

Investigating Follower Felt Trust from a Social Cognitive Perspective

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Previous organizational research on trust has focused more on subordinates' trust in their leaders than on their experience of felt trust from the leader, even though the latter is also an important component of trust relationships. Our paper addresses a recent call for more theoretical explanations of the mechanism through which followers' felt trust influences their in-role and extra-role performance. Based on social cognitive theory, we proposed that occupational self-efficacy (OSE) mediates the felt trust-performance relationship in workplace settings, and tested these relationships in two empirical studies. Study 1 was a cross-sectional pre-study ($N = 189$) investigating only the mediating effects of OSE. For the main study, i.e., Study 2 ($N = 500$), we collected data at three different measurement occasions to minimize response bias. Study 2 investigated the mediation of the felt trust-performance relationship not only by OSE, but also by an additional mediator variable (organization-based self-esteem) that had been identified in previous studies, in order to determine whether the OSE effects remained significant. In both studies, structural equation modelling results supported the proposed mediating effects of OSE on the three performance outcomes for the reliance component of felt trust, but not for the disclosure component of felt trust.

Keywords: felt trust; social cognitive theory; self-efficacy; performance

Introduction

Trust is an important component of the relationship between followers (e.g., subordinates) and their leaders (e.g., supervisors and managers). High-trust workplace relationships tend to be associated with positive follower outcomes such as work satisfaction, performance and organizational citizenship behavior (see the meta-analyses by Colquitt, Scott, & LePine, 2007; Dirks & Ferrin, 2002). The extent to which a leader trusts a subordinate has implications for the closeness of the subordinate-supervisor relationship, and also how much autonomy (Seppälä, Lipponen, Pirttila-Backman, & Lipsanen, 2011), empowerment (Yukl & Fu, 1999), and access to information and support the subordinate has. The current work considers the supervisor's trust from a subordinate's perspective, specifically in terms of the extent of "felt trust" that subordinates believe the leader has for them (Brower, Schoorman, & Tan, 2000; Lau, Liu, & Fu, 2007). Our focus is the process through which followers' felt trust affects their in-role and extra-role job performance (outcomes which have also been a prior concern of felt trust research, e.g., Kim, Wang, & Chen, 2018; Lau, Lam, & Wen, 2014; Salamon & Robinson, 2008).

Previous trust research from the follower's perspective has tended to concentrate on subordinates' trust in their leaders (e.g., Schoorman, Mayer, & Davis, 2007). In contrast, substantially fewer models and empirical studies have focused on the felt trust experienced by subordinates. However, coinciding with the advancement of the study of followers and followership in recent years, felt trust has attracted increasing academic research interest (e.g., Baer, Dhensa-Kahlon, Colquitt, Rodell, Outlaw & Long, 2015; Brower, Lester, Korsgaard, & Dineen, 2009; Lau et al., 2007; 2014). Brower et al. (2000) noted that a subordinate's perception of the extent to which he/she is trusted may not be the same as the supervisor's report of the trust extended to the subordinate. This suggests that supervisors' trust in followers might influence subordinates through two different routes (Brower et al., 2009),

one being the influence that a supervisor's trust directly has on the way the supervisor treats the follower, and the other via intrapsychic pathways that are influenced by the extent of the subordinate's felt trust.

Our investigation addresses the research question of whether – and if so, how – follower felt trust influences important performance-related outcomes? This involves identifying relevant mediating variables. We take a social cognitive perspective (e.g., Bandura, 1989; 2012) to explain why the trust followers feel from their supervisors might relate to their subsequent task and extra-role performance. Specifically, we posit that followers' felt trust influences their performance through a psychological pathway involving self-efficacy. As an essential component of individual self-regulation, self-efficacy pertains to individuals' beliefs about their ability to achieve goals through their own actions, and has a strong impact on individuals' thoughts, motivation, and actions (Bandura, 1977). The agentic perspective of social cognitive theory (Bandura, 2001) argues that human behaviors are characterized by intentionality (i.e., actions are originated for specific purposes) and forethought (i.e., behaviors are regulated in accord with outcome expectations), which are both driven by self-reflectiveness about one's capability. Thus, although people's efforts to achieve goals and results are influenced by a variety of factors, they are rooted fundamentally in individual self-efficacy (Alessandri, Borgogni, Schaufeli, Caprara, & Consiglio, 2015; Bandura, 2001). The current study relies on the construct of occupational self-efficacy, as we believe it is best suited to address the workplace context. Occupational self-efficacy (OSE) is defined as a domain-specific form of self-efficacy reflecting confidence in one's ability to perform in the work context (Çetin & Aşkun, 2018; Schyns & von Collani, 2002).

Our work answers Lau, De Jong and Lam's (2018) call for a new theoretical perspective to explain the felt trust – performance relationship. However, it is important to note that previous work has identified several potential mediators of this relationship,

deriving from multiple theoretical perspectives. These include a self-evaluation perspective proposed by Lau et al. (2014) which argues for the importance of organization-based self-esteem (OBSE) as a mediator. Felt obligation has also been suggested as a mediator by those taking a social exchange perspective (Salamon & Robinson, 2008). Finally a conservation of resources perspective suggests that emotional exhaustion might mediate between felt trust and performance (Baer et al., 2015). The mediating effects of the variables associated with each of these three alternative perspectives have tended to be tested in isolation from each other. However, a study by Lau et al. (2018) examined the simultaneous effects of all three of these mediators, finding that only OBSE uniquely predicted task performance. Even though OBSE was the only unique predictor of performance in Lau et al. (2018), an earlier study by Lau et al. (2014) found that OBSE only partially mediated the felt trust-task performance relationship, and that OBSE did not significantly mediate the felt trust-OCB relationship. Taken together, these research findings support our idea that, aside from OBSE, there might be additional mediators of the felt trust-performance relationship, and suggest the value of considering additional theoretical perspectives.

Our work also contributes more generally to the followership literature. Previous trust research has mainly focused on studying followers' trust in the leader as a reflection of leader effectiveness (e.g., Burk, Sims, Lazzara, & Salas, 2007). However, a key followership issue is why followers are willing to accept the influence of a leader (Bastardo & Van Vugt, 2019). We suggest that followers are more likely to accept a leader's influence when they feel the leader trusts them. In turn, we believe felt trust enhances followers' beliefs in their own working capability, which then results in higher levels of follower task performance and extra-role behaviors. Indeed, followers' self-beliefs in their competence to achieve work outcomes have been argued as a crucial antecedent of followership (Zoogah, 2014).

The next section of the paper elaborates our arguments and presents the associated hypotheses. This is followed by descriptions of two empirical studies conducted to test the hypotheses. We conclude with a discussion of theoretical and practical implications of our findings.

Theoretical framework and hypotheses

Felt trust

Trust is defined as “the willingness of a party to be vulnerable to the actions of another party based on the expectation that the other will perform a particular action important to the trustor, irrespective of the ability to monitor or control that other party” (Mayer, Davis, & Schoorman, 1995, p. 712). Thus, trust is usually characterized as involving two parties: the trustor and the trustee (Mayer et al., 1995) and is typically viewed as something that is granted or given by one individual to another. Felt trust, in contrast, is a trustee’s perception of the extent that another person trusts him or her.

The concept of felt trust has its origins in the trust literature as well as in dyadic theories of leadership such as vertical dyadic linkage (VDL) theory, and its successor, leader-member exchange (LMX) theory (Cashman, Dansereau, Graen, & Haga, 1976; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). Dyadic leader-follower relationships are characterized as developing through a series of interpersonal exchanges during which the two parties learn about and evaluate each other’s capabilities and intentions. Because exchange relationships often involve implicit rather than explicit agreements about reciprocity, trust on the part of both persons involved is extremely important to maintaining such relationships (Blau, 1964). However, the intangible nature of trust means that followers cannot directly observe the level of their supervisors’ trust, but instead must infer it from the attitudes and behaviors that their leaders express towards them, thus introducing the potential for inaccuracy. Hence, followers’ perceptions of the level of trust received may not correspond to the actual level of trust extended by the

supervisor. Indeed, Brower et al. (2000) differentiate between leaders' actual trust in followers and followers' felt trust. These considerations imply that follower felt trust is important, because it suggests that the extent of felt trust might more directly influence how a follower responds in an exchange relationship than the actual trust that has been extended by the leader.

