GOOD LEADERSHIP ROLE MAKING A STRONG ORGANISATION TRUST

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Abstract

This study examines the variable of trust in organizational relationships and found six leadership behaviours that foster trust. Using a confirmatory factor analysis, these leadership behaviours were examined to see the nature of the relationships among latent variables. Goal of the research was to establish whether there were some fundamental qualities that characterized trust-producing leadership behaviours. Study used data that were gathered from a survey among teachers in Jamaica. Participants work at various levels of the Jamaican education system and they were selected using a convenience sampling technique. Research is timely given the growing evidence of mistrust among leaders and followers in organizations and its findings are significant in that it offers a new and more nuanced perspective on the kinds of leadership behaviours that nurture organizational trust. Instrument used to collect the data was designed by the researcher and tested for reliability using Cranach's Alpha and produced a result of .938. study proposes recommendations for

Key Words: leadership behaviours, trust, organizational health, employee well-being

Introduction

One of the inevitable imperatives of effective leadership is that of inspiring and winning the trust of others. A leader can hardly be effective if he or she is not trusted. Hurley (2006), in a Harvard Business Review article entitled "The Decision to Trust", discloses that his research across thirty companies globally, involving some four hundred and fifty executives, revealed that almost half of all managers did not trust their leaders. Leaders operating in those circumstances are not likely to be effective as many, if not most, of their communications and decisions are likely to be viewed suspiciously. On the other hand, when leaders are trusted they are given the benefit of the doubt in situations in which stakeholders are given limited information about the process and purpose of particular decisions. Hurley cites a similar study conducted by Harris (2002), which uncovers a similar unhealthy situation with 69% of respondents agreeing that the statement "I just don't know who to trust anymore" reflected the way they felt. Building trust is an essential leadership and management activity as it influences successful cooperation and efficiency in the organization, (mcAllister, 1995; Nooteboom 2002). Trust creates the conditions for innovation and learning in the organization according to Bartsch, Ebers and maurer (2013), as well as builds friendships as Gibbons (2004), argues. Trust is the life blood of all healthy relationships.

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Given the pivotal importance of trust for all relationships, including relationships in the workplace, there can be no doubt that studying the issue is highly timely, relevant and meaningful as Savolainen and Hakkinen (2011), have suggested. Thompson, Burke, King and Wong (2017), have highlighted the problem of de-motivation affecting the workplace and the implications of de-motivated employees for an efficient and effective organization. Distrust in an organization, like de-motivation, has grave implications for organizational profitability and efficiency. Distrust affects an organization's performance negatively as high levels of trust affect performance positively. The issue of trust, therefore, is a major bottom-line issue.

Trust is vital to every valued relationship and is one of the most critical assets of a leader according to Rezaei, Salehi, Shafiei and Sabet (2012). The health and well-being of an organization and its employees depend on trust and the leader's behavior, more than that of anyone else in the organization is important in determining the level of trust that exists in the organization (Rezaei et al., 2012). There are high levels of distrust in organizations and organizations cannot function effectively without trust. The issue of trust is as much a psychological and sociological issue as it is a managerial issue. It is therefore imperative that strategies for building and maintaining trust and providing insights on trust-building behaviors be undertaken. This study seeks to undertake the task of exploring ways through which organizations can build and maintain trusting relationships between leaders and employees.

The study seeks to answer two questions, namely:

What are the factors of trust-producing leadership behaviors that leaders of organizations may adopt in order to respond to the needs and expectations of employees?

To what extent are these trust-producing behaviors related and how significant is the relationship between these trust-producing leadership behaviours and the related factors?

This study is significant for at least three reasons. firstly, the issue of distrust is a major contributor to problems such as employee withdrawal, lack of commitment, underperformance (molm, 2003). Trust influences organizational processes such as communication, cooperation, and information sharing, and it affects productivity. Employee withdrawal and lack of commitment have implications for organizational productivity and ultimately the quality and cost goods and services to the customer. Given these considerations, any attempt to understand and overcome problems of distrust in organizations is a valuable undertaking. This study is significant in that it seeks to add to the body of knowledge that proposes solutions to the problem distrust, but more critically to the processes of advancing trust.

