5. The school integrates the study of women's issues in academic disciplines across the curriculum.

6. The school provides students with service opportunities that reach

out to poor women and children in the community.

7. The school expects their graduates to be informed women who will play a vital role in the Church.

8. The school expects their graduates to be informed women who will play a vital role role in society.

2 *Mercy Charism: Educational Excellence.

1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Not Sure	4 Agree	5 Strongly Agree

9. The school provides a disciplined academic environment that prepares women for leadership roles in society.

10. The school is committed to a mission that sustains a culture of high academic expectations.

11. The school provides an educational culture in which there is a strong belief that all students can learn.

12. The school curriculum provides for frequent monitoring of student progress.

13. The school is committed to the ongoing development of current research based instructional practices.

14. The school prepares students to meet the challenges of technology.

15. The curriculum is infused with a variety of assessment techniques to improve student performance.

16. The faculty uses a variety of instructional strategies which engages students in their own learning.

3 *Mercy Charism: World Vision and Responsibilty.

1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Not Sure	4 Agree	5 Strongly Agree

17. The school provides education that communicates to students a sense of global responsibility.

18. The school provides an environment that develops students into

peacemaking adults.

19. The school educates students to have respect for the environment.

20. The school provides education about other cultures and our global community.

21. The school provides an environment that educates students to have respect for all human life.

22. The school is committed to a program that educates students about perserving our global resources. (recycling etc.)

23. The school has a systematic program for outreach to the those in crisis situations. (food drives, famine, earthquake etc.)

24. The school provides students with opportunities for engagement in community service activities.

4 *Mercy Charism: Collaboration.

1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Not Sure	4 Agree	5 Strongly Agree

25. The school displays an organizational culture that is committed to collaboration among the faculty.

26. The school culture promotes collaborative decision making with the student body.

27. The school collaborates with local civic organizations.

28. The school creates a culture of collaboration with the parent community.

29. The school collaborates with other Mercy educational organizations and associations.

30. In this school collaboration is part of the strategic planning process.

31. The school collaborates with the corporate members of the school. (Sisters of Mercy, Board Members)

32. The school administration is committed to a culture within the school that fosters collaboration.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Strongly Agree

33. The spiritual development of the students is seen as the responsibility of all those who work within the school.

1 2 3 4 5

34. The religious studies curriculum provides education about Catherine McAuley and the Mercy charism.

1 2 3 4 5

35. The school provides daily prayer rooted in the charism.

1 2 3 4 5

36. The school provides faculty/staff retreats that provide further education about the charism.

1 2 3 4 5

37. This school has a hospitable climate that displays a reverence and dignity for each individual.

1 2 3 4 5

38. The school staff provides a compassionate presence for students.

1 2 3 4 5

39. The school culture models fairness and justice with regard to decisions about student discipline issues.

1 2 3 4 5

40. The school culture provides an environment for students to become women of faith and to develop their own personal spirituality.

1 2 3 4 5

Please click right button (>) to go to the next page.

SUBMIT

6 *Mercy Charism: Compassion and Service.

1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Not Sure	4 Agree	5 Strongly Agree

41. The school culture is one that fosters the value of compassion for the differences in students' learning abilities.

42. The school staff models the values of the Mercy charism in the day to day life of the school.

43. The school leadership supports a culture of care and compassion for all students in the school.

44. The school culture fosters an environment in which all students model respect for one another.

45. The school admissions policies are committed to a representation of diversity in the student body.

46. The school community service program allows students to be viable members of the local community.

47. The school's discipline policy includes a counseling component for students in need.

48. The school's counseling department provides a compassionate presence for students.

7 *Section II. Effective School Correlates. Opportunity for Learning.

1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Not Sure	4 Agree	5 Strongly Agree

49. The culture in this school fosters an attitude that what is good for students is of highest priority.

50. Teachers in this school provide students with clear expectations for specific course objectives.

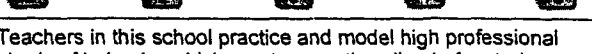
51. Teachers in this school believe that a collective focus on the

52. The staff believes that they can teach all students regardless of student background and ability level.

53. A variety of assessment techniques are used to improve individual student performance.

54. The teachers allocate a significant amount of classroom time to a variety of teaching strategies.

55. Teachers help students before, during and after school.



56. Teachers in this school practice and model high professional standards of behavior which create a postive climate for student success.

