

## How is Trust affected by a Leader's failure on his role?

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### Abstract

This study explores the trust concept on leadership and how it can affect employee's behavior. The purpose of the paper is to discuss how leadership trust can be affected by a leader's failure on his role.

The research question is "How is trust affected by a leader's failure on his role?" And it will lead us to test and validate the impact of leader's trust on employee's behavior and performance through organizations structures.

In leadership, trust between superiors and followers plays a very important role. Since last decade, there has been a considerable increase in researching trust at the organizational level. Researchers and practitioners continue to recognize trust as an important factor in determining organizational success, organizational stability and the well-being of employees. Trust has also emerged as a central construct in a wide range of management studies including those focusing on performance.

This is a conceptual paper, which explores the concepts of trust, behavior and performance, framed by leadership models. The literature review includes a documentary analysis of papers from the main scientific databases: Scopus and WOS, using the keywords leadership, trust, behavior and performance.

As expected results we anticipate to confirm if leader's trust within organization hierarchies will generate and be a key factor on behavior and thus lead to better performance from employees which will originate better results from their tasks and thus more efficiency which in turn will lead to high organizational performance.

### Keywords

Leadership, Trust, Behaviour, Performance

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Trust has been one variable that shows to be an important factor in the success of organizations and in its stability and well-being of employees. Trust can influence the degree of employees' engagement and can be an influence through the organization. (Albrecht & Travaglione, 2003)

According to Veloso (2010) it has been found that trust in labor relations is declining. A hierarchy issue is appearing as employees rely less on employers and managers. Some authors attribute this declining in confidence in the organizational context to the changes that have occurred as downsizing processes and restructuring, and to the internal functioning of organizations, specifically the leadership styles and change management strategies (Zeffane & Connell, 2003).

On this regard, to establish and maintain a trusting relationship within organization, with team leaders, and specifically with top management bodies, there are important situational factors such as fluid communication, justice and fairness in organizational policies and procedures, perceptions of organizational support, job satisfaction and job security (Albrecht & Travaglione, 2003). In relations between organizations such as outsourcing or supplier-customer, (inter-organizational) trust it is also an important factor, as an example, in collaboration among organizations and maintaining their relationships medium and long term (Ab Aziz, Ahmad, & Dominic, 2012).

In leadership, trust between superiors and followers, between employers and employees, plays a very important role. In order to understand the mutual connection between trust and leadership on a deeper level, Kovac (2010) selected delegation, communication and control as important elements in the leadership process (Kovač & Jesenko, 2010)

Following Kovac's research (2010) he stats that In addition, trust within an organization is gaining in importance due to new organizational forms such as network organizations and knowledge organizations. Thus, an author like Bleicher, who developed the concept of the "organization of trust" (Vertauensorganistaion) (Bleicher, 1991), defines the "organization of trust" in his latest observations as the foundation stone of a modern organization. Bleicher considers "an intelligent company" where trust is "the glue that holds organizations together" to be the organizational form of the future (Bleicher, 2009).

A number of studies have established the importance of trust as a fundamental requirement for social integration and democracy (Paliszkievicz, Koohang, Gołuchowski, & Horn Nord, 2014a). Trust has also emerged as a central construct in a wide range of management studies including those focusing on performance as Kramer (2003), Lewicki,(2005), Mayer (1995), McAllister (1995) or Colquitt (2007). According to Aryee (2002) within organizations, trust has been demonstrated to be an important predictor of outcomes such as organizational commitment, Costigan (1998) already mentioned that employee loyalty is also an important outcome.

The trust literature distinguishes trustworthiness (the ability, benevolence, and integrity of a trustee) and trust propensity (a dispositional willingness to rely on others) from trust (the intention to accept vulnerability to a trustee based on positive expectations of his or her actions (Colquitt et al., 2007)

One of the Leadership styles referred by Boyatzis, Goleman and McKeen(2003) is coaching and on that regard they mentioned that coaching focuses on personal development rather than accomplishing tasks. Yet the style leads to an outstandingly positive emotional response and better results, almost irrespective of the other styles, a leader employs.