As trust is considered a multifaceted construct (McEvily & Tortoriello, 2011), and following the example of Lau et al. (2014), in the current study we consider two felt trust domains – felt reliance and felt disclosure. High follower *felt reliance* in our research context means that the follower feels that the supervisor allows the follower to represent the supervisor's interests and will rely on the follower's judgement or work-related skills by delegating decisions and actions to the follower. High follower *felt disclosure* means that the follower perceives that the supervisor intends to share sensitive information – either work-related or personal – with him/her. Our approach to operationalizing felt trust (i.e., felt reliance and felt disclosure), therefore, puts the emphasis on capturing a follower's feelings and impressions of the supervisor's trust intentions, rather than specific supervisor behaviors observed by the follower. This approach is consistent with the broader research on trust as a process (e.g., Dietz & den Hartog, 2006).

Follower felt trust and performance outcomes

Our focus in investigating the effects of follower felt trust is on two types of outcomes, namely follower in-role job performance (i.e., performance at required tasks) and extra-role job performance (i.e., organizational citizenship behaviors, OCB). Our consideration of extra-role job performance further differentiates between OCB toward colleagues (OCBI) and toward organizations (OCBO) (Carpenter, Berry, & Houston, 2014; Smith, Organ, & Near, 1983). Performance is an important potential outcome of felt trust for two reasons. First, considerable prior research attention has been paid to follower task performance and OCBs,

as they are of primary interest to organizations (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Paine, & Bachrach, 2000). Second, these performance variables are also the main foci of previous felt trust scholars (e.g., Lau et al., 2014, 2018; Li & Lau, 2014; Salamon & Robinson, 2008). Focusing on these performance outcomes thus makes our results comparable with previous findings, and can allow us to demonstrate the contribution of our proposed mediating mechanism.

The positive relationship of a follower's trust in the leader with in-role and extra-role job performance has been widely examined and established (e.g., Zhu & Akhtar, 2014, also see the Colquitt et al., 2007 meta-analysis). However, there are few theoretical explanations for how a follower's experience of *felt trust* from the supervisor might influence his or her job performance. Our primary theoretical argument for expecting a positive relationship of felt trust with performance is based on social learning theory (e.g., Bandura, 1977). Social learning theory implies that supervisors can play a vital role in motivating followers to perform via their interpersonal communications (e.g., felt disclosure), and positive feedback (e.g., felt reliance). We provide further details on this theoretical argument in the following section where we develop the argument for mediation of the felt trust-performance relationship by self-efficacy.

Also, the concept of reciprocity is relevant to explaining the felt trust-performance relationship. By definition, felt trust describes followers' perceptions that their leaders are willing to be vulnerable to them, and signals the leaders' expectations that their vulnerability will not be exploited. Persons who perceive they are trusted typically make great efforts not to violate the expectations of the trustor (Deutsch, 1958). Thus, we argue that when felt trust is high, followers who perceive their leaders are willing to rely on them and to share sensitive information with them will act responsibly in ways that meet the expectation of the leader, such as performing well and providing citizenship behaviors.

We also note that the idea of positive felt trust-performance relationship is supported by existing empirical findings. For example, in a cross-sectional sample of 497 teachers, Lau et al. (2014) found follower felt reliance was significantly positively related to task performance and OCBI (although not OCBO). And, at the aggregate level of 88 retail stores, Salomon and Robinson (2008) found a positive effect of collective felt trust on unit adjusted sales performance and customer service performance. Therefore, we propose that felt trust will positively relate to follower task performance and OCBs and accordingly advance the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: Follower felt trust (i.e., felt reliance and felt disclosure) is positively related to follower (a) in-role job performance, (b) OCBI and (c) OCBO.

Follower occupational self-efficacy as a mediator

Building on social cognitive theory, we propose that follower self-efficacy is an important mediating process that carries the effects of felt trust through to performance. Self-efficacy is defined as people's beliefs about their capabilities to achieve specific goals or levels of performance (Bandura, 1997). Self-efficacy effects on performance can be either direct or indirect, and tend to operate through their impact on individual goals and outcome expectations (Bandura, 2012). From the perspective of social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1989, 2001, 2006), an agentic individual is purposeful via setting desired goals and outcome expectations. Agentic behavior is regulated by self-motivation and self-guidance, a process in which cognitive beliefs play the key role. Therefore, because of its ability to link social influences (such as a supervisor's influence on his or her followers) to purposeful behavior, social cognitive theory appears to provide a suitable theoretical lens through which to examine the link between felt trust and follower performance.

We suggest that felt trust can be a source of self-efficacy, arguing that felt trust functions as a type of social persuasion. Social persuasion is comprised of the support and

encouragement received from another person (Bandura, 1977; Schyns & von Collani, 2002), and has been identified as one of four key sources of efficacy beliefs along with mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, and emotional/physiological states. Bandura (2012) indicates that social persuasion is an important source of individual self-efficacy because it strengthens people's belief that they can succeed at relevant tasks. When conceiving of felt trust as a form of social persuasion, explanations can be advanced for why both felt reliance and felt disclosure might increase self-efficacy. Specifically, followers who feel that their work judgements and skills are relied upon (i.e., felt reliance) are likely to interpret this as positive feedback from the supervisor about their working capabilities (e.g., Biron & Bamberger, 2010). Similarly, sharing personal beliefs or work-related sensitive information (felt disclosure) indicates a willingness of the supervisor to have a close relationship with the follower (Gillespie, 2003), which in turn is expected to enhance follower occupational self-efficacy by suggesting that they might have additional intrapersonal resources that can help them achieve their work goals.

Moreover, according to Mayer et al.'s (1995) trust definition, a trustor has positive expectations of the trustee performing certain anticipated behaviors in the future. Therefore, feeling trusted by the leader also transmits the leader's high expectations of the follower. According to Eden (1990), when high expectations are perceived by followers they can become self-fulfilling prophecies and boost the followers' self-efficacy, thus raising followers' motivation and levels of behavior to be consistent with the leader's expectation via this so-called Pygmalion effect (Brower et al., 2009). Indeed, empirical results show that supervisor behaviors that communicate positive expectations and a positive working relationship can affect followers' self-efficacy (Natanovich & Eden, 2008; Schyns & von Collani, 2002). Drawing on these bases, we posit that followers are likely to be more

confident in their capability to do their jobs, that is, to have higher self-efficacy, when felt trust is high.

In turn, self-efficacy is proposed to positively affect follower job performance. The social psychological and organizational literatures suggest that self-efficacy increases effort and persistence in tasks, which in turn enhances performance (Bandura, 1986; Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998). This has been demonstrated empirically for both in-role and extra-role job performance, and also for both general self-efficacy (Alessandri et al., 2015; Ng & Lucianetti, 2016; Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998) and for occupational self-efficacy (Hirschi, 2012; Rigotti, Schyns, & Mohr, 2008). Because self-efficacy is strongly associated with setting higher goals and exerting additional effort when pursuing a task (Wood & Bandura, 1989; Zhang, Law, & Lin, 2016), we expect that follower occupational self-efficacy will mediate the relationship between felt trust and job performance.

Note that self-efficacy can be conceptualized and assessed at various levels of specificity, including as a general personality construct, as a domain-specific construct, and as a task-specific construct (Woodruff & Cashman, 1993). Compared to general or task-specific self-efficacy, which respectively reflect aggregate assessments of one's capabilities across a broad set of different life domains or capabilities for one specific task, occupational self-efficacy refers specifically to individuals' beliefs about their work-related capabilities (Schyns & von Collani, 2002). Hence, occupational self-efficacy is at a medium level of generality, depicting "individual differences in self-efficacy associated with various professions and various jobs" (Schyns & von Collani, 2002, p. 221). This seems to us to be the level of specificity that is most relevant to the effects of felt trust from a supervisor. In addition, occupational self-efficacy has the desirable characteristic of being a construct that is specifically tailored to work settings. Thus, we advance a set of hypotheses consistent with

occupational self-efficacy playing a role as a key mediator of the relationships between follower felt trust and follower performance outcomes.

