

TRUST WITHIN ORGANISATIONS: A CROSS-CULTURAL RESEARCH ON THE ROLE OF CHARACTER PERCEPTION

Dominic McLoughlin

Ithikos Pty Ltd and Western Sydney University, Sydney, Australia, dom.mcl@ithikos.com.au

Maryna Salun

DrD, Simon Kuznets Kharkiv National University of Economics, maryna.salun@hneu.net

Emrah Özsoy

Assist. Prof.Dr. Sakarya University, Turkey, eozyoy@sakarya.edu.tr

Carroll R.

Ithikos Pty Ltd, Sydney, Australia, rob.carroll@ithikos.com.au

Kateryna Zaslavska

PhD, Simon Kuznets Kharkiv National University of Economics, Kateryna.Zaslavska@hneu.net

Osman Uslu

Assist. Prof.Dr. Sakarya University, Turkey, ouslu@sakarya.edu.tr

ABSTRACT

Previous research has demonstrated that employees' trust in their manager is strongly influenced by their relationship with, and perceptions of, their manager. In this paper we draw on a convenience sample of survey data from ICT companies operating in three countries – namely Australia, Turkey and Ukraine (N=541). Furthermore, sub-components of trust and communication with the immediate manager mediate the relationship between perceptions of character and organisational outcomes. Overall, our findings create a new avenue for trust research by advancing the idea that perceptions of character are an important antecedent of workers' trust in management.

Keywords: Interpersonal Trust; Trust In Manager, Trust In Organisation, Perceived Character

ÖRGÜTLERDE GÜVEN: KARAKTER ALGISININ ROLÜ ÜZERINE KÜLTÜRLERARASI BİR ARAŞTIRMA

ÖZ

Daha önce yapılan araştırmalar çalışanların yöneticileriyle ilişkilerinin ve yöneticilerine dair algılarının yöneticiye güvenlerini etkilediğini göstermektedir. Bu çalışmada kolayda örnekleme metoduyla Avustralya, Türkiye ve Ukrayna'da ki bilgi iletişim ve teknoloji alanındaki örgütlerden elde edilen veriler (n=541) elde edilmiştir. Güvenin alt bileşenleri ve ilk yöneticiyle olan iletişim, karakter algıları ile örgütsel çıktılar arasındaki ilişkiye aracılık etmektedir. Genel olarak bulgular, karakter algılarının çalışanların yönetime duyulan güvenin önemli bir öncülü olduğu fikrini geliştirerek, güven araştırmalarına yeni bir yol oluşturmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Güven, Kişilerarası Güven; Yöneticiye Güven, Örgüte Güven, Algılanan Karakter

Introduction

Trust has for decades been considered important in relationships within workplaces. It is argued here that a manager's character is a key theme in the trust literature that is largely overlooked in empirical research, yet it is a potentially important component of the workplace. Building on previous work demonstrating the antecedents of trust in the workplace (McGregor, 1967; Ciulla, 1998; Simons, 2002; Locke, 2003; McLoughlin, 2014), it is argued here that key concepts of honesty, integrity and doing 'the right thing' allow development of a construct for perceived character of managers in the workplace. This perspective aligns with Dirks and Ferrin's (2002) broad notion of character based trust focused on the perception of the leader's character. However, Dirks and Ferrin (2002) also found evidence that differing trust referents (who is being trusted) can systematically alter the relationships between trust antecedents and outcomes (see also Ferrer and Travaglione, 2003). Therefore, this research explicitly considers the perceived character of the immediate manager and of senior management separately. Likewise, trust in the immediate manager and trust in the organisation are considered separately. This research tests the relationship between perceived character and trust in three countries with quite different cultures: Australia, Turkey and the Ukraine. This research explores a potentially important new antecedent for trust, and seeks to provide a nuanced framework for trust within organisations.

Perceived character of immediate managers and senior management

A number of antecedents of trust imply that a manager's character is a key theme. In their important meta-analysis, Dirks and Ferrin's (2002, p. 613) diagram notes that 'drawing inferences about character of leader' is a vital component of trust, but that this was not examined empirically because of insufficient data. This hypothesised relationship between character and trust has strong precedents. An early example in the management literature is McGregor's (1967: 164) argument that '[i]nconsistencies between words and action decrease trust'. Particularly from an organisational behaviour perspective, there is a clear link between perceptions of honesty, integrity and trust, for example, Burns (1978) argues that '...leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality' (1978: 20). Following Burns, Bass (1985) developed the idea of transformational leadership where followers trust, admire, and respect a leader, but this does not address the issue that a leader may go in unethical, immoral directions (Giampetro-Meyer, Brown, Browne, and Kubasek, 1998; Parry and Proctor-Thomson, 2002; Yukl, 1998). Arguing that Burns' (1978) theory implied a 'good' leader, Ciulla argues that the important question is not 'What is the definition of leadership?' but rather 'What is good leadership?' (1998:13), where the '... use of the word good here has two senses, morally good and technically good or effective' (Ciulla, 1998: 13). It is at this point that the notion of a worker's perception of the character of their manager parallels other key components of their trust in management, notably integrity and competence.