Still about coaching Boyatzis, Goleman and McKeen (2003) referred that through personal conversations with employees, coaching leaders establish rapport and trust. Such leaders delegate and give employees challenging assignments that stretch them. These leaders are tolerant towards failures. This style of leadership is most effective with employees who show more initiative and want more professional development. Good coaches effectively communicate a belief in people's potential and an expectation that they can do their best. (Goleman et al., 2003)

## 2. METHODOLOGY

Based on the literature, for our research, we adopted the leadership styles definitions from the questionnaire that will be prepared and compiled from Lang (1996). The behavior of leaders thus comprises coherent, "to be" notions that are realized with the aid of leadership instruments (Lindert 1996:91). The manner and form of using influential mechanisms for directing co-workers towards achieving objectives have been defined in the four possible varieties of leadership styles; they are marked as L1, L2, L3 and L4

When measuring the perception of the leader's "democratic" approach, we are going to use the four previously defined leadership styles. We can therefore observe that the democratic approach increases as we progress from the type L1 leader to the type L4 leader, from autocratic vs democratic, directive vs participatory. The individual elements present typical characteristics of theoretically defined leaders, as described above. In this research, we want to measure these elements in the form of statements, i.e. we will ask on the survey to grade the extent they believe the statements apply to their superiors using a scale from 1 (I don't agree at all) to 5 (I fully agree).

All the statements are presented in the section "Defining the types of leaders from the democratic leadership styles." Since certain elements connect content-wise based on the level of democracy in leadership styles, we hereinafter determined the different types of leaders on the basis of cluster analysis. Based on the perception of individual elements, we later defined different groups of leaders that differ according to their level of democracy in leadership styles.

Other elements studied (trust, the delegation of tasks, the level of communication and control) have a multi-dimensional nature; therefore, they were measured in the research questionnaire indirectly. We determined individual factors (in order to best define an individual element) on the basis of the organization's practical operation. We measured the trust in different levels of organization, because we wanted to obtain an integrated picture of the trust within the organization as a whole. Consequently, the respondents will evaluate trust within an organization in a general sense, among the top leaders, their superiors and followers, and among the organizational units. The other three dimensions (the delegation of tasks, communication and control) were defined in the research questionnaire from the formal and informal points of view. (Kovač & Jesenko, 2010)

To join another perspective and to expand this research we also going to prepare the questioner based on Paliszkievicz et al (2014) were the authors reported that the items of the instrument loaded on the three components created the following constructs: management trust (MT), organizational trust (OT), and organizational performance (OP). The three constructs with their associated factors. The measures of MT, OT, and OP integrated a Likert-type scale. For positively worded statements, the scale represented strongly agree = 5, agree = 4, neither agree nor disagree = 3, disagree = 2, and strongly disagree = 1. The opposite was used for negatively worded statements.

## 3. LITERATURE REVIEW

### Trust between leaders and their followers

The relationship between superiors and followers may be based on trust or on fear wrote Bleicher (2009). Being more detailed, and precise, Bleicher believes that "in addition to fear, trust is one of the ways of keeping the social system together" Bleicher (2009). Additionally Ghilic-Micu and Stoica (2003) wrote that "fear is the opposite of trust in the workplace" and also emphasize the aspect of negative consequences of fear taking over at the workplace.

Those negative influences of fear on the efficiency of performing work tasks have been confirmed by numerous researchers. Thus, Schein (1995) confirmed the negative influences an atmosphere of fear has on learning processes within an organization Kramer and Cook (2004). Bibb and Kourdi (2007) are even more forthright when they wrote that "low trust cultures are characterized by fear of the boss and fear of making a mistake because of the repercussions.

The sort of behavior that you see in such cultures is caution, lack of risk taking as well as passive acceptance and lack of challenge to authority" (Bibb & Kourdi, 2007). In contrast, Ghilic-Micu and Stoica (2003) stated that a high level of trust leads to "synergy and performance". Consequently, it is in the interest of each leader to develop a high level of trust in relation to his or her followers. The main goal of all this research is focus on exploring the scope and importance of trust between superiors and followers, employers and employees.