Hypothesis 2: Follower felt trust (i.e., felt reliance and felt disclosure) is positively related to follower occupational self-efficacy.

Hypothesis 3: Follower occupational self-efficacy is positively related to follower (a) in-role job performance, (b) OCBI and (c) OCBO.

Hypothesis 4: Follower occupational self-efficacy mediates the relationships of follower felt trust (i.e., felt reliance and felt disclosure) with follower (a) in-role job performance, (b) OCBI and (c) OCBO.

OBSE as an additional mediator

In addition to our newly proposed self-efficacy mediator, we note that among the mediators identified in previous felt trust research, only organization-based self-esteem (OBSE) predicted additional unique variance above other previously identified mediators, as shown in studies by Lau et al. (2018). Hence, in the main study of the current paper, we test the proposed mediating effect of occupational self-efficacy while also including OBSE as a mediator of the felt trust-performance relationship. Doing so allows determining whether or not self-efficacy remains a significant mediator in a model that simultaneously includes the effects of both mediators. If the mediating effects of self-efficacy are non-significant when OBSE is also in the model, then the argument for the usefulness of adding self-efficacy to the explanatory model would be substantially weakened.

OBSE depicts the degree to which the organization satisfies the needs of organizational members to maintain a positive self-view by communicating to them that they are valued within the organization (Pierce, Gardner, Cummings & Dunham, 1989). Pierce et al. (1989) differentiate OBSE from self-efficacy and state that self-efficacy reflects whether individuals' self-perceived competence can be translated into actions and desired outcomes,

whereas OBSE reflects self-perceived importance, meaningfulness and worth communicated via the organization. Lau et al. (2014, 2018) empirically demonstrated that follower organization-based self-esteem (OBSE) mediates the relationship between felt reliance and task performance. Based on the self-evaluation literature and attribution theory, they argue that felt trust communicates a positive assessment of the follower, which is perceived by the follower as important social information that informs his or her sense of worth in the organization, that is, their OBSE. The second part of the mediating path, namely, the positive relationship between OBSE and follower job performance, has been widely and robustly supported by empirical studies (e.g., Bowling, Eschleman, Wang, Kirkendall, & Alarcon, 2010). However, Lau et al. (2014) did not find that the disclosure component of felt trust predicted either in-role or extra-role performance. Based on Lau et al.'s (2014) findings, we expect that OBSE is more likely to emerge as a mediator in the relationship of felt reliance and performance than in the relationship between felt disclosure and performance, but for completeness, we test the potential that OBSE mediates both felt reliance and felt disclosure effects on performance.

Hypothesis 5: Follower OBSE mediates the relationship of follower felt trust (i.e., felt reliance and felt disclosure), with follower (a) in-role job performance, (b) OCBI, and (c) OCBO.

Overview of studies

We conducted two empirical studies to test the model implied by the research hypotheses. First, we conducted a pre-study (Study 1) using a cross-sectional sample as an initial investigation of the feasibility of occupational self-efficacy as a mediator of the felt trust-performance relationship. Study 1 tested hypotheses 1-4. This was followed by a more rigorous main study (Study 2) that tested the full set of five hypotheses, using improved

measures and collecting the data for antecedent, mediator, and outcome variables at three different time points to minimize response bias.

Study 1

Method

Sample and procedure

Participants were international graduates from a UK business school, employed in various companies. They completed a survey based on their work experience with their direct supervisors. An online survey link (with a one-month reminder) was sent via email to 800 graduates through the business school's alumni network. Potential respondents were informed that participation was voluntary, anonymous, and that their answers would only be used for research purposes. 189 of the 800 respondents (23.6%) completed the survey.

The sample was fairly balanced in terms of gender (53.4% male, 45.5% female, 1.1% no response). 85.9% of the participants were in the two age categories of 18-27 and 28-37 years, 10.2% were between 38-47, 3.4% were between 48-57, and 0.5% were between 57-65. Respondents worked in different sectors, including service companies, museums, higher education institutions, retail companies, and government. Participants reported their tenure in the current organization as less than 1 year (34.4%), more than one year but less than 2 years (25.9%), more than 2 years but less than 5 years (26.5%), and 5 years or more (13.3%). Most participants had worked with their current direct supervisor for less than 1 year (56.4%). The remaining participants had been with their supervisor for "more than one but less than 2 years" (21.5%), or "2 years or more" (22.1%).

Instruments

Felt trust from supervisor. The two felt trust domains of felt reliance (5 items, e.g., "To what extent do you think your direct supervisor relies on your task-related skills and abilities?") and felt disclosure (5 items, e.g., "To what extent do you think your direct

supervisor shares his/her personal feelings with you?") were measured using Lau et al.'s (2014) modified version of Gillespie's (2003) trust scale. Responses to the items were made on a 6-point Likert response format with anchors ranging from 1= "Not at all" to 6= "Very much."

Occupational self-efficacy. A six-item short version of the Schyns and von Collani's (2002) occupational self-efficacy measure that was validated by Rigotti et al. (2008) was used. A sample item is "When I am confronted with a problem in my job, I can usually find several solutions." Responses were made on a 6-point Likert response scale (1= "Not at all true", 6= "Completely true").

Job performance and organizational citizenship behavior. Participants evaluated their own in-role job behavior (in-role job performance) and extra-role job behavior (OCBI and OCBO), using Williams and Anderson's (1991) 21-item instrument (seven items for each scale). Sample items are "I adequately complete assigned duties" (in-role job performance); "I give advance notice when unable to come to work" (OCBO); and "I go out of way to help new employees" (OCBI). A 6-point Likert response scale was used (1= "Strongly disagree", 6= "Strongly agree").

Analytic strategy

Preliminary descriptive statistics were calculated using scale scores. Remaining analyses used a latent variable approach, estimated with the structural equation modelling (SEM) software Mplus 7.2 (Muthén, & Muthén, 1998-2012). To accommodate minor non-normality in the data, a robust estimator (MLR) was used. A set of three item parcels was used as indicators of each latent variable to improve the ratio of the sample size to the number of freely estimated parameters (Hall, Snell, & Foust, 1999; Little, Cunningham, Shahar, & Widaman, 2002).

Confirmatory factor analyses (CFA) were used to assess the construct validity of our measurement model (e.g., Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). Based on Henseler, Ringle, and Sarstedt (2015), we also assessed the heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratio of correlations between the factors to assess discriminant validity, using a criterion value of .85 or below to indicate adequate discriminant validity. To evaluate reliability, we report the composite reliability (CR) and average variance extracted (AVE) (see Kline, 2016, pp. 313-314). Latent variable path models were estimated to test the hypotheses, with statistical significance of the mediating effects assessed using bias-corrected bootstrapped 95% confidence intervals (10000 bootstrap samples) around the unstandardized estimates of the indirect effects.

Results

Scale score means, standard deviations, and correlations for the Study 1 focal variables are shown in regular font in the upper, right-hand portion of Table 1, with coefficient alphas on the diagonal. Zero-order correlations among the scale-score variables were all in the expected direction, and provided preliminary support for most of our hypotheses. Confirmatory factor analysis of the hypothesized six-factor measurement model (felt reliance, felt disclosure, occupational self-efficacy, in-role job performance, OCBI, OCBO) and alternative models of lower dimensionalities suggested the proposed model had an overall acceptable fit, $\chi^2(120) = 170.944$, CFI = .96, RMSEA = .047, 90% CI [.030, .063], SRMR = .052. Importantly, this model also fit significantly better than the alternative models. (The full set of results from alternative measurement models is available from the first author.) The lower, left-hand portion of Table 1 reports the correlations among the latent constructs from the measurement model.

