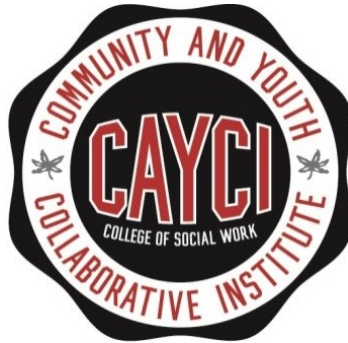Community and Youth Collaborative Institute
School Experience Surveys

Technical Report: Academic Press
Teacher/Staff Version

Produced By:
Dawn Anderson-Butcher, Anthony J. Amorose, Aidyn Iachini, and Annahita Ball

**Community and Youth Collaborative Institute
College of Social Work
The Ohio State University**

ACADEMIC PRESS
Teacher/Staff Version

I. Definition of Construct

Academic press is defined as the extent to which school members, including teachers and students, experience a normative emphasis on academic success and conformity to specific standards of achievement. The "Academic Press" scale is a tool which measures teachers'/school staff's experiences of academic press.

II. Relevance for Practice

Research identifies academic press as a critical component of effective schools, and it is also recognized as an effective measure for overall student achievement (Byrk, 2010; Murphy, Weil, Hallinger & Mitman, 1982; Lee & Smith, 1999; McDill, Natriello & Pallas, 1986).

III. Scale Description and Instructions

A. Items

1. Decisions at this school always focus on what is best for learning.
2. Teachers provide helpful feedback to students about their academic performance.
3. Teachers monitor whether students are learning on a regular basis.

B. Response Options

Response options for each item include the following:

1 = Almost never
2 = Sometimes
3 = Half of the time
4 = Frequently
5 = Almost always
* "Do Not Know"

C. Instructions for Respondents

We are interested in learning about your perceptions of the academic press in your school. For each of the following statements, please fill in the ONE circle that best represents your answer.

D. Instructions for Scale Administers

Surveys can be self-administered or administered to teachers/staff in person or online. Explain that the purpose of the survey is to learn more about their perceptions about their students, school, and community. They should select one answer per request, and make a choice based on the answer that best reflects how they feel. They may submit the survey when they have completed it.

If administered in person, look through the finished surveys to make sure that teachers/staff didn't miss any items or questions. Please remember that they do not have to answer every question, but do encourage them to complete as much of the survey as possible, reminding them their answers will help the school know how to best support its students and personnel.

IV. Scoring Procedures

An average of the response scores from the 3 items should be calculated and used as an indicator of experienced academic press, with higher scores representing greater levels of perceived academic press.

V. Psychometric Properties of the Scale

A. Description of Sample

Participants used to explore the psychometric properties of the scale included 729 school staff members from various elementary schools (52.8%), middle schools/junior high schools (17.3%) and high schools (29.8%) around the state of Ohio. The majority of participants indicated at least part of their duties at the school included teaching (85.5%), with the remainder reporting non-teaching duties (e.g., support staff, administration). The amount of experience working at the school ranged from 1-10 (53.9%) or11-20 (26.6%) to over 20 years (19.5%). Staff members (73.0% female) almost all identified themselves as Caucasian (93.7%). The participants varied in age with 11.1% reporting they were under 30 years of age, 41.0% indicated they were 30-44, and 47.9% were 45 years or older. Data on these staff members were collected as part of a needs assessment within each school's improvement planning process. Some data were collected using an online instrument, whereas others were collected via paper/pencil survey. School administrators informed teachers and school staff of the survey and distributed the surveys in a meeting or through mailboxes or provided the staff with a link to the online survey. All completed paper/pencil surveys were returned to a specified location in the building or to a person who was identified as the lead. All versions of the survey were anonymous. The final sample described above, which includes those with no missing data on the scale, omits 18 staff members who responded to one or more of the items with "Do Not Know." For each of the items, less than 1.60% of the staff members selected the "Do Not Know" response option.

B. Basic Descriptive Statistics and Relevant Group Differences

Sample	Mean	SD	Range	α
Full Sample (*N* =729)	4.40	.68	1.33-5.00	.76
Gender				
Males (*n* = 153)	4.33	.69	2.33-5.00	.66
Females (*n* = 532)	4.42	.68	1.33-5.00	.77
Age				
Less than 30 years (*n* = 81)	4.26	.71	1.67-5.00	.72
30-44 years (*n* = 299)	4.38	.66	2.00-5.00	.74
45 years and above (*n* = 349)	4.41	.73	1.33-5.00	.79
Amount of Experience at the School				
1-10 years (*n* = 393)	4.35	.69	1.67-5.00	.73
11-20 years (*n* = 194)	4.41	.74	1.33-5.00	.81
More than 20 years (*n* = 142)	4.45	.70	2.00-5.00	.78
Role as Staff Member				
Teaching (*n* = 623)	4.39	.66	1.33-5.00	.72
Non-Teaching (e.g., support staff, administrators) (*n* = 106)	4.33	.92	2.00-5.00	.90
School Level				
Elementary (*n* = 385)	4.52	.60	2.00-5.00	.73
Middles School/Junior High (*n* = 126)	4.26	.85	1.67-5.00	.86
High School (*n* = 217)	4.21	.73	1.33-5.00	.70

Notes. Group specific data omits staff who did not indicate their status. All group comparisons were non-significant (p>.05), with the exception of School Level The effect sizes (η^2) indicated that School Level group membership differences accounted for 4.3% of the variance in the scores. Follow-up comparisons showed that the elementary school staff reported higher scores than the other 2 groups which did not differ from one another.