8 *Effective School Correlate: Climate of High Expectations.

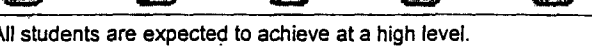
1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Not Sure	4 Agree	5 Strongly Agree

57. Teachers in every department understand and integrate the school's mission throughout the curriculum.

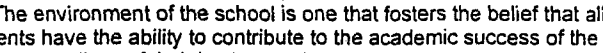
58. The use of technology is viewed as a necessary tool to enhance student achievement.

59. The school is characterized by an environment of caring for all students regardless of ability level.

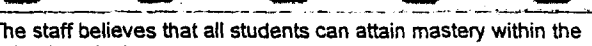
60. 61. Academic achievement is stressed, praised and rewarded.



62. All students are expected to achieve at a high level.



63. The environment of the school is one that fosters the belief that all students have the ability to contribute to the academic success of the school regardless of their background.



64. The staff believes that all students can attain mastery within the prescribed curriculum.

9 *Effective School Correlate: Instructional Leadership.

1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Not Sure	4 Agree	5 Strongly Agree

65.The administration assumes the role of instructional leaders in the

school.

66.The administration understands and models the characteristics of effective instructional practices when dealing with the community.

67.The administration creates a collabrative culture that empowers teachers through shared decision making .

68.The adminstration guides the business of teaching and learning by directing and supporting a collective school vision.

69.The school's administration is proactive in making sure that this school does not accept mediocre teaching.

70.The administration is responsive to faculty and student needs.

71.The administration models risk-taking behaviors to ensure overall school improvement.

72.The administration establishes a clear vision and sense of direction for improvement of instruction.

10 *Effective School Correlate: Positive Home/School Relations.

1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Not Sure	4 Agree	5 Strongly Agree

73. Parents understand support,and articulate the school's mission.

74. The school provides the opportunity for parents to play a role in helping the school achieve its mission.

75. Parents share responsibility for fostering student achievement.

76. The school provides opportunities for parents to extend the efforts of the school and community.

77. Parents are actively involved in the school and attend school events.

78. The school provides multiple opportunities for parents to communicate with teachers about their student's progress.

79. The school provides open lines of communication and a collaborative process for discipline issues.

80. The school creates a positive culture with regard to communication with parents.

11 Effective School Correlate: Clear and Focused Mission.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Strongly Agree

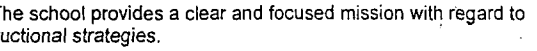
81. The school is a confident organization that knows its purpose and mission.

82. The school culture is marked by a clear and focused mission to which the school community shares a commitment.

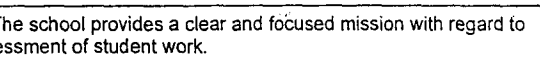
83. People at this school believe they work in an organization that stands for something special.

84. The school has the students' welfare as a first priority.

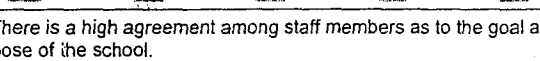
85. The school's mission is the focal point of all decision making.



86. The school provides a clear and focused mission with regard to instructional strategies.



87. The school provides a clear and focused mission with regard to assessment of student work.



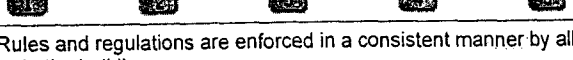
88. There is a high agreement among staff members as to the goal and purpose of the school.

12 *Effective School Correlate: Safe and Orderly Environment.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Strongly Agree

89. The school culture creates an environment that is friendly and culturally inviting.

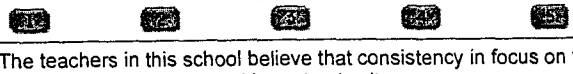
90. The school provides a positive approach to discipline.



91. Rules and regulations are enforced in a consistent manner by all adults in the building.

92. The school rewards and recognizes positive behavior from all community members.

93. The school culture reflects a purposeful, businesslike environment.



94. The teachers in this school believe that consistency in focus on the school's mission creates a positive school culture.