Sison develops the argument further, suggesting that social capital (trust) is morally ambivalent and in order to distinguish the trust present in the likes of the Mafia, the notion of character must be introduced:

"Moral capital may be defined as excellence of character, or the possession and practice of a host of virtues appropriate for a human being in particular sociological context. Nowadays, its meaning could also be expressed by the word 'integrity', a trait suggesting wholeness and stability in the person as someone on whom others could depend or rely." Sison (2003:31)

The concept of integrity is also used in organisational theory, but is not clearly defined and understood (Rieke and Guastello, 1995). Butler and Cantrell, (1984) and Yukl and Van Fleet (1992) viewed integrity, trustworthiness and honesty as synonymous (Dineen, Lewicki, and Tomlinson, 2006), while Becker (1998) similarly uses integrity, honesty, and conscientiousness interchangeably. More recently, Simons (2002) developed a model of 'behavioral integrity' (BI) by looking at the consistency of behaviour with espoused views. This approach examined 'the perceived pattern of alignment between an

actor's words and deeds' (Simons, 2002:19). In other words this refers to 'the extent to which employees believe a manager 'walks her talk', and conversely, reflecting the extent to which they see her as 'talking her walk' (Simons, 2002:19). However, it has been argued that Simon's (2002) created a 'behavioural consistency' index, rather than an 'integrity' index (McLoughlin, 2011:4). Therefore, there is a need for the broader notion of character with a perceived moral dimension, as Locke (2003) argues:

Finally, it is widely recognized that trust is an important concept in organizations, but there is rarely any mention of where it comes from. Moral trust comes from an appraisal of the manager's or leader's moral character. For example, to be trusted a manager should be honest (Locke, 2003:434).

For this reason a perceived character construct should contain the notions of honesty and doing 'the right thing'. This view aligns well with Dirks and Ferrin's (2002) broad notion of 'character based' trust focused on the perception of the leader's character:

This perspective implies that followers attempt to draw inferences about the leader's characteristics such as integrity, dependability, fairness and ability and that these inferences have consequences for work behavior and attitudes. (Dirks and Ferrin, 2002:612).

In order to capture dependability and fairness, this research includes notions of a manager overcoming difficulties and putting subordinates' needs before their own. As Morgan and Zeffane (2003:58) point out, whichever set of components are measured, it remains the case that: 'Employees evaluate the key qualities of managers...'. The literature strongly indicates that the concepts of trust and character are related and research into trust in the workplace should therefore consider the perceived character of the manager.

At least two approaches to the definition of character are possible. When defining the related concept of integrity, Becker (1998:157-158) suggested an objective definition: 'integrity is commitment in action to a morally justifiable set of principles and values...' while Mayer and Gavin (2005:874) suggest a subjective definition: 'Integrity is the perception that the trustee adheres to a set of principles that the trustor finds acceptable'. These two approaches are also applicable to the definition of character. Adapting Sison's (2003) definition of moral capital and Mayer and Gavin's (2005) definition of integrity, this exploratory research follows McLoughlin (2014) in defining perceived character as: the perception that the trustee adheres to a host of virtues appropriate for a human being in the particular sociological context.

Trusting whom?

Ferres and Travaglione (2003) found that the referent operated as a moderator of the relationship between trust and job performance, OCB altruism, job satisfaction, and organisational commitment, with direct managers being particularly important (see also Dirks and Ferrin, 2002). In addition, the relationship between trust and organisational commitment was higher when the referent was organisational leadership, as opposed to direct leader. Given the importance of context, more recent work in trust research (McEvily and Tortoriello, 2011) stresses that the difference in trust referent is important in the operationalisation of research. This research therefore considers 'trust in the immediate manager' and 'trust in the organisation' as two different constructs.

Trust in the immediate manager

The view that 'trust in management' is important for organisational performance is widespread, however the precise relationship between trust and performance remains unclear (Mayer and Gavin, 2005) – as, sometimes, is precisely who is trusting whom. Although Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt, and Camerer (1998) developed a broadly accepted integrated definition of trust, Colquitt, LePine, Zapata and Wild (2011) suggest that the literature still has two distinct streams: one exemplified by Mayer, Davis, and

Schoorman's (1995) model which emphasises the vulnerability aspect of the definition and the other emphasising the expectations aspect of Rousseau et al.'s (1998). Differing theoretical perspectives on trust have meant that the definition is much debated in the literature, despite some acceptance of Rousseau et al.'s (1998) definition of trust as a 'psychological state comprising the intention to accept vulnerability based upon a positive expectation of the intentions or behavior of another' (1998: 395).