This study indirectly critiques traditional ways that were assumed to be trust-building such as simply giving rousing motivational speeches that proclaim the good will of leaders. These approaches have been found to be ineffective ways of building trust. Trust is built through behavior not precepts. This study identifies some specific behaviors which have been stated by employees to be builders of trust. These behaviours have found support in the scientific literature and as such are presented here as a potential contribution to trust-building across all organizational settings.

finally this paper lays the foundation for controversy, debate, and further research concerning the ingredients

for building trusting and mutually beneficial relationships in the workplace.

Theoretical Framework

Hurley (2006) defines trust as confident reliance on someone when one is in a position of vulnerability, while mayer, Davis and Schoorman (1995) characterize trust as the willingness to be vulnerable to the actions of another. This willingness to be vulnerable arises in a context in which there is the expectation that the other will perform an action which one desires the other to perform but has no control over whether or not that other will perform such action. mayer et al. are supported by Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt and Camerer (1998) who describe trust as a psychological state in which one in anticipating that some needs will be met, but accepts vulnerability based upon positive expectations of the intentions or behavior of another.

Clinebell (1984) posits that all meaningful relationships require trust and as a consequence exposes the people in that relationship, particular those with less power, to being vulnerable. Clinebell thus concludes that all relationship involve vulnerability. Savolianen and Hakkinen (2011) appear to support the view that relationships imply vulnerability, arguing that effective leaders are known for their trustful behavior towards employees. This implies that effective leaders create conditions in which employees can be confident in the decisions and actions of their leaders despite being vulnerable. Savolianen and Hakkinen (2011) further suggest that trust is a basic element of functioning relationships in organizations.

The concept of trust is defined in this paper as a belief in the good will and good intent of another, to do such things, at such times, and even in such ways, as would advance or protect one's interests. Such actions have the potential for meeting the needs of others in circumstances in which one is dependent on the other and has no control over whether the other will in fact do, when the other will do, or how well he or she would do. Trusting the other therefore makes one vulnerable to that other.

Research on the issue of trust crosses a number of disciplines including psychology (Simpson, 2007), sociology (molm, 2003) and management (Lewicki, Tomlinson & Gillespie, 2006). Simpson (2007) argues that trust involves the juxtaposition of people's loftiest hopes and aspirations with their deepest worries and fears and opines that it may be the single most important ingredient for the development and maintenance of happy, well-functioning relationships. Despite her use of management lenses to discuss trust, molm (2003), like Simpson (2007), embed her construction of trust in the soft tissue of emotions. molm argues that feelings of trust and affective commitment grow when perceptions of fairness are heightened and concerns about the negative use of power lessened.

Beslin et al. (2004) correctly pontificate that trust is not something that is created through talk, but results from action, and one important action they highlight is listening. They suggest that too often leaders talk about having trust, rather than taking action to build trust. Savolianen and Hakkinen (2011) support Beslin et al. (2004) and argue that in the process of trust formation, it is trustworthiness in the leader's behaviour that provides a foundation for the relationship. Trust, they contend result from competence, integrity, benevolence, and credibility. These positions are supported by Gordon (2001), whose *Leader Effectiveness*

Training initiative which dates back almost four decades has stressed that listening is the most important task of the leader. Thompson (2009) found that listening was the most powerful act of showing respect. It is inescapable that employees will have confidence in leaders whom they feel respect them, and it is axiomatic that people will tend to have high regard (respect) for those who take time to listen to them show genuine interest in the things that concern them and about which they desire to have someone show concern.

Arising from his work with hundreds of top executives, Hurley (2006), identifies ten factors which he says are at play in the trust decision-making process. factors include risk tolerance, security, relative power, and alignment of interests. Risk tolerance refers to the tendency and capacity of some people to trust although they do not have enough information about the 'trustee'. On the other hand, security refers to the reservations that an employee may have about the likely decision of his or her supervisor in a high stakes situation. the same supervisor with whom the risk to trust was taken, in a given situation, becomes the source of the same employee's fear for his or her security, in another situation. relationship between risk and trust is examined by Lewicki and Tomlinson (2003) who contend that the need for trust arises from our *interdependence* with others. Human being generally, and inevitably employees in the workplace, depend on other people to help them with the outcomes they value. Given the intertwining of interests there is an element of risk involved insofar as human beings often encounter situations in which needed support, interest alignment, and cooperation are needed but cannot be compelled. It is trust that determines how much risk each party perceives in those circumstances.