95. Students respect and follow the rules.

1 2 3 4 5

96. Adults in the school respect and follow school policies in a professional manner.

1 2 3 4 5

Please click the right button (>) to complete the survey. Thank you very much for participating in this study. If you wish to receive the results of this research please indicate this on the following page.

13 *What position do you hold at this school?

- Faculty
- Staff
- Administration
- Other, Please Specify

14 *97. How long have you worked at this school?

15 99. Are you a graduate of a Mercy secondary school?

YES NO

16 100. Do you wish to receive the results of this study or add any additional comments? Please use comment box. Include your e-mail address for study results.

YES NO

Additional Comment

Mercy Charism and its Relationship to Effective Schooling.

SURVEY INSTRUMENT
ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

APPENDIX D

SURVEY INSTRUMENT

VALIDITY PANEL QUESTIONS

18 101. VALIDITY PANEL MEMBERS:How long did it take you to complete this survey?

- 20 Minutes
- 25 Minutes
- 30 Minutes
- 35 Minutes
- 35 Minutes or Longer

19 102. Is it reasonable to assume that faculty will complete this survey?

YES NO

Additional Comment

20 103. CONTENT VALIDITY: Do the questions appear to cover the content related to Mercy charism? If not, please respond in the comment box.

YES NO

Additional Comment

21 104. Should any item about Mercy charism be added or deleted? If so, please respond in the comment box.

YES NO

Additional Comment

22 105. Do the questions appear to cover the content related to effective schools? If not, please use the comment box.

YES NO

Additional Comment

23 106. Should any questions regarding effective schooling be added or deleted? If not, please use the comment box.

YES NO

24 107. Do the questions in the section on Background Information appear to cover content related to personal infomation about the respondents. If not, please use comment box.

YES NO

Additional Comment

25 CONSTRUCT VALIDITY: 108. Does it appear that the questions enlist relevant information about Mercy charism? If not, please use the comment box.

YES NO

Additional Comment

26 109. Does it appear that this questionnaire enlists relevant information regarding effective schools? In not, please use the comment box.

YES NO

Additional Comment

27 110. Is there any vocabulary word, wording of questions or use of language that is unclear, ambiguous or confusing? If there are, please use the comment box.

YES NO

Additional Comment

28 111. Should any items be eliminated, modified or included? If so, please use the comment box.

YES NO

Additional Comment

29 112. FACE VALIDITY: Are the instructions and layout of the survey clear? In not, please use the comment box.

YES NO

Additional Comment

30 113. Does the layout require any modifications before printing. If so, please use the comment box.

YES NO

Additional Comment

31 114. Do you have any additional suggestions for improving this survey instrument? Please use the comment box. Thank you!

YES NO

Additional Comment

32 115. Would you like to receive the results of this study? Please put your e-mail or mailing address in the comment box.

YES NO

Additional Comment

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ASSISTANCE. "

APPENDIX E

LETTERS OF PERMISSION TO CONDUCT THE STUDY

August 8, 2003

MERCY
HIGH
SCHOOL

GIVING
YOUNG
WOMEN
A
LIFETIME
ADVANTAGE

Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Services
University of San Francisco
2130 Fulton Street
San Francisco, Ca 94117

Dear Members of the Committee:

On behalf of Mercy High School, Omaha, I am writing to formally indicate our awareness of the research proposed by Ms. Dorothy McCrea, a student at USF. We are aware that Ms. McCrea intends to conduct her research by administering a written survey which will be completed online to our employees.

I am responsible for employee relations and I am the principal of the school. I give Ms. McCrea permission to conduct her research in our secondary school. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at (402) 553-9424.

Sincerely,

Ms. Carolyn Jaworski
Principal

1501 South 48 Street • Omaha, Nebraska 68106-2598
Telephone (402) 553-9424

MERCY

College Preparatory Education since 1911

August 11, 2003

Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Services
University of San Francisco
2130 Fulton Street
San Francisco, Ca 94117

Dear Members of the Committee:

On behalf of Mercy High School, Burlingame, I am writing to formally indicate our awareness of the research proposed by Ms. Dorothy McCrea, a student at USF. We are aware that Ms. McCrea intends to conduct her research by administering a written survey which will be completed online to our employees.