C. Maximum Value Percentages and Classification of Scores

Percentages		Classification of Scores		
Maximum Value	½ SD	Excelling	Emerging	Needs Improvement
88.0%	6.8%	>95	95-81	<81

Notes. The max value percentages reflect the scale mean divided by the number of response options in the scale. This value allows the subscale to be compared with other measured constructs measured in the CAYCI surveys, thereby providing relative information regarding the extent to which staffs' experiences are favorable across constructs. The classification of scores provides ranges of values based on the maximum value percentage plus or minus ½ SD percentage. Based on these cut points, schools may determine where they stand on staffs' experiences of academic press relative to normed data.

D. Relationships Between Academic Press Scale score and other Staff Perception Constructs

Construct [a]	r =
Student Academic Motivation	.457
Student School Connectedness	.504
Student Internalizing Behaviors	.279
Student Psychological Well-Being	.349
Student Externalizing Behaviors	.192
Student Social Skills	.352
Student Safety	.356
Support for Students' Basic Needs	.205
Families and Caregivers' Support for of Learning	.304
Family History	.113
Family Support for Prosocial Activities	.196
Services and Supports	.292
Community Supports for Positive Youth Development	.281
Learning Supports	.394
Student Physical Activity and Nutrition	.286

Notes. [a] Average score on the respective subscale scores from the CAYCI surveys (Anderson-Butcher, Amorose, Iachini, & Ball, 2013). All relationship are significant (p<.01).

E. Factorial Validity

A confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted using robust maximum likelihood estimation procedures in LISREL 8.71 (Scientific Software International, Inc., Chicago). The CFA model specified that the 3 items loaded on a single latent Academic Press factor. The factor variance was freely estimated, as was the uniqueness for each item. No covariances between uniquenesses were modeled. The data were input using the asymptotic covariance matrix.

Given this model was just identified, the overall fit of the model to the data was perfect, S-B $\chi^2 = 0$, $df = 0$, $p = 1.00$. The table on the next page presents the completely standardized factor loadings and uniquenesses for each item. Squared multiple correlations averaged .61.

Item	Loading	Uniqueness
Decisions at this school always focus on what is best for learning	.54	.70
Teachers provide helpful feedback to students about their academic performance	.90	.19
Teachers monitor whether students are learning on a regular basis	.85	.28

VII. Past and Future Scale Development

An initial version of the Academic Press scale included 1 additional item: "[insert school name] values student learning," Results from preliminary analyses indicated that this item did not fit well with the other scale items. Thus, the current recommendation is to use the 3-item version of the measure as described in this report. Future scale development work should involve testing the psychometric properties of the scale with a larger sample of non-teaching staff (e.g., school administrators, support staff). Further, it may be worth considering modifying items and/or response format to increase the variability in the scores. Revisions to the first item should be explored as well, given the low factor loading associated with this indicator. Finally, work is needed to validate the Spanish version of this scale.

VII. Summary

Overall, the results of the psychometric testing indicate initial support for the reliability and validity of the Academic Press scale. The use of this measure could provide valuable information about the effectiveness of the school as it relates to measuring teachers'/staff's experiences of academic press.

VIII. References

Anderson-Butcher, D., Amorose, A. J., Iachini, A., & Ball, A. (2013). Community and Youth Collaborative Initiative School Community Surveys. Columbus, OH: College of Social Work, The Ohio State University.

Anderson-Butcher, D., Amorose, A.J., Iachini, A., & Ball, A. (2012). The development of the Perceived School Experiences Scale. *Research on Social Work Practice, 2(2),* 186-194.

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IX. Recommended Citation of Scale

When using the scale for program evaluation or research purposes, we recommend using the following citation:

Anderson-Butcher, D., Amorose, A. J., Iachini, A., & Ball, A. (2013). Community and Youth Collaborative Institute School Community Surveys: Teacher/School Staff Academic Press Scale. Columbus, OH: College of Social Work, The Ohio State University.

If this scale is used along with additional Community and Youth Collaborative Institute School Community Surveys, then the following citation would be appropriate to cover all scales:

Anderson-Butcher, D., Amorose, A. J., Iachini, A., & Ball, A. (2013). Community and Youth Collaborative Institute School Community Surveys. Columbus, OH: College of Social Work, The Ohio State University.