The alternative definition offered by Mayer, et al (1995:712) defines trust as the 'willingness to be vulnerable' to the actions of the trust referent 'irrespective of the ability to monitor or control that party'. Operationalising this definition asks whether trust referents are allowed significant influence over the trustors' working lives (Mayer and Davis, 1999; Mayer and Gavin, 2005; Schoorman, Mayer and Davis, 2007). Mayer et al (1995) also posited 'trustworthiness' as constituting three qualities of the trust referent: ability, benevolence, and integrity. Ability and integrity are the rational aspects of the reasons to bestow trust in the referent, and they grow from past success and consistency between words, deeds, and values (Colquitt et al., 2011:1000). Mayer et al (1995) reason that the trustor will be willing to be vulnerable to another person if the latter is perceived as possessing these trustworthy traits. Similarly, Clark and Payne (1997) identified six elements of trustworthiness when examining prior research identified consistent themes across studies including integrity, competence, consistent behaviour, loyalty, openness and showing respect. Conceptual models positing trust as an intended action (Clark and Payne, 1997; Albrecht, and Sevastos, 1999) also highlight a distinction between trust as a state of mind or feeling, and trust as an 'overt behaviour' (Clark and Payne, 1997, p.206). The importance of viewing trust as a behavioural intention is in line with arguments presented by Currall and Judge (1995) and Albrecht and Sevastos (2000), which formally recognise the trustor's willingness to act on perceptions of others' trustworthiness. Within this behaviourist view, cognitive, affective and normative perspectives may help outline the construct of trustworthiness rather than trust itself: 'It is the willingness to engage in trusting behaviour...which defines trust' (Albrecht and Sevastos, 2000: 36).

While it is possible to see Rousseau et al's (1998) definition as encompassing that of Mayer et al (1995) however, as scholars have pointed out (Colquitt, Scott and LePine, 2007; Ferrin, Bligh and Kohles, 2008) this definition itself stresses two key elements – the willingness to be vulnerable and the expectation of favourable treatment. This leads to difficulties in operationalisation, in that empirical research generally attempts to measure an element separately: 'Thus, while definitions of trust across disciplines may be 'not so different after all' (Rousseau et al., 1998), operationalisations of trust would appear to be quite different indeed.' (McEvily and Tortoriello, 2011:40).