I am responsible for employee relations and I am the principal of the school. I give Ms. McCrea permission to conduct her research in our secondary school. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me 650/762-1100.

Sincerely,

Laura M. Held
Principal

Mercy High School
2750 Adeline Drive
Burlingame, California 94010
(650) 343-3631 • Fax (650) 343-2316
email: mercy@mercyhsb.com

Mercy High School is sponsored by the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas, Regional Community of Burlingame

MOUNT ST. MARY
ACADEMY
ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE • SPIRITUAL GROWTH • CATHOLIC TRADITION

August 8, 2003

Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Services
University of San Francisco
2130 Fulton Street
San Francisco, CA 94117

Dear Members of the Committee:

On behalf of Mount. St. Mary Academy, I am writing to formally indicate our awareness of the research proposed by Ms. Dorothy McCrea, a student at USF. We are aware that Ms. McCrea intends to conduct her research by administering a written survey which will be completed online by our employees.
I am responsible for employee relations and I am the principal of the school. I give Ms. McCrea permission to conduct her research in our secondary school. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at (501) 664-8006.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Henle

Mrs. Rebecca Henle
Principal

c: Sr. Deborah Troillett, RSM
President, Mount St. Mary Academy

Date_____

dmccrea@mercyhs.org
(415) 334-9932

Principal
Mercy High School
2750 Adeline Drive
Burlingame, Ca 94010-5579

Dear ,

My name is Dorothy McCrea and I am a doctoral student in the Catholic Education Leadership Program at the University of San Francisco. As part of my doctoral research study, I am investigating how the operation of the Mercy Charism is related to the culture of the organization and its relationship to the effectiveness of the secondary school. In order to secure data for the research I am inviting three Mercy secondary schools, including yours, to participate in this study. I expect that about 166 individuals from the three Mercy schools will take part in this research. I would like to survey the full time faculty and staff at the school. The surveys will be administered online and that each survey should not take more than 30 minutes to complete.

In order for me to conduct this study, I would like permission from you to e-mail your full-time staff members the information about the research effort and to request their participation. My hope is to obtain the e-mail addresses from your web site directory, or to secure a list serve address from you that would allow me to contact all of your full-time employees. The criteria for participation in the study are included with the participant letter. Participants will simply log on to a web address which will contain the survey. Results will be submitted to a secure site through the use of Zoomerang software. Responses to individual questions will remain confidential.

I would also like to respectfully ask that sometime after Christmas break, or at a regularly scheduled faculty meeting, you make a verbal request for participation from your staff. This would help emphasize the importance of this study to Mercy secondary educators and would help with the survey return rate. It is my hope that the results of this research will benefit future Mercy educators in their understanding of the charism and its relationship to the effectiveness of the school. When the research is completed, I will contact you about sharing the results.

If you are interested in allowing your staff to participate in this research, please e-mail your acknowledgement by replying to this e-mail. Or, if you have any questions, you can also call me at the telephone number listed below, or you can contact the IRBPHS, Department of Psychology, University of San Francisco. (IRBPHS@usfca.edu)

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Dorothy McCrea Student University of San Francisco

APPENDIX G

LETTERS TO PARTICIPANTS

Dorothy J. McCrea dmccrea@mercyhs.org
Date January 28, 2004

Dear Mercy Educator,

My name is Dorothy McCrea; I am the Principal at Mercy High School, San Francisco and a student at the University of San Francisco in the Catholic Educational Leadership Program. I am conducting a doctoral study that involves employees at three Mercy high schools. The administration at your school has given me permission to conduct this study at your site. Therefore, I am asking faculty, staff and administration at the selected Mercy secondary schools to complete a survey regarding Mercy charism and its relationship to the culture of effectiveness within the school.

You are being asked to participate in this survey because you are an employee at one of the three Mercy secondary schools selected for this study. The survey will be completed online and sent to a secure web site. In order to ensure complete privacy and confidentiality, the URL address and password will be sent via e-mail when the survey is launched from the Zoomerang platform. The questionnaire can be completed and forwarded electronically to this secure software site upon completion. **If you are willing to participate, please reply indicating your agreement.**

The questionnaire simply involves clicking response buttons to a Likert scale. *(Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Not Sure, Agree, and Strongly Agree).* This survey should take no more than 30 minutes to complete. The results of the research data will remain strictly confidential. Individuals will not be identified by responses, nor will any particular response be identified by school. If you have further questions you may contact the IRBPHS, Department of Psychology, University of San Francisco. Contact information is listed below.