A third factor in Hurley's ten-factor theory is relative power. The assessment of the relative power of the other is an important factor in the decision to trust. According to Hurley, if the truster is in a position of authority, he is more likely to trust, because he can sanction a person who violates his trust. If, however, the truster has little authority, and thus no recourse, he or she is more vulnerable and so will be less comfortable trusting.

Hurley's position on the dynamic of power in relationships and its impact on trust is supported by a large body of literature, including Galbraith (1983), Handy (1993), and de moll (2010). french and Raven (1959) in their seminal work on the five bases of power suggest that all relationship involve the use of some form of power. These five bases they say are reward power, reference power, legitimate power, expert power, and coercion. Raven (1965) later added a sixth basis of power which they call informational power.

The existence and use of these power bases inform the level of trust employees will have in their leaders. A supervisor who is believed to be the kind of person who will use his or her reward power to punish will generate low or no trust from supervisees. On the other hand, the supervisor who uses or is believed to use his or her reference power to support the advancement of supervisees will gain high levels of trust. Thus Hurley (2006) suggests employees are prone to seek to identify relationships that would benefit from greater trust and to diagnose the root causes of distrust in order to decide whether to place confidence in them. The decision to place or not to place trust and confidence in a relationship is ultimately informed by what an employee perceives to be the alignment of interests, according to Hurley. According to Hurley, the underlying question the would-be truster asks is: "How

likely is this person to serve my interests?" Incipiently the person is surveying the bases of power articulated by french and Raven (1959) and Raven (1965). In this regard the question of whether one's interest will be served is in effect another way of asking whether the employer or supervisor will use his or her reward power is a negative or positive way. Thus, as Hurley concludes, when people's interests are completely aligned, trust is a reasonable response. This conclusion is confirmed by Lewicki et al. (2006) who posit that trust in the behaviour of other people grows when cooperation (alignment of interest) is reciprocated while trust declines most often when positive expectations are disconfirmed.

Dealing frontally with the issue of trust is a major undertaking in human resources management and some of the behaviours associated with trust are embedded in emotional intelligence as defined by mayer et al. (1995) and Goleman (1998). Goleman's five emotional intelligence skills which include how a leader manages self and relates to others are foundational to the building of trusting relationships. Thus, according to Savolianen and Hakkinen (2011), trust appears at many levels, organizational and managerial, and is manifested in the ways, frequency, and quality of interaction between employees and managers.

Blanchard (2010) proposes what he calls the ABCD Trust model. According to this model, trust requires:

Ability – demonstrating competence.

Believability – acting with integrity.

Connectedness – demonstrating care.

Dependability – keeping your promise.

Vodicka (2006) also posits a four part model which he describes as the 4 C's model. The four elements of this trust model are consistency, compassion, communication and competence.

Ayers (1956) appears to strike a balance between Blanchard and Vodicka with his own four part model which mixes elements of both Blanchard and Vodicka. The Ayers model consists of reliability – keeping commitments, acceptance of others for who they are, openness to giving and receiving feedback, and congruence.

The common themes in all three models are:

Competence.

Dependability/Reliability.

Consistency/Believability.

Compassion/Openness to others' opinions.

Lewicki and Tomlinson (2003) advance a three part model comprising of ability, integrity, and benevolence. According to Lewicki and Tomlinson, *ability* refers to an assessment of the other's knowledge, skill, or competency, and in this regard trust is seen as requiring some sense that the other is able to perform in a manner that meets ones expectations. This perspective is similar to that of Blanchard (2010) and Ayers (1956).

Integrity, according to Lewicki and Tomlinson (2003) is the degree to which the trustee adheres to principles that are acceptable to the trustor and is aligned to believability/consistency and dependability in Blanchard (2010) and Vodicka (2006). The third element of Lewicki and Tomlinson's trust model is benevolence. Benevolence refers to

the assessment that the trusted individual is concerned enough about one's welfare to either advance one's interests, or at least not impede them. This quality intersects with connectedness, compassion, and acceptance of others in the previous three models.