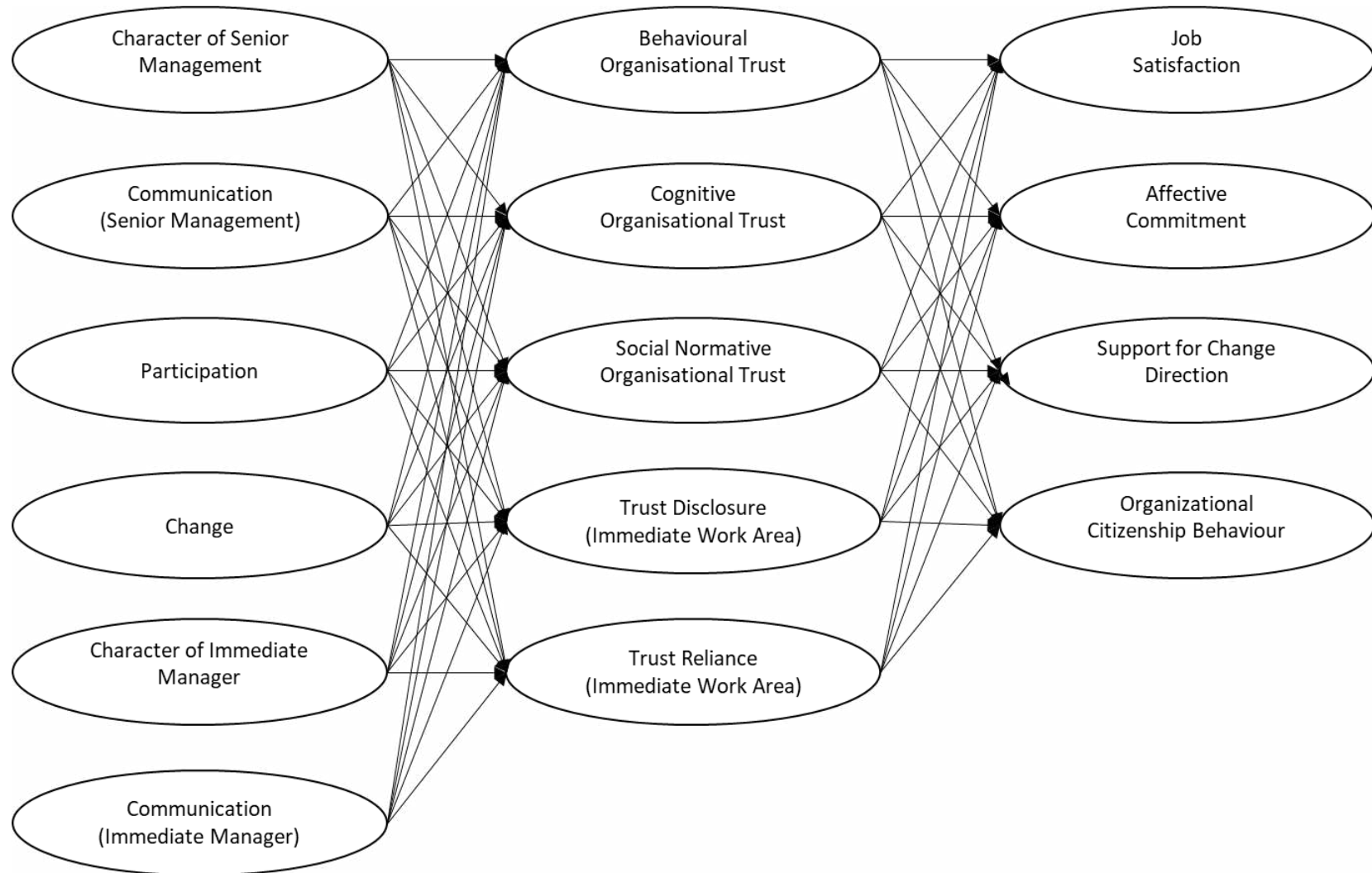
This research adopts Rousseau et al's (1998) definition of trust in an immediate manager as the trust referent with an emphasis on the willingness to be vulnerable. Dirks and Ferrins' (2002) meta-analysis found evidence that differing 'trust referents' (who is being trusted) can systematically alter the relationships between trust antecedents and outcomes (see also Ferrer and Travaglione, 2003). Dirks and Ferrin (2002) found that the referent operated as a moderator of the relationship between trust and job performance, OCB altruism, job satisfaction, and organisational commitment. In addition, the relationship between trust and organisational commitment was higher when the referent was organisational leadership, as opposed to direct leader. Given the importance of context, more recent work in trust research (McEvily and Tortoriello, 2011) builds on Dirks and Ferrin (2002) in providing a comprehensive assessment of the measurement of trust in organisational research. On examining all the studies that used Rousseau et al's (1998) definition and the psychometric measurement of trust, they found a high degree of fragmentation in measures used. Importantly they suggest more replication of the five of the most robust trust scales to assist research in making meaningful comparisons across organisations and contexts. Building on the dualism inherent in Rousseau et al's (1998) definition, they proposed a framework for measuring trust to allow for greater clarity in measuring three components: Trustworthiness Beliefs, Trusting Intentions and Trusting Behaviours (2011: 39). This research uses Gillespie's (2003) Behavioural Trust Inventory for the measurement of trust in the immediate manager.

Trust in Organisation

In researching organisational trust rather than interpersonal trust, the type and number of dimensions used to frame trust fluctuates across scholars. Levin (1999) suggested that three dimensions be used to structure an integrative trust perspective; cognitive trust, affective trust and cognitive-affective trust. Extending this, later empirical evidence suggested that trust might at least have a cognitive, affective and behavioural basis (Albrecht and Sevastos, 1999, 2000; Clark and Payne, 1997; Cummings and Bromiley, 1996). Albrecht and Sevastos (1999) found support in their research for the convergent and discriminant validity of five dimensions of trust in senior managers in their research: dispositional, cognitive, affective, behavioural, and normative-based trust. In operationalising trust as a behavioural intention, Ferres (2003) used the willingness approach mentioned above (Currall and Judge, 1995; Albrecht and Sevastos, 2000). Her empirical study demonstrated a statistically robust method of measuring trust in the organisation from various aspects: affective organisational trust, behavioural organisational trust, cognitive organisational trust and social normative organisational trust.