Your participation in this study may benefit the three Mercy schools involved in this research and help in our understanding of the Mercy charism and its relationship to the effectiveness of our schools. I will acknowledge your willingness to participate within three days and will then send you the URL address for completing the survey. Your generous gift of time is very much appreciated and will benefit Mercy secondary schools. Thank you in advance for your help.

Sincerely,

Dorothy McCrea
Principal, Mercy High School
Student, University of San Francisco
415-334-9932
IRHSB (425) 422-6091 or IRBPHS@usfca.edu

APPENDIX H

IRBPHS HUMAN SUBJECTS APPROVAL

Dotty McCrea

From: IRBPHS [irbphs@usfca.edu]
Sent: Tuesday, September 30, 2003 2:00 PM
To: dmccrea@mercyhs.org
Cc: Mary Peter
Subject: IRB Application #03-066

September 30, 2003

Dear Ms. McCrea:

The Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (IRBPHS) at the University of San Francisco (USF), which operates under the rules and regulations set forth by the federal Office for Protection from Research Risks (OPRR) and the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) has reviewed your application for human subjects approval regarding your study.

Your application has been approved by the committee (IRBPHS #03-066). Please note the following:

1. Approval expires twelve (12) months from the dated noted above. At that time, if you are still collecting data from human subjects, you must file a Renewal Application.

2. Any modifications to the research protocol or changes in instrumentation (e.g., changes in subject sample, wording of items, consent procedures, tasks required of subjects) must be proposed in a Modification Application, which must be approved prior to implementation of any changes.

3. Any adverse reactions or complications on the part of Human Subject must be reported (in writing) to the IRBPHS within ten (10) working days in the form of a Human Subjects Incident Report.

On behalf of the IRBPHS committee, I wish you much success in your research.

Sincerely,

Terence Patterson, EdD, ABPP
Chair, Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects Counseling Psychology Department Education Building-017 University of San Francisco 2130 Fulton Street San Francisco, CA 94117-1080
(415) 422-6091 (voice)

APPENDIX I

VALIDITY PANEL MEMBERS

VALIDITY PANEL MEMBERS

Panel Member	Gender	Mercy Sister	Other Religious	Doctoral Degree in Education	Alumnae of Mercy	Mercy Educator	Zoomerang User
1.	F	X			X	X	
2.	F					X	X
3.	F		X	X			
4.	F		X				
5.	F	X		X	X	X	
6.	M					X	
7.	F			X		X	X
8.	F					X	X
9.	M			X			

APPENDIX J

VALIDITY PANEL LETTER

415-334-9932

Date: September 30, 2003

Dear

I am writing to request your participation on a panel to validate a survey instrument to be used in a doctoral research study entitled *Mercy Charism and its Relationship to Effective Schooling.* Your name was suggested to me as an expert in the field of secondary education.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the operation of the Mercy charism within three secondary institutions and to ascertain whether a relationship exists between the values of the charism and the effective schools correlates. I hope that this study will enhance our understanding of Mercy/Catholic secondary education in schools sponsored by religious orders. This research will be valuable and enlightening to future leaders of those institutions.

A researcher-designed survey will be used to gather data regarding the operation of the charism within the schools and the practices of effectiveness as defined by the correlates for effective schooling. I ask that you complete the entire survey, including the demographic questions, and then answer questions 18-32 which pertain to the validity of the survey. Your expertise as an experienced educator and your familiarity with the Mercy charism will be most helpful to the direction and focus of this study.

All surveys will be completed online via the use of Zoomerang software. The survey will be e-mailed to you with a URL address that links you to the survey once it is launched. An evaluation form is included at the end of the questionnaire. Please complete all the questions and submit your responses and comments with the survey. The information returned to me will be stored in a secure site which preserves confidentiality. I would respectfully request that you complete the survey and evaluation form within the next ten days. All response will be kept confidential and participation is voluntary.

Thank you in advance for your participation on this Validity Panel. I will be happy to share the results of my findings after the data has been analyzed. If you wish to know the results of this research, please indicate this at the end of the survey.

