PRACTICE OF TRUST TOWARDS LEADERS IN THE EDUCATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Ling Ying Leh
Universiti Sains Malaysia
lingyingleh@gmail.com

Abdul Ghani Kanesan Abdullah
Universiti Sains Malaysia
agk@usm.my

ABSTRACT

This study aims to identify the level of trust in the leaders and describes the psychometric properties of the instrument of trust against the leaders modified according to the situation and the uniqueness of the organization's management system of education in Malaysia. A total of 19 items in Malay language translation which has been modified from the original instrument Affect- and Cognition-based Trust built by McAllister (1995) were used for this study. Data for this study were obtained from 247 randomly selected lecturers from four polytechnics. The results of factor analysis obtained two factors which explained 73.1