This research focussed on Information, Communication and Technology (ICT) workplaces, accordingly Rousseau et al's (1998) definition of trust is also adopted for the organisational level. Important variables such as organisational change and managerial actions or lack of action should be considered in the research. For example, there is a clear link between increased participation in a change process and improved perceptions of 'honesty and integrity' (Clark and Payne, 1997), which can 'counterbalance the negative effect of change on trust' (Morgan and Zeffane, 2003:69). In addition, Morgan and Zeffane (2003:69) found that '[p]erceptions of low decision-making participation, being uninformed, lack of communication and poor follow-up are also situational factors that increase cynicism'. The theoretical model drawn from the literature is specified in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Initial (Theoretical) Model



Method

Participants were sourced by the authors – employees in ICT organisations in their respective countries, in a convenience sample. An online survey, previously developed by McLoughlin (2014) was used, predominantly circulated via email invitation. Data analysis was conducted using partial least squares path modelling in XLStat. The relationship between ‘perceived character’ and trust was first explored within the ICT industry in Australia (McLoughlin, 2014). This current research seeks to undertake a similar study using two additional languages and cultures, and employees of a new multinational organisation¹ within Australia. Consistent with the original research, verified constructs are included in this study. Figure 1 shows the initial theoretical model. The main trust measures used for trust in manager are Trust Reliance and Trust Disclosure, from the Behavioral Trust Inventory (Gillespie, 2003). Trust in organisation will be assessed using questions from Ferrer (2003) for the variables Behavioural Organisational Trust (BO), Cognitive Organisational Trust (CO) and Social Normative Organisational Trust (SNO).²

McLoughlin’s (2014) Perceived Character of Immediate Managers and Perceived Character of Senior Management are included as antecedents, as are change and participation constructs based on the Dunphy and Stace (1990, 1993) contingency model. Change is potentially negative for trust and an important factor in the IT industry, while participation in change decision making is a measure of style of change leadership (Dunphy and Stace, 1990, 1993). The final hypothesised antecedent is communication. In the Australian study, McLoughlin (2014) found that the communication by the immediate manager and communication by senior management were also different constructs and so the same measures are used for this research.

For the outcomes, McLoughlin (2014) based the hypothesised relationships on Dirks and Ferrin’s (2002) framework, and the same measures are used here: Organisational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB), Job Satisfaction, Support for Change Direction and Affective Commitment Two demographic variables were included – gender and supervisor.³ The target population was identified by organisational function and occupation and needed to be an industry that operated similarly in different countries. The IT industry has strong commonalities across countries due to being a globalised industry. IT organisations are also considered an archetypal knowledge-based workplace (Frenkel, Korczynski, Donoghue and Shire, 1995). Workers in knowledge based industries are also often regarded as working in environments of greater trust and autonomy (Kanter, 1997; Frenkel, Korczynski, Shire and Tam, 1999, Jennex, 2007; Chung and Jackson, 2011), although this is contested (Hoffman, Hoelscher, and Sherif, 2005; Korsgaard and Sapienza, 2002; Adler 2001). The proliferation of smartphones, tablets and other mobile technology decade has attracted the attention of scholars who have examined its impact on work practices, attitudes to work and work-life conflict (Mazmanian, Orlikowski and Yates, 2013; Pocock and Skinner, 2013; Towers, Duxbury, Higgins, and Thomas, 2006). An important aspect of IT workplaces is whether mobile technologies afford greater autonomy and participation to employees by allowing them to work anytime or anywhere, or whether a mobile device simply acts as an ‘electronic leash’ (Mazmanian, Orlikowski and Yates 2006:339) further binding people to the office, potentially diminishing trust.

Data

The authors in each country translated the survey into the local language and then back translated the questions to ensure reliability. Respondent employees within local IT organisations were then sought. A total of 541 people responded to the survey, with the largest representation from an Australian multinational ICT organisation (59%), followed by Turkish IT organisations (22%) and the IT organisations in the Ukraine (19%). The Ukraine has legislation which favours small IT companies and

¹ Not involved in the 2014 research

² The 2014 research adapted questions to be clear whether the referent was “my immediate manager”, “senior management” or “this organization”

³ The specific questions are available from the corresponding author upon request

this resulted in a larger percentage of supervisors responding, when compared to the results from Turkey and Australia (see Table 1).

Table 1: Demographic Information

Country	Responses	Gender		Supervisor	
Australia	320	Male	222	Yes	112
		Female	97	No	205
Turkey	121	Male	88	Yes	41
		Female	33	No	80
Ukraine	100	Male	59	Yes	65
		Female	41	No	35

As this research explores the complex variables related to trust, the issues may be addressed using Partial Least Squares (PLS). As a component-based structural equation modelling technique, PLS offers several advantages over the better-known covariance-based SEM (CBSEM) methods. Where CBSEM relies on a maximum likelihood function to obtain parameter estimates for latent structural modelling, PLS focusses on the explanation of covariance across the model. Both CBSEM and PLS enable researchers to answer a set of interrelated research questions in a comprehensive model simultaneously (Gefen, Straub and Boudreau., 2000). The PLS technique however, offers a stronger explanatory rationale for multiple variables and a more nuanced understanding of possible pathways and smaller sample sizes (Chin, 2010).