 Insert Table 1 about here

Hypotheses were examined by estimating two structural equation models. Both models included latent constructs for felt trust reliance and disclosure, and the set of three performance variables. Structural Model 2 also included a latent construct for the occupational self-efficacy mediator. The overall model fit for both models was acceptable. Because Model 2 was saturated, it had an identical fit to the measurement model noted in the preceding paragraph; the fit for Model 1 was $\chi^2(80) = 142.238, p < .001$; RMSEA = .064, 90% CI [.047, .081]; CFI = .94; SRMR = .055.

Results from Model 1, which included only the direct effects of trust on the three performance variables, showed positive and statistically significant effects of felt reliance on (a) in-role job performance, $\beta = .49, p < .01$; (b) OCBI, $\beta = .51, p < .01$; and (c) OCBO, $\beta = .46, p < .01$. However, the effects of felt disclosure on the three performance variables were all non-significant. Hence, H1 (a-c) were supported for felt reliance but not for felt disclosure.

Model 2 specified that the effects of trust on performance were mediated through occupational self-efficacy. In this model, follower felt reliance had a statistically significant effect on occupational self-efficacy, $\beta = .61, p < .01$. In turn, occupational self-efficacy had statistically significant effects ($p < .01$) on: (a) in-role job performance, $\beta = .74$; (b) OCBI, $\beta = .25$ and (c) OCBO, $\beta = .34$. However, felt disclosure did not have a significant effect on occupational self-efficacy. Thus, although Hypotheses 3a-c received support, Hypothesis 2 was supported for felt reliance but not for felt disclosure. The remaining direct effects of follower felt reliance and felt disclosure on the three performance constructs were not statistically significant, except for the direct effect of felt reliance on OCBI, $\beta = .36, p < .01$.

The bootstrapped 95% confidence intervals indicated a significant indirect effect (via follower occupational self-efficacy) of follower felt reliance on all three performance outcomes. Specifically, the unstandardized and standardized (std) indirect effects were as follows: (a) in-role job performance, $ab = .23, 95\% \text{ CI } [.12, .41], \text{ std } ab = .45$; (b) OCBI, $ab =$

.10, 95% CI [.002, .24], *std ab* = .15¹; and (c) OCBO, *ab* = .11, 95% CI [.03, .24], *std ab* = .20. However, none of the mediated effects of follower felt disclosure on performance were statistically significant, i.e., (a) in-role job performance, *ab* = -.02, 95% CI [-.06, .01], *std ab* = -.06; (b) OCBI, *ab* = -.01, 95% CI [-.03, .01], *std ab* = -.02; and (c) OCBO, *ab* = -.01, 95% CI [-.03, .01], *std ab* = -.03; thus hypotheses 4 (a) to 4(c) were supported for felt reliance but not for felt disclosure.

In sum, Study 1 results supported a conclusion that the effects of felt reliance on both in-role and extra-role performance are mediated by occupational self-efficacy. However, felt disclosure did not relate either to occupational self-efficacy or to any of the three performance outcomes. These results encouraged us to test the hypotheses again using a more rigorous design and making other improvements to our procedures. First, even though the two extra-role performance scales used in this study were established measures, their low observed reliabilities raised concerns. Thus, we replaced them with alternative measures in Study 2. Second, in Study 2 we collected the data for the independent variable, mediating variable, and outcome variables at three separate points in time. Third, because previous studies had shown mediating effects of OBSE, we included it as an additional potential mediator in order to determine whether or not the mediating effects of OSE remained significant in its presence. Finally, Study 2 drew a larger and more heterogeneous sample with a wider range of educational backgrounds, industries, occupations, and ages than did Study 1.

Study 2

Method

Sample and procedure

Participants in Study 2 were employed, between 18 and 65 years of age, had more than 3 months working experience in United Kingdom, and indicated that they worked for a

direct supervisor. Survey data were collected in three waves (via a data recruitment company) to minimize biases associated with cross-sectional measurement. In Wave 1, 500 of the 1,317 followers invited to participate completed the survey, for a 38% response rate. Wave 1 included measures of the two components of felt trust. After three weeks, the 500 Wave 1 respondents were invited to complete the Wave 2 survey measuring occupational self-efficacy and OBSE. Of these, 382 completed Wave 2. The Wave 3 survey was sent to participants three weeks after they finished Wave 2. In Wave 3, 302 participants completed measures of their in-role job performance, OCBI and OCBO.

Analyses comparing demographics from persons completing all surveys versus those who did not complete all three waves found few differences between them, and those differences that were found were minimal. Specifically, stayers ($M = 47.61$) were slightly older than leavers ($M = 42.38$), stayers ($M = 8.92$) had a longer organizational tenure than leavers ($M = 6.81$), and stayers ($M = 4.18$) reported slightly higher levels of T1 felt reliance than leavers ($M = 3.99$). Because our SEM analyses used full information maximum likelihood (FIML) estimation methods which can accommodate missing variables, the data analyses reported in this article are based on the full sample of 500 persons who completed Wave 1. Assuming data are missing at random (MAR), which seems plausible given our preliminary analyses comparing leavers and stayers, using this approach produces less bias in parameter estimates than deleting participants with missing data and has the advantage of maintaining study statistical power (Graham, 2009). (As a robustness check, we also repeated our analyses using a multiple imputation approach to dealing with missing data. The resulting parameter estimates were very similar in value to those reported in this article, and there were no differences in conclusions about statistical significance.)

Participants' average age was 45.57 years old ($SD=11.64$), 34.8% were male, and 65.0% were female. The average working experience of the participants was 8.14 years

(SD=8.37). They had worked for their current direct supervisor for 3.53 years on average (SD=3.78). 21.6% of the participants worked in the service sector, 18.4% in retail, 8.6% in industry, 8.8% in education, and 0.4% in agriculture, and 42.2% reported working in an “other” sector.

Instruments

The measures for felt trust, occupational self-efficacy, and in-role job performance were identical to those used in Study 1. Descriptions of the new instruments used in Study 2 follow.

Organization-based self-esteem. Pierce, Gardner, Cummings and Dunham’s (1989) 10-item scale was used to measure follower OBSE. Respondents were asked to evaluate the extent they feel valued, worthwhile, and effective at their workplace, using 5-point response options ranging from 1= “Strongly disagree” to 5 = “Strongly agree.” A sample item is “I count in my organization”.

Organizational citizenship behaviors. OCBs were measured using Lee and Allen’s (2002) 16-item scale. This allowed distinguishing between OCBI and OCBO (measured by 8 items each), as was also done in Study 1. Sample items are “I go out of the way to make newer followers feel welcome in the work group” (OCBI) and “I express loyalty toward the organization” (OCBO). Responses were made using 7-point response options ranging from 1 = “Never” to 7 = “Always.”

Analytic strategy

Item parcels for use as indicators of the latent variables were created in the same manner as for Study 1. Again, measurement and structural models were estimated using Mplus 7.2 (Muthén & Muthén, 1998-2012) and the robust MLR estimator, and bootstrapped confidence intervals were used to assess statistical significance of the indirect effects.

Results

Preliminary analyses

Scale score means, standard deviations, and correlations for the focal variables are shown in the upper right-hand portion of Table 2, with coefficient alphas on the diagonal. Cronbach alphas for all variables were acceptable, values ranged from .76 to .96. The zero-order correlations were all in the expected direction and provided preliminary support for the hypotheses.

 Insert Table 2 about here

Tests of the measurement model assumptions

As in Study 1, a series of CFAs (Models 0-7) was conducted to assess the construct validity of the measures. The baseline measurement model (Model 0) was comprised of the two dimensions of follower felt trust, occupational self-efficacy, OBSE, and the three performance variables. The model failed the test of exact fit, $\chi^2(168) = 259.512, p < .001$. However, other indicators suggested this was primarily due to minor sources of misfit, and the overall model fit was found to be acceptable, CFI = .982; RMSEA = .033, 90% CI [.025, .041]; SRMR = .045.