Sincerely,

Dorothy McCrea
Principal, Mercy High School
Student, University of San Francisco

dmccrea@mercyhs.org
415-334-9932

APPENDIX K

RELIABILITY PANEL LETTER

November 1, 2003 dmccrea@mercyhs.org

Dear Mercy Educator,

I am currently a student at the University of San Francisco in the Catholic Educational Leadership Program. I am conducting a study that utilizes a 96- item survey, *Mercy Charism and its Relationship to Effective Schooling*. This study will investigate the relationship between the Mercy charism and the effective school correlates. I would like to request that you to participate in reliability study for this dissertation research. You are being asked to participate because you are currently serving as a faculty member in a Mercy school.

You will be asked to complete the survey twice, with a separation of two weeks between administrations of the surveys. Your participation will help to establish the reliability and internal consistency of the questionnaire. The survey will be sent to you via the Internet, using Zoomerang software, and should take no more than 30 minutes to complete.

If you agree to participate in this reliability study, please respond to this communication by replying to this e-mail. I encourage your participation as this study will be beneficial to Mercy secondary education.

Thank you in advance for your help.

Dorothy J. McCrea
Doctoral Student
University of San Francisco

1260 Howard Ave
San Carlos, Ca 94070

APPENDIX L

SURVEY REMINDER LETTER

January 2004

Dear Mercy Educator,

You have received information regarding a survey that will be sent to you from Dorothy McCrea a doctoral student at the University of San Francisco. This letter will serve as a reminder to you that the survey will be e-mailed to you within the next two weeks.

Please look for this in your e-mail address list as: Mercy Charism and its Relationship to Effective Schooling. Once you access the survey, please complete all the questions and submit the results.

All data will be sent and subsequently stored in the Zoomerang platform. Your responses will remain confidential. Thank you for your help with this research.

Sincerely,

Dorothy McCrea

Student: University of San Francisco
dmccrea@mercyhs.org 415-334-9932

APPENDIX M

REMINDER TO SURVEY NON-RESPONDENTS

Electronic E-Mail Reminder Letter Sent via Zoomerang

From: dmccrea@mercyhs.org
Sent:
To:
Subject: Mercy Charism and its Relationship to Effective Schooling

You have received a letter explaining the purposes of my research. Please access the survey that was sent to you by using the link indicated in this e-mail. Simply follow the survey instructions. Thank for your help.

Dorothy J. McCrea
University of San Francisco
Doctoral Student

http://www.zoomerang.com/survey/zgi

THE UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO

Dissertation Abstract

Mercy Charism and its Relationship to Effective Schooling

Today, there are forty two Mercy secondary schools located in North and South America. These institutions were founded and rooted in the charism of Catherine McAuley, the foundress of the Sisters of Mercy. Today, these schools are primarily staffed by lay administrators and teachers. In this dissertation the literature review in Chapter II defined the values for this charism and described how they would ideally operate within a Mercy secondary school. In addition, the literature review explored the defining values for school effectiveness using the correlates for effective schools as the foundation for this research.

This study was an effort to determine to what extent the Mercy charism and the effective school correlates operated in three Mercy secondary schools. In addition, this research sought to determine if a relationship existed between this particular charism and the effective school correlates.

The data indicated that there was a high degree of operation of both the charism and the correlates within these three schools. The overall mean score on all survey questions, $M = 4.33$, for all three schools, $n = 123$, revealed that both the Mercy charism and the correlates for effectiveness were understood and practiced by those who worked in these Mercy secondary institutions. The data also indicated that there was a high degree of correlation between the two variables. Pearson's Correlation Coefficient resulted in a score of $r = .85$, which indicated that a potential connection did exist between the charism and the effective school correlates.

The results of this study showed that the core values of the charism and the effective school correlates were operational in the three Mercy schools that participated in this study. It remains to be seen if a particular charism does indeed embed the qualities of effectiveness within a school, however, for the future heritage of Mercy secondary education and for Catholic schools in general will be important to understand how the charism or mission of a school impacts its ability to provide an effective contemporary educational experience for their students.

Dorothy J. McCrea

Sr. Mary Peter Traviss, OP
Chairperson, Dissertation Committee