All four models form the theoretical framework for this study. Using these frameworks as a reference point, this study conceives of trust as involving the capacity for deference towards others as the foundation of trusting producing leadership behaviour. This notion of deference is akin to what the models describe as connectedness and compassion. A leader who evokes trusts is one who shows that he or she cares. A second element of trust producing behaviour (which is related to the notion of deference) is the willingness and ability of the leader to listen and to show interest in others' opinions. This deference Ayers (1956) describes as acceptance of others and willingness to give and receive feedback. This idea of acceptance of others implies openness to diversity. All four models emphasize competence or ability. The leader who will evoke trust is the leader who is able to demonstrate that he/she knows what he/she is about and is able to get things done and carries the undertone of being responsible.

Methodology

Research Design

The study uses an exploratory descriptive quantitative research design. According to Creswell (2014) quantitative research is an approach for testing objective theories by examining the relationships among variables. This design allows the researcher to explore the topic of trust based on data that was previously utilized to measure expectations of the school principal. The intention was to create a model of a few of the items that were derived from the exploratory factor analysis, to confirm whether these observed variables relate with the latent variables of the data, allowing for a generalizability of factors associated with trust under the topic of leadership.

Instrument

A self-designed instrument, namely the Principalship-Teachers' Questionnaire was used to collect the data (see Appendix A). This questionnaire comprises of 35 items measured on a 5 point Likert scale. Additionally, there were nine items measuring demographics which includes variables such as gender, age, years in the profession, type of school (whether public or private), and highest level of qualification. The instrument was tested for reliability using Chronbach's alpha. The test generated a result of .938, which exceeds the ideal reliability reading of .90 suggested by Nunnally (1978). The items included in the instrument were generated based on the issues of measuring, creating, and maintaining trust which the scientific literature addresses as well as the researcher's own hypotheses concerning key components of the construct trust.

Sample

The research used a convenience sampling technique. This non-probability method was deemed appropriate given the researcher's access to substantial number teachers in the public education system. In the course of the researcher's interactions with teachers and the administration of educational institutions several verbal and nonverbal cues conveyed the distrust of teachers in their respective administrations. Given the sensitivity of the issue of trust, and the negative reactions that would be produced if organizational leaders perceived

that they were being studied, the sample was drawn from several institutions. Thus the study was not about a single institution but in effect the education system.

Table 3: Items taken from the exploratory factor analysis

#	Trust-Producing Leadership Behaviour	factors with which Trust-Producing Leadership Behaviours Correlate
1	Trusting collective wisdom	Conveys by actions that others' views and approaches can be correct
		Shows willingness to accept criticism
		Trust collective wisdom
2	Respect for diverse perspectives	Encourage diversity of perspectives
		Resists dictating how staff members should think
		Encourages staff members to continue professional development
3	Openness to debate	Willing to debate issues in situations where opinions differ
		Create conditions for staff members to participate in decision-making
4	Listening	Demonstrates care
		Interest in Opinions of Staff
		A good listener
5	Sense of collective Responsibility	Promote collective responsibility
		Commend staff who demonstrate commitment
		Defer to others who may be more knowledgeable on issues
6	Propensity to respond positively to alternative views	Responds positively to staff members even when there is disagreement
		Admits error when established
		Regard for professional judgement of staff members
		Welcomes Different Points of Views

Results

Discussion

six variables identified in this study which have been characterized as trust-producing behaviours have called attention to some critical and fundamental qualities of leadership that are needed to enrich the experience of employees. As Hurley (2006) has shown, there is a

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major trust deficit among the global workforce. This trust deficit has major implications for organizational productivity as mcAllister (1995) and Nooteboom (2002) have found. Indeed trust creates the conditions for innovation and learning in the organization as Bartsch et al. (2013) has asserted.

In light of the foregoing, there is an urgent need for action to be taken to address the problem of distrust that plagues the global workforce. Such an undertaking is relevant and of high value as Savolainen and Hakkinen (2011) rightly assert. □e urgency and relevance of the task of addressing the issues of distrust become even more curious given how vital trust is for meaningful relationships as Rezaei et al. (2012) notes.

It is self-evident that leaders in organizations have not been paying close attention to the fundamental issue of trust and those behaviours that nurture it given, on the one hand, the established importance of trust for relationships and, on the other hand, the fact that the behaviours that have been found, by previous studies and this current study, to be trust-producing behaviours are not other-worldly, esoteric, or novel.

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