Trust in leadership appears to be associated with a well-established set of leadership actions and behaviors stated Dirks and Skarlicki (2004) as a conclusion on their research, On another research Andersen (2005) as result from his findings,

he wrote that superiors gain the trust of their followers with their activity, and the level of trust between superiors and their followers differs with regard to hierarchical level in an organization.

Taking in consideration all mentioned above, it can be stated that Trust between Leaders and follows, employees and employers, is a very important fact and it should be taken in consideration. Reforming this Kovac (2010) wrote that building trust between superiors and followers is extremely important for a successful and effective operation of an organization.

Based on Kovac (2010) research the basic relationship between superiors and followers within an organization is formed through the leadership process. The basic form of the leadership process within an organization is manifested in the so-called leadership style, which can be defined as a relatively permanent pattern of influence on the followers with the goal of mutually achieving set objectives (Staehle, 1999). In theory, leadership styles are shown for the most part as dichotomous models (autocratic vs democratic, directive vs participatory) (B. B. M. Bass & Stogdill, 1990).

Getting in-depth understanding of the scope of trust between followers and leaders, employers and employees or superiors and followers, exploring the connection between the leadership style (autocratic vs democratic, directive vs participatory) (B. B. M. Bass & Stogdill, 1990) and the level of trust can be seen as too superficial (Kovac & Jesenko, 2010). In order to understand the mutual connection between trust and leadership on a deeper level, following Kovac's research delegation, communication and control were selected as important elements in the leadership process (B. B. M. Bass & Stogdill, 1990). The manner and form of the implementation of control, communication and delegation is, to a great extent, related to leadership style as stated by Bass (1990).

As mentioned above, following Kovac (2010) criteria, we decided to select communication, delegation and control as elements of the leadership process because they occur most frequently in the research related to trust between superiors and followers within an organization. Based on the research by Whitner (1998), the following factors contribute the most to increasing trust between leaders and followers: behavioral consistency, behavioral integrity, delegation and control, communication, demonstration of concern,

According to Das and Teng, (1998) and Schweer and Thies (2003) it was found that a certain level of control is necessary in most organizations. Although trust can simplify the controlling process (Neubauer & Rosemann, 2006) it cannot completely eradicate or substitute it. Trust can only decrease the controlling process complexity.

Referring to Kovac's research (2010), regarding communication some authors as Zand (1977) and Korsgaard and Roberson (1995) emphasize that trust is one of the central elements in the communication process within an organization (Schweer & Thies, 2003). The level of trust influences the quality of the communication process itself and increases its openness and intensity

Delegation is understood as a process of empowerment by ones' followers, who can take responsibility for certain activities (Kovač & Jesenko, 2010). Bass (1990) wrote that "the degree of delegation is associated with the trust the superior has for the subordinate". The form of delegation depends on the trust between the superiors and the followers (Whitener & Brodt, 1998).

## **Management and organizational trust**

We can find many definitions of trust especially in the disciplines of philosophy, psychology, sociology and economics just to name the most relevant ones. According to Herzberg (1988) trusting another person means having a trusting attitude towards the other person. Thus, trust is implicit, not conditional and always rational. Philosophers emphasize a trusting attitude, often subconscious, as being a part of the basic conduct of life as written by Paliszkievicz (2014)

According to Gibb (1978), a psychologist, theorized that trust is instinctive and as a feeling, it is comparable to love. Trust in everyday life is a mix of feelings and rational thinking. Personality psychologists such as Wrightsman (1966) and Rotter (1971) view trust as a personality trait that reflects the general expectations of the trustworthiness of others.

The majority of research on trust, as Butler (1984), Deluga (1994), Tan (2000) or more recently Aryee (2002), focuses on supervisors, managers, or work-group leaders. Researchers as Aryee (2002) or Brown (1996), have noticed that when employees have trust in the top manager, their organizational commitment and organizational identity also improve, which in turn causes employees to work harder and spend more time and energy in their jobs. On the other hand supervisors' actions and behaviors, are essential in determining the followers' attitudes and providing a foundation for trust wrote Withner (1998).