To further analyze the distinctiveness of the two dimensions of felt trust, of the two mediators and of the three performance variables, we estimated seven additional nested CFAs in which different sets of variables were combined into the same latent construct, in order to determine whether the combined variables were truly distinct from each other. The proposed Model 0 fit best, with a significantly lower chi-square value than the remaining models, and better values of alternative model fit indices. (Details of the fit statistics allowing comparisons of these alternative nested models to Model 0 are available from the first author.) HTMT ratios of the seven factors were all below the recommended threshold of .85, ranging in value from .12 (felt disclosure with occupational self-efficacy) to .75 (felt reliance with felt

disclosure). Moreover, inspection of factor loadings from Model 0 indicated that all were statistically significant, with values of standardized loadings ranging from .60 to .99. These results supported our intended specification of the measurement model, and allowed us to move on to the hypothesis testing structural model. The correlations among the latent factors as estimated in Model 0 ranged in value from .11 (felt disclosure with OSE) to .66 (OCBI with OCBO), again supporting discriminant validity. The reliability indices for the latent factors were also acceptable, with AVE ranging from .61 to .83 and CR ranging from .60 to .87 (see Table 2 for details).

Hypothesis testing

Multiple structural equation models were specified to test the hypotheses. Model 1 had only direct effects of trust on the performance outcomes; Model 2 included occupational self-efficacy (OSE) as a mediator. Model 3 included both OSE and OBSE as parallel mediators to determine whether there was a remaining unique mediating effect of OSE (see Figure 1). These three structural models all had acceptable model fits based on supplementary fit indices, even though they all failed the chi-square test for exact fit, Model 1: $\chi^2(80) = 152.035, p < .001$; CFI = .977; RMSEA = .042, 90% CI [.032, .053]; SRMR = .049; Model 2: $\chi^2(120) = 203.039, p < .001$; CFI = .978; RMSEA = .037, 90% CI [.028, .046]; SRMR = .048; Model 3: $\chi^2(168) = 259.512, p < .001$; CFI = .982; RMSEA = .033, 90% CI [.025, .041]; SRMR = .045.

Unstandardized and standardized path estimates from the models are presented in Table 3. Supporting Hypothesis 1(a-c), Model 1 results indicate that followers' felt reliance at Time 1 had positive effects on their Time 3 performance, specifically: (a) in-role job performance, $\beta = .26, p < .01$, (b) OCBI, $\beta = .33, p < .01$, and (c) OCBO, $\beta = .32, p < .01$. However, the effects of felt disclosure on the three dimensions of performance were all nonsignificant, $\beta = -.02, n.s.$ for in-role job performance, $\beta = .06, n.s.$ for OCBI, and $\beta = -.01,$

n.s. for OCBO. This pattern of results replicates all findings of Study 1, supporting effects of felt reliance on the three performance outcomes but no effects of felt disclosure on performance.

 Insert Table 3 about here

Hypothesis 2 posited positive effects of the two dimensions of follower felt trust on the occupational self-efficacy mediator. As seen in the Model 2 results reported in Table 3, follower felt reliance at Time 1 uniquely and positively predicted occupational self-efficacy at Time 2, $\beta = .36, p < .01$. However, consistent with Study 1, the unique effect of follower felt disclosure on occupational self-efficacy was not significant, $\beta = -.05, n.s.$

Hypothesis 3 proposed that follower occupational self-efficacy at Time 2 had positive effects on the Time 3 measures of follower performance. This hypothesis was supported, as can be seen in Model 2 results of Table 3, indicating significant effects of OSE on (a) in-role job performance, $\beta = .45, p < .01$, (b) OCBI, $\beta = .27, p < .01$, and (c) OCBO, $\beta = .36, p < .01$. The significance of the indirect effects of the two felt trust components on the three dimensions of performance as mediated via occupational self-efficacy was tested using a bias-corrected bootstrapping approach. The unstandardized indirect effects of felt reliance at Time 1 on the performance outcomes at Time 3, via occupational self-efficacy at Time 2, were all statistically significant: (a) $ab = .06$ 95% CI [.03, .11], $std\ ab = .17$ for in-role job performance; (b) $ab = .07$, 95% CI [.03, .14] for OCBI, $std\ ab = .10$; and (c) $ab = .09$, 95% CI [.05, .15], $std\ ab = .13$ for OCBO. However, the parallel indirect effects of follower felt disclosure on the three performance variables were all nonsignificant, as would be expected given the non-significant effect of felt disclosure on OSE. Thus, Hypotheses 4 (a) to 4 (c) were supported for felt reliance, but were not supported for felt disclosure, again replicating Study 1 results.

In SEM Model 3, OBSE was included in the model as a parallel mediator along with OSE. Hypothesis 5 predicted that OBSE mediated the relationships between follower felt trust and the three dimensions of follower performance. The Model 3 columns of Table 3 report relevant results. As expected, follower felt reliance at Time 1 had a statistically significant effect on follower OBSE at Time 2, $\beta = .36, p < .01$, but the effect of felt disclosure at Time 1 on OBSE at Time 2 was not statistically significant at conventional values, $\beta = .10, p = .07$. In addition, OBSE did not have a significant effect on either in-role performance or OCBI at Time 3, thus it did not make sense to test for indirect effects as mediated by OBSE on either of these outcomes. However, Time 2 OBSE had a moderately strong effect on Time 3 OCBO, $\beta = .40, p < .01$, suggesting the potential for significant indirect effects via OBSE on this performance outcome.

Tests of the two potential indirect effects on OCBO via OBSE showed a significant mediated effect of felt reliance, $ab = .10, 95\%CI [.06, .16], std\ ab = .14$, and of felt disclosure, $ab = .03, 90\%CI [.003, .05], std\ ad = .04$. However, note that the latter indirect effect should be interpreted with caution as the path from felt disclosure to OBSE was not statistically significant. Hence, Hypothesis 5 (c) was clearly supported for felt reliance and provisionally supported for felt disclosure, but H5(a) (indirect effects via OBSE on in-role performance) and 5(b) (indirect effects via OBSE on OCBI) were not supported.

As would be expected, in Model 3 the estimated effects of felt trust on OSE were essentially the same as those in Model 2, i.e., felt trust reliance, $\beta = .36, p < .01$, and felt trust disclosure, $\beta = -.05, n.s.$ Even with the inclusion of OBSE as a parallel mediator, the proposed positive effects of occupational self-efficacy on the follower performance dimensions remained positive and statistically significant: (a) in-role performance, $\beta = .42, p < .01$, (b) OCBI, $\beta = .25, p < .01$, and (c) OCBO, $\beta = .22, p < .01$ (see Table 3 for additional detail). The magnitude of these effects did not change much from Model 2 to Model 3 for in-

role performance and for OCBI. However, the effect of occupational self-efficacy on performance was noticeably weaker for Model 3 compared to Model 2 for OCBO. This appears to be due to overlap with the effect of OBSE on OCBO. In spite of this, tests of the effects of felt trust reliance on performance via occupational self-efficacy still held for all three performance dimensions in Model 3, specifically, (a) $ab = .06$, 95% CI [.03, .11], $std\ ab = .15$ for in-role job performance; (b) $ab = .07$, 95% CI [.03, .14], $std\ ab = .09$ for OCBI; and (c) $ab = .06$, 95% CI [.02, .11] $std\ ab = .08$ for OCBO. Finally, Model 3, which included the simultaneous mediating effects of OSE and OBSE, explained 25% of the variance in in-role performance, 19% of the variance in OCBI and 33% of the variance in OCBO. Figure 1 depicts the results for the main study in path diagram form.

 Insert Figure 1 about here

Discussion

The current paper further develops a social cognitive theory-based conceptual framework of felt trust and its consequences. We proposed and empirically demonstrated that occupational self-efficacy significantly mediates the relationship of felt reliance with in-role and extra-role performance, even when the previously identified mediator of OBSE was included in the model. Thus, for felt reliance, the newly proposed mediator advances our understanding of mechanisms by which felt trust influences performance. However, although both the pre-study and the main study showed consistent support for our hypotheses with respect to felt reliance, they were not supported for felt disclosure. Relevant theoretical implications are further discussed in the next sections.