Validity and reliability of measures

Turning first to the validity of the questions: The initial testing addresses discriminant validity, ensuring the questions are more strongly related to the variable they seek to capture, rather than any other question or variable. This testing is initially conducted by checking the cross loadings for all of the questions against all of the other questions (the monofactorial cross loadings). Each question loading on its own variable must be the highest number both across that row and down that column. A second test of discriminant validity is recommended using Fornell and Larcker's (1981) Average Variance Explained (AVE). The latent variables should be greater than the square of the correlations among the latent variables. Chin (2010) recommends that the AVE should also be higher than 0.5 for all questions, meaning that questions should account for at least 50% of the variance.

Once the discriminant validity has met these benchmarks, the next test considers the consistency of the questions within the variable using Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha. The calculation of Cronbach's Alpha holds all of the paths from the questions to the variable as equal, although some questions may be stronger representatives of the variable than others. PLS accounts for this by giving each question a weighting that maximises the variance explained for the prediction of the variable. Therefore, a better measure of internal consistency in PLS is Composite Reliability which allows variable path weights (Chin, 2010). However, due to Cronbach's widespread use, and for comparability with other studies, both Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (Dillon-Goldstein's rho) are reported here. Finally, the weighting in PLS also enables the retention of weaker questions because the weighting minimises those questions, or those questions can be removed. On balance, a superior internal 'reliability' can often be obtained in PLS by removing problematic questions.

At this stage, the statistical model itself is not being tested, rather the discriminant validity and reliability of the variables are being assessed.⁴ Given the small (per country) sample size, weaker questions were eliminated and then reliability re-assessed. Table 2 indicates that the variables do meet the reliability criterion with D.G. rho above 0.7, with conventional Cronbach's Alpha comparison.

⁴ Although Change met the validity and reliability criteria (Cronbach's alpha: 0.894 and D.G. rho:0.927) it is removed in the next step, the results are not reported in Table 2.

Table 2: Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha (n=541)

Latent variable	Dimensions	Cronbach's alpha	D.G. rho (PCA)
Perceived Character (Immediate)	6	0.899	0.923
Communication (Immediate)	3	0.882	0.927
Participation	3	0.532	0.762
Trust Disclosure	5	0.813	0.872
Trust Reliance	5	0.875	0.910
Communication (Org)	3	0.803	0.884
Perceived Character (Org)	5	0.877	0.911
Trust BO	3	0.789	0.877
Trust CO	3	0.808	0.887
Trust SN	3	0.805	0.885
Job Satisfaction	2	0.555	0.818
Affective Commitment	3	0.694	0.831
Support for Change Direction	3	0.667	0.819
OCB	3	0.830	0.898

The literature and the Australian research suggested an exploratory theoretical model for examining trust in ICT workplaces. Due to the small sample size from each country, the combined maximised model was tested. Because all of the testing mentioned so far is done in the context of a structural model, the theoretical model is specified as a statistical model in XLStat.⁵ The theoretical model is assumed until both discriminant validity and Composite Reliability have been established, although the poor questions relating to a variable may be removed. Only then does the testing of the statistical model itself commence.

The logic of this analysis has been to utilise the capacity of structural equation modelling to develop a nuanced understanding of how trust operates within ICT workplaces across three countries. Mediation is first established through comparing the direct effects model, the partial mediation model and the trust mediated model. Analysis of the strength of the paths, the variables and their significance allows for the most statistically robust model based on the data to be developed. Comparison of the direct effects model, the partial mediation model, and the trust mediated model in that research completed the three steps recommended by Baron and Kenny (1986) to demonstrate mediation. Those tests revealed that the 'trust only' mediated model did not provide the best fit with the data.

Results

The 2014 Australian research (n=225) established a GoF of 0.940* and the mean R² of 0.493. In this research, testing of relationships between the variables, identifies the model which most robustly represents the data collected, as set out in Figure 2. It shows the highest GoF of 0.959* and the mean R² of 0.583. Table 3 provides the details of the values, with all of the values and paths significant at the 0.05 level (using bootstrapping).⁶

⁵ The analysis for this paper was done in XLStat,2017, version 19.01.

⁶ Chin (2010) recommends bootstrapping for testing significance. The number of re-samplings recommended for confidence intervals is 1000 (Efron and Tibshirani, 1986). Confidence interval testing produces a lower and an upper bound (at the 95% level for this research) and neither bound should contain zero for the benchmark to be achieved (Chin 2010).