The effect of an employee's trust in top management on the employee's job performance was already study by researchers as Davis (2000), Morgan and Zeffane (2003) or Connell (2003). These authors found that the ideas of fairness and being human-oriented, based on a company's strategies and regulations all have an important impact upon an employee's job satisfaction and organizational commitment. When supervisors express concern for their employees' well-being, help them with career development, and value their work, they signal to their followers that they are interested in a close and social exchange relationship as mentioned also by Paliszkievicz (2014).

According to McAllister (1995), Dirks (2002), Wang (2010) and Yang (2010), there are two types of trust, one of which is exchange-based or relational in nature and the other character-based or cognitive in nature. Affective trust refers to the trust which is based on emotional ties between two parties in a relationship that results from the mutual exhibition of care and concern as written by McAllister (1995) and Dirks (2002). Affective trust is a good proxy for the process of social exchange, given it measures the extent to which both parties in a relationship engage in the reciprocated exchange of care and concern, as stated by Dirks (2002) or recently by Schaubroeck (2011).

Dirks (2002) and Schaubroeck (2011) defined that Cognitive trust refers to that which is based on an instrumental evaluation by the follower of the salient personal characteristics of the leader such as their integrity, competence, reliability and dependability. Cognitive trust influences employee attitudes by making them feel more confident in their supervisor's ability and qualifications to guide their task performance wrote Mayer (1995).

Wong (2003) observed that employees' trust in supervisors is associated with their trust in the organization. As their trust in the supervisor increases, their favorable perceptions of the organization also increase, observed by Pearce (1993). According to Lewis (1985) trust relationships further enable people to make emotional investments, because they believe in the intrinsic virtue of such relationships and that these sentiments are reciprocated.

Aryee (2002) stats that trust in the leader has been found to correlate with organizational trust, the antecedents of trust in the organization are different from those of trust in the leader, as mentioned by Tan (2000) one of his research. Findings from some studies suggest that the insecure future of the organization, inadequate working conditions, and poor treatment (Kiefer, 2005) or job insecurity (Wong, Wong, Ngo, & Lui, 2005) could lead to employees' distrust in the organization.

Trust in organizations involves employees' willingness to be vulnerable to their organization's actions. This willingness can be rendered only when an organization clearly communicates its actions to its employees through informal and formal networks. An important source of information is the employee's immediate social environment, which largely comprises co-workers Paliszkievicz (2014).

Deming (1994) stated that lack of trust in organization results in impairment of the entire system. Thus, organizational trust is mandatory for optimizing an organizational system because it can create a safe environment and lubricate organizational functioning.

Based on the literature the way we propose to analyze this variables is following Paliszkievicz (2014) theoretical model and empirically measure trust in organizations as it relates to organizational performance.

On their research Paliszkievicz et al (2014) attempted to empirically validate an instrument with three components: management trust (MT), organizational trust (OT), and organizational performance (OP). The authors concluded that the three components, MT, OT, and OP, were empirically validated to be reliable and interpretable among their associated factors.

## 4. CONCLUSIONS

The results that we expect to obtain and after the analyses should indicate the connection between the level of democracy in leadership styles and also the level of formalization in delegation, communication and the control of the tasks of one's followers or employees, as well as the democracy in leadership and the level of trust. Based on (Kovač & Jesenko, 2010)

We also expect that as stated by Rotter (1967) and Gilbert (1998) the two most common targets of trust in the literature are interpersonal trust, and organizational trust, can be validated as Interpersonal trust between managers and followers improves performance and productivity. Moreover, interpersonal trust between managers and followers influences high organizational commitment and morale; and low turnover and absenteeism (Diffie, 1984). Improving behavior (McAllister, 1995) and enhancing the quality of communication (Yeager, 1978) are other positive characteristics when interpersonal trust between managers and followers are present.

This study will be an approach between leadership styles and level of democratic leadership and variables as trust, control, communication and delegation, mixed with an approach of the relation between organizational trust, management trust and organizational performance.

At the end we pretend to have a theoretical model that can be used in future researches.

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