Differential effects of felt trust dimensions on performance

In both Study 1 and Study 2, we tested an initial model that estimated simultaneous effects of the two felt trust dimensions on the three performance outcomes. Although we did

not propose that felt trust reliance and felt trust disclosure would have differential effects on performance, our empirical results suggest this to be the case. The felt trust dimension of reliance showed a robustly significant, positive effect on in-role and extra-role performance across both studies. In contrast, in both studies, felt disclosure showed no significant unique effect on any of the three performance variables when felt reliance was also included in the model. The differential effects of these two felt trust dimensions are consistent with prior findings by Gillespie (2003) when considering trust (as opposed to felt trust), and by Lau et al. (2014) when looking specifically at felt trust. That is, Gillespie (2003) found reliance trust was more strongly associated with job satisfaction and performance in leader-member relations than was disclosure trust. Similarly, Lau et al. (2014) found no direct effect of felt disclosure on job outcomes. These prior results, taken together with the findings of our studies, motivate the need for a more nuanced consideration of how different aspects of felt trust might influence performance.

The differential effects of felt trust reliance and felt trust disclosure might be explained by considering the different types of information they carry. Felt trust reliance carries positive information about the supervisors' perceptions of followers' trustworthiness in terms of their ability, thus high felt trust reliance is likely to enhance follower self-efficacy and performance. In comparison, felt trust disclosure conveys a message about followers' trustworthiness with respect to their benign intentions, which do not directly connect to capability and performance. A closer look at felt disclosure shows that its nature includes sharing sensitive information about work which can include problematic situations and negative emotions. However, sharing negative information could be a double-edged sword. On one hand, it signals trust and a high-quality leader-follower relationship, thus raising a follower's OBSE. On the other hand, such disclosures could also increase followers' anxiety and negative affectivity, which might cancel out any positive effects on their self-efficacy.

This is because such psychological states (also known as emotional or physiological arousal, e.g., Bandura, 1989; 1997) are one of the four major types of information upon which self-efficacy is based. Anxiety arousal generates individual vulnerability to work challenges and low expectations of success (Bandura, 1977), which in turn has implications for perceptions of self-efficacy. Indeed, a very recent study by Gibson (2018) illustrates how “disruptive self-disclosure” can create negative changes in a relationship trajectory. In contrast, a greater level of felt reliance is unlikely to have such a negative impact. If a leader is willing to rely on the follower, it is reasonable to assume that the follower will be delegated more job responsibilities but also given resources that can enhance performance.

A similar logic could also explain what appear in our models to be different unique effects of felt reliance and felt disclosure on OSE and OBSE. In our studies, felt reliance was positively related to both OSE and OBSE. This suggests that the positive information that felt reliance carries is related to both followers’ cognitive evaluations of their capabilities and their self-evaluations. In our results, when felt reliance was also in the model, felt disclosure did not significantly relate to either OSE (tested in both Study 1 and Study 2) or OBSE (tested in Study 2 only). The OSE results fairly unambiguously suggest that felt disclosure is unlikely to have an influence on employees’ self-efficacy for performance. However, our interpretation of the OBSE results is more nuanced. Lau et al.’s (2014) results did show a relationship of felt disclosure with OBSE, and although non-significant, our results are in the expected direction. Taking into consideration both Lau et al.’s results and our Study 2 results, we believe it is still possible that felt disclosure does positively influence employees’ self-esteem based on the information about the affective aspects of working relationships that it carries. However, if they do indeed exist, the effects of felt disclosure on OBSE might be weaker than those of felt reliance -- further study of the felt disclosure relationship does still seem warranted. In sum, our findings of differential relationships of OSE and OBSE with

performance and with felt disclosure supports previous observations that self-esteem is not an equivalent construct to self-efficacy, although they are related (Chen, Gully, & Eden, 2004), and illustrates the importance of considering both of these mediators of felt trust effects.

Explaining felt trust effects on performance via self-efficacy

Consistent with our hypothesis, the positive influence of followers' felt reliance on job performance appears to be mediated via increased self-confidence in their working capabilities. That is, followers are more likely to have high self-efficacy when they believe that their supervisor trusts their work-related skills or judgment. In turn, self-efficacy was shown to positively relate to follower job performance. Thus, a significant, mediated effect of felt trust reliance was observed in both studies, and importantly, it remained statistically significant in Study 2 even when a second, previously identified mediator (OBSE) was also included in the model. However, as previously noted and contrary to our expectations, we did not find significant results for a mediated relationship of follower felt disclosure with job performance via occupational self-efficacy.

These findings extend the trust literature and our understanding of felt trust. More specifically, although Lau et al. (2014) also examined the influence of felt trust on followers' task performance and OCBs, they suggested that the mediating mechanism by which felt trust affects job behaviors is through followers' organization-based self-esteem. In their results, OBSE significantly, but weakly and only partially, mediated the relationship of felt reliance and in-role job performance, with an estimated indirect effect of .03; and the mediation effects were nonsignificant for OCBI and OCBO. Our Study 2 results indicate that when self-efficacy was also included in the model, the unique mediating effect of OBSE on in-role job performance was no longer statistically significant. Occupational self-efficacy not only significantly mediated the felt reliance-in-role performance relationship, but it also mediated

the felt reliance-extra-role performance relationships even when OBSE was also included in the model.

Additionally, our Study 2 results suggest that OSE is a more robust mediator, as it mediated the relationships of felt reliance with all three performance variables while OBSE mediated only the relationship of felt reliance with OCBO. Thus, our results suggest that subordinates' beliefs about their capability to successfully perform are at least equal to, and may be more important than, self-esteem in linking felt trust to performance. This is consistent with our earlier theoretical observation that occupational self-efficacy as a key motivational component more directly ties to desired performance outcomes, whereas OBSE reflects more about one's sense of being perceived as important, respected, and worthy in the workplace, and thus is not so directly linked to performance. Another potential reason for this is that high self-efficacy not only motivates followers to pursue higher levels of job performance, but also increases their persistence when barriers are encountered (Gist & Mitchell, 1992; Tims, Bakker, & Derks, 2014).

This finding is consistent with, and also extends, prior research by Chen et al. (2004). Chen et al. found self-efficacy is more highly related to motivational variables and task performance, while OBSE is more related to affective states which do not relate to task performance. We find that, compared to self-esteem, self-efficacy is not only more highly related to task performance but also to extra-role behavior toward colleagues. However, with respect to extra-role behavior toward organizations, the effect of self-esteem was stronger than self-efficacy. This is because for followers who are high on OBSE, the organization is a key component to their self-worth and identity (van Dyne et al., 2000). Thus, they are more likely to perform behaviors that benefit the organization. Such motivation was more directly related to OCBO than was a "can-do motivation" generated by high occupational self-

efficacy. Hence, our findings further support previously observed differences between self-efficacy and self-esteem in their relationships to performance.

Last but not least, our findings of a positive effect of felt reliance on self-efficacy add to the literature by providing a new perspective within which to investigate the association of trust and self-efficacy. Recent research has investigated the trust-self-efficacy relationship from a trustor's perspective (rather than our current trustee's perspective) and found self-efficacy to be important. For example, Ng and Lucianetti (2016) found that followers' increased trust in their organization creates an environment that enhances their self-efficacy because trust is a positive emotional signal to self-efficacy, with related positive influences on innovative behavior. Ozyilmaz et al. (2018) demonstrated that followers' trust in the system can interact with self-efficacy to influence work outcomes including attitudes and performance. However, the omission of considering followers as trustees limits a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between trust and self-efficacy. Our research addresses this gap and provides empirical evidence that followers' felt trust also has a positive impact on self-efficacy, particularly occupational self-efficacy. Furthermore, the observed zero-order correlations of self-efficacy with trust in organization in Ng and Lucianetti (2016) and Ozyilmaz et al.'s (2018) studies (e.g., $r = .34, p < .05$; $r = .22, p < .05$, respectively) are of similar magnitude or smaller than those between self-efficacy and *felt trust reliance* in our studies ($r = .46, p < .01$ for Study 1; $r = .33, p < .01$ for Study 2). Therefore, felt trust appears to be similarly or even more strongly related to self-efficacy than trust is. This is potentially because felt trust directly relates to one source of self-efficacy – social persuasion – as we argued, while trust might indirectly relate to self-efficacy by enhanced positive emotions or a feeling of psychological safety.