Table 3: Significance Testing, R² and p value for Maximised Model

Latent variable	Value	Value (Bootstrap)	Standard error (Bootstrap)	Critical ratio (CR)	Lower bound (95%)	Upper bound (95%)	Dependent Variable	R ²	p
Perceived Character (Immediate)	0.869	0.870	0.012	73.136	0.847	0.893	Communication	0.756	0.05
Perceived Character (Immediate)	0.734	0.736	0.022	33.466	0.690	0.777	Trust Disclosure	0.539	0.05
Perceived Character (Immediate)	0.804	0.804	0.019	43.109	0.764	0.836	Trust Reliance	0.646	0.05
Participation	0.281	0.281	0.008	34.151	0.263	0.296	Trust BO	0.694	0.05
Communication (Org)	0.321	0.321	0.007	44.352	0.306	0.335			
Perceived Character (Org)	0.335	0.335	0.007	46.288	0.320	0.349			
Participation	0.276	0.276	0.009	32.339	0.258	0.292	Trust CO	0.697	0.05
Communication (Org)	0.326	0.326	0.007	47.903	0.312	0.339			
Perceived Character (Org)	0.335	0.335	0.006	52.228	0.322	0.348			
Communication (Org)	0.387	0.387	0.013	30.273	0.360	0.411	Trust SN	0.616	0.05
Perceived Character (Org)	0.433	0.432	0.010	41.971	0.411	0.452			
Trust BO	0.220	0.221	0.009	23.282	0.202	0.239	Job Satisfaction	0.413	0.05
Trust CO	0.247	0.248	0.008	29.939	0.230	0.263			
Trust SN	0.224	0.224	0.012	18.924	0.201	0.246			
Communication IWA	0.132	0.132	0.007	17.826	0.117	0.147	Affective Commitment	0.487	0.05
Trust Disclosure	0.117	0.117	0.008	14.113	0.100	0.132			
Trust Reliance	0.131	0.131	0.008	16.597	0.115	0.146			
Trust BO	0.168	0.168	0.006	25.922	0.156	0.181			
Trust CO	0.161	0.161	0.006	25.297	0.148	0.173			
Trust SN	0.149	0.149	0.008	19.481	0.134	0.164			
Communication IWA	0.182	0.183	0.010	18.582	0.163	0.202	Support for Change Direction	0.550	0.05
Trust BO	0.217	0.217	0.008	28.792	0.202	0.231			
Trust CO	0.232	0.233	0.007	34.394	0.219	0.246			
Trust SN	0.224	0.225	0.009	23.859	0.205	0.242			
Communication IWA	0.187	0.187	0.009	21.629	0.169	0.203	OCB	0.429	0.05
Trust Disclosure	0.148	0.148	0.010	14.935	0.129	0.168			
Trust Reliance	0.147	0.148	0.010	15.285	0.128	0.166			
Trust BO	0.150	0.150	0.009	17.065	0.131	0.168			
Trust CO	0.156	0.156	0.008	19.333	0.140	0.171			

Figure 2: Maximised Model

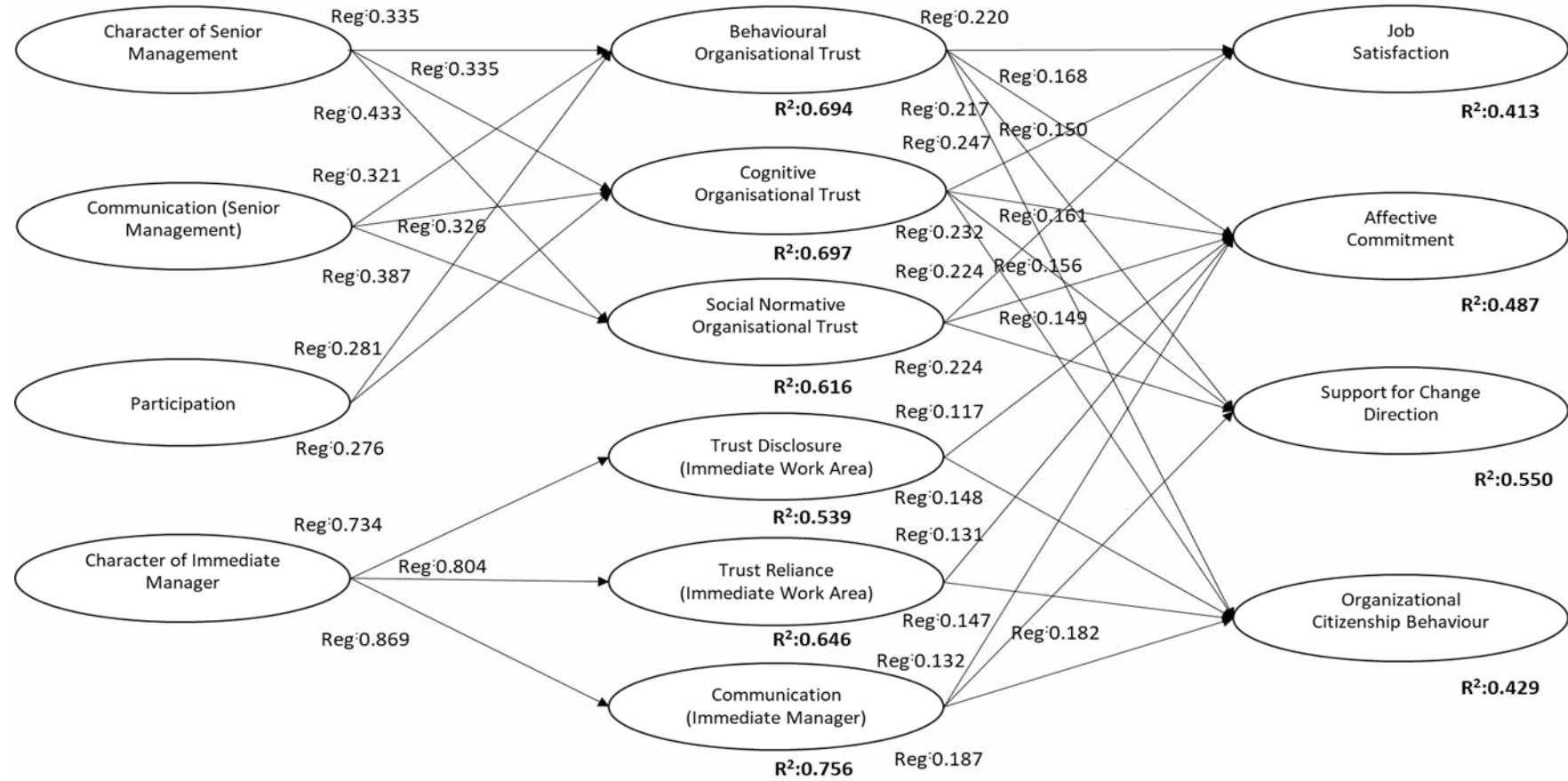


Figure 2 and Table 3 show that the following antecedent associations are significant and positive at the .05 level. Perceived character of the immediate manager is significantly associated with communication (immediate manager), trust disclosure and trust reliance. Perceived character of senior management is significantly associated trust in the organisation (Trust BO, CO, SN). Communication (senior management) is significantly associated with trust in the organisation (Trust BO, CO, SN). Participation is significantly associated with two elements of trust in the organisation (Trust BO, CO).

Figure 2 and Table 3 also show that with trust in the organisation (Trust BO, CO, SN) is significantly associated with all organisational outcomes – the one exception being Trust SN and OCB. Communication (immediate manager) is significantly associated with all organisational outcomes – the one exception being job satisfaction. Trust in the immediate manager (Reliance and Disclosure) is significantly associated with affective commitment and OCB.

Discussion

There are a number of important implications from the results. First, increased understanding of the antecedents, outcomes, and role of trust in the international ICT industry. Second, ‘who trusts whom’ does make a difference as the different operations of trust at different hierarchical levels within the organisation attest. Character of manager is a strong driver of trust for the immediate work area (and communication), perhaps because of the interpersonal dimensions of trust. Character of senior management and communication are shown to be the strongest drivers of trust for the organisation, with participation in decision making also important. As expected by Dirks and Ferrin (2002), perceived character is an important factor in determining trust. Another expectation of Dirks and Ferrin (2002) is also confirmed in this study - the relationship between trust and affective commitment had a higher value when the referent was organisational, as opposed to trust in the immediate manager.

The fact that communication with the immediate manager has important direct effects on support for change direction, OCB and affective commitment is perhaps unsurprising. However, the mediation of immediate work area communication in a similar way to trust was unexpected. Less surprisingly, organisational communication is mediated through the three subcomponents of organisational trust indicating an important difference in the referent for communication. New knowledge is gained through the finding associations other than trust may also depend on who the referent is. The implication is that one should be wary of theorising about trust and communication in general, but rather specify ‘trust in whom’, and ‘communication with whom’.

Another contribution is the differentiated nature of the results for the impact of character of managers and senior management. As with other trust antecedents, the theoretical model posited that immediate managers have a different impact on trust when compared to senior management. Trust research often does not consider differences of trust within organisations. These findings have identified the antecedents and outcomes of trust within a small sample of ICT workplaces, however, there is a strong possibility that these findings have implications for theories of trust within other workplaces.

Limitations and further research

Further research should seek to engage in more sophisticated designs, in order to better reflect the nuances of the various levels of management within organisations. Organisations, even small local ones appear to have a complexity in their hierarchy, which is more often expected in multinational corporations. These different circumstances within organisations may be fruitful ground for additional research into the impact of both trust referent and communication referent. The measure of ‘perceived character of manager’ would appear to be a strong trust antecedent, which influences other generally accepted antecedents, such as communication. Confirming the usefulness of the measures in other trust studies and in other industries may be fruitful areas for further research. All of the findings of this research would also benefit from longitudinal study.

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