Limitations and future research

Our focus in this paper was on felt trust, but in the future it would be valuable to include actual follower trust in the supervisor or supervisor trust in the follower in the felt trust model. This would allow the direct comparison of the predictive effects of these two additional forms of trust operating within the dyad to the predictive effects of follower felt trust. We suspect that felt trust might be more directly linked to performance than these other two forms of trust. Indeed, in their meta-analysis, Dirks and Ferrin (2002) found a relatively weak influence of trust in leader on followers' in-role and extra-role performance, compared to the stronger relationship that we found between followers' felt reliance and their self-rated performance. However, this belief that felt trust might be of primary importance when predicting performance should be addressed directly in empirical studies that collect measures of trust and felt trust from both dyadic sources and investigate the relationships amongst them, and their relationships with performance.

Another limitation of our studies is that all of the variables were self-reported from the same source. We do note, though, that our findings on the direct and indirect effects of follower felt reliance on job performance were similar to those of Lau et al. (2014), where follower job performance was rated by the supervisor. In addition, after a meta-analytic comparison of self-reported and other-reported OCBs, Carpenter et al. (2014) suggest that researchers might come to similar conclusions regardless of whether they use self-ratings or other-ratings. They also suggest that self-ratings could be preferred when measuring OCBs because others might not be able to directly observe them. The relatively low reliability of task performance suggests another measure of in-role job performance should be considered in future research. In sum, future research can benefit from replicating and extending our studies by using a multi-source and longitudinal research design to compare whether the findings are similar to other-reported performance. A cross-lagged research design is also recommended to rigorously investigate relationships between felt trust, occupational self-

efficacy, and follower performance. Such a design would not only more conclusively deal with potential same-source response bias, but would also strengthen our ability to make causal conclusions.

As described earlier in the literature review, felt trust in the present study specifically refers to followers' perceptions of their supervisors' willingness to be vulnerable. However, another aspect of trust that could be studied is trust-related risk-taking behaviors, for example, letting the trustee have influence over issues that are important to the trustor (e.g., in the research by Mayer & Davis, 1999). Gillespie (2003) suggests that willingness to be vulnerable happens in the first stage of a trust relationship, and that this in turn predicts risk-taking behaviors. Given trust as a belief and trust as a behavior are two distinct aspects of trust (Dietz & den Hartog, 2006; Mayer et al., 1995) and might differ in their relationships with other variables, follow-on research could provide further insight into felt trust by examining followers' perceptions of the manner in which their supervisors actually engage in risk-taking behaviors based upon trust.

For example, the use of more dynamic research design approaches – such as a diary design (e.g., Searle, 2012) – could enrich our understanding of how trust operates over time by collecting detailed information about specific, day-to-day interactions involving supervisor-subordinate dyads and linking them to the levels of felt trust experienced and resulting levels of in-role and extra-role behaviors. We suggest it might be worth investigating how supervisors' actions involving delegation, psychological empowerment, and consultation influence felt trust and the resulting job performance.

While our current results imply that felt disclosure is not as important to follower performance as felt reliance, future research could examine the extent to which felt disclosure might be relevant for other follower-related outcomes. For example, these could include outcomes that require the reciprocal sharing of information, such as situations where the

follower made or observed mistakes. In such situations, felt disclosure could create a climate of safety that allows potentially risky information to be disclosed. Additionally, it is possible that felt disclosure plays a stronger role in certain types of jobs, for example, those where effective performance requires establishing a strong personal relationship with the supervisor. In addition, research on felt disclosure could potentially be advanced by the development of a measure that distinguishes the nature of the information that is being disclosed.

We encourage future research to propose and examine moderators that condition the effect of felt trust on follower occupational self-efficacy. For example, leaders' authority and reputation may strengthen the felt trust-self-efficacy relationship. Specifically, when the follower perceives the leader is a reputed person, trust from the leader would be more valuable, thus having greater effect on the follower's self-reflectiveness about his or her capability. Similar logic can be applied to leaders' authority.

Final conclusions and implications

The findings of our studies highlight the importance of follower felt trust in the workplace. The current research conveys how important it may be for leaders to make their followers feel that they are trusted, if the leaders expect reciprocity in the form of job performance and organizational citizenship behaviors from the follower. However, fostering follower felt trust is challenging as trust is intangible and not easy to observe. The extent to which followers feel they are trusted may not equal to the level of trust extended by the leader. Thus, when followers do not feel that they are trusted, they are more likely violate leaders' performance expectations. Hence, organizations need to pay more attention to develop leaders' skill of improving followers' felt trust. Shared leadership (Carson, Tesluk, & Marrone, 2017; Gibb, 1954; Yukl, 1989) could be an efficient way to enhance followers' felt trust as it implies that the leader and the organization trust their working judgement and delegate authority to them.

We found felt trust influence follower's behavior via their occupational self-efficacy. In addition, we compared differential effects of self-efficacy and OBSE. Based on our results, we believe leaders can foster their followers' self-efficacy, a powerful psychological mechanism to increase performance, through enhancing their felt trust by relying on them, trusting their work judgement and skills, and delegating more tasks to them. Yet, although the self-disclosure component of felt trust is based on stronger emotional and relational bonds between followers and leaders (Gillespie, 2003), our studies did not find evidence supporting the expected positive link of felt disclosure with the self-efficacy mediator nor with performance. However, felt disclosure was related to follower self-esteem and their citizenship behavior toward organization. Furthermore, we found that followers' felt trust reliance appears to enhance their evaluations of self-efficacy and self-worth, with resulting positive effects on performance. In general, we suggest if leaders prioritize improving follower in-role job performance and helping behaviors to their colleagues, they need to be careful about sharing negative working information or difficulties but rather enhance their followers' felt reliance, which can enhance their self-efficacy. In contrast, if the leaders focus on boosting follower extra-role performance toward organizations, they should enhance followers' both felt reliance and felt disclosure, which in turn enrich their self-esteem and then further increase their OCBO.

Footnotes

¹ There was some ambiguity around the inference of statistical significance for this particular result. Specifically, the bootstrapped confidence interval for the standardized indirect effect for OCBI had a lower limit of 0, however, the CI for the unstandardized effect (which is more replicable than the standardized effect and more typically used for statistical inference) did indicate a statistically significant result using conventional limits. Also, both components of the mediating paths were statistically significant at conventional levels, thus we considered this effect interpretable. Supporting our decision, we note that this result did indeed replicate in the main study.

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Table 1

Study 1: Descriptive statistics and correlations for focal variables.

Variables	M	SD	AVE	CR	1	2	3	4	5	6
1 FT Reliance	4.36	.93	.62	.60	(.82)	.40*	.46*	.32*	.35*	.26*
2 FT Disclosure	3.10	1.26	.77	.77	.38*	(.87)	.14	.08	.08	-.08
3 OSE	4.70	.61	.55	.87	.58*	.16	(.84)	.56*	.31*	.34*
<u>Job Performance</u>										
4 In-role	5.06	.53	.42	.41	.46*	.09	.76*	(.63)	.48*	.54*
5 OCBI	4.52	.68	.44	.42	.48*	.12	.45*	.63*	(.74)	.29*
6 OCBO	4.93	.53	.34	.33	.39*	-.03	.46*	.86*	.38*	(.54)

Note. $N = 189$. AVE = Average Variance Extracted (reliability); CR = Composite Reliability; FT = Felt Trust; OSE = Occupational Self-Efficacy; OCBO = Organizational citizenship behavior toward organizations; OCBI = organizational citizenship behavior toward individuals. Manifest variable values of correlations are in upper, right half of matrix; latent variable values are boldfaced and reported in lower left half of matrix. Cronbach's alpha is reported in parentheses on the matrix diagonal.

* $p < .05$ level (2-tailed).

Table 2

Study 2: Descriptive statistics and correlations for focal variables.

	M	SD	AVE	CR	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<u>Felt trust (Time 1)</u>											
1 FT Reliance	4.11	1.17	.64	.68	(.86)	.46*	.38*	.33*	.30*	.29*	.26*
2 FT Disclosure	2.86	1.35	.83	.84	.45*	(.90)	.23*	.09	.11	.17*	.13*
<u>Mediators (Time 2)</u>											
3 OBSE	3.64	.78	.87	.87	.40*	.26*	(.93)	.43*	.29*	.30*	.47*
4 OSE	4.80	.81	.70	.81	.34*	.11*	.47*	(.89)	.38*	.35*	.34*
<u>Job performance (Time 3)</u>											
5 In-role	5.37	.55	.60	.60	.24*	.12*	.32*	.49*	(.76)	.28*	.23*
6 OCBI	4.98	1.08	.67	.67	.35*	.22*	.27*	.35*	.41*	(.89)	.50*
7 OCBO	4.03	1.25	.71	.72	.31*	.15*	.53*	.43*	.27*	.66*	(.89)

Note. $N = 500$. AVE = Average Variance Extracted (reliability); CR = Composite Reliability; OBSE = organization-based self-esteem; OSE = occupational self-efficacy; OCBO = organizational citizenship behavior toward organizations; OCBI = organizational citizenship behavior toward individuals. Manifest variable values are in upper, right half of matrix; latent variable values are boldfaced and reported in lower left half of matrix. Where relevant, Cronbach's coefficient alpha is reported in parentheses on the matrix diagonal.

* $p < .05$ level (2-tailed).

Table 3. Study 2: Unstandardized (B) and standardized (β) path coefficients from SEM models for hypothesis testing.

Predictor	Model 1 (no mediator) Dependent Variables:			Model 2 (OSE mediator) Dependent Variables:				Model 3 (OSE + OBSE mediators) Dependent Variables:				
	T3 In-role	T3 OCBI	T3 OCBO	T2 OSE	T3 In-role	T3 OCBI	T3 OCBO	T2 OBSE	T2 OSE	T3 In-role	T3 OCBI	T3 OCBO
<u>Felt reliance (Time 1)</u>												
B	.10**	.26**	.22**	.19**	.02	.17**	.11*	.19**	.19**	.02	.17**	.06
($s.e.$)	(.03)	(.06)	(.05)	(.04)	(.04)	(.06)	(.05)	(.03)	(.04)	(.03)	(.06)	(.05)
β	.26	.33	.32	.36	.06	.22	.16	.36	.36	.04	.21	.08
<u>Felt disclosure (Time 1)</u>												
B	-.01	.04	-.01	-.03	.01	.07	.02	.05	-.03	.01	.06	-.01
($s.e.$)	(.02)	(.05)	(.04)	(.03)	(.02)	(.05)	(.04)	(.03)	(.03)	(.02)	(.05)	(.04)
β	-.02	.06	-.01	-.05	.03	.09	.03	.10	-.05	.02	.09	-.01
<u>OSE (Time 2)</u>												
B	–	–	–	–	.33**	.39**	.47**	–	–	.31**	.37**	.28**
($s.e.$)	–	–	–	–	(.08)	(.11)	(.09)	–	–	(.09)	(.12)	(.09)
β	–	–	–	–	.45	.27	.36	–	–	.42	.25	.22
<u>OBSE (Time 2)</u>												
B	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	.07	.07	.52**
($s.e.$)	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	(.06)	(.09)	(.10)
β	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	.10	.05	.40
R ² Full Model	.07	.13**	.10*	.12**	.24**	.19**	.21**	.17**	.12**	.25**	.19**	.33**

Note. $N = 500$. OSE = occupational self-efficacy; OBSE = organization-based self-esteem; OCBI = organizational citizenship behavior toward colleague; OCBO = organizational citizenship behavior toward organization; B = unstandardized regression coefficient; $s.e.$ = standard error of B ; β = standardized regression coefficient.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

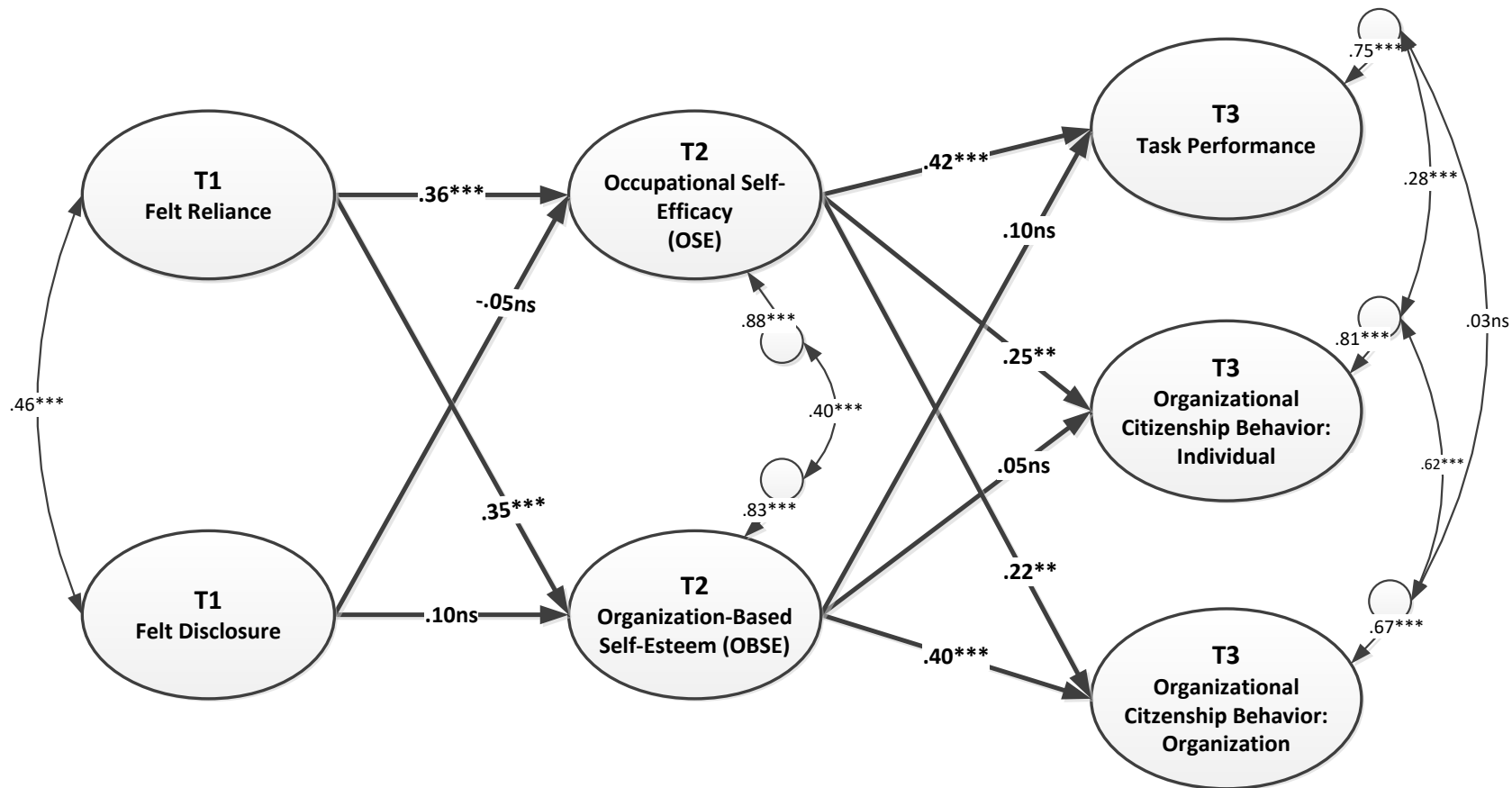


Figure 1. Main Study: Path model showing standardized parameter estimates from final mediation model. As typical when testing for mediation, the model also included direct paths from Felt Reliance and Felt Disclosure to the three performance outcome variables. To simplify presentation, those six paths are not shown in the figure. Most of them were not statistically significant, with the exception of a path from Felt Reliance to OCBI, $\beta = .21^{**}$. * $p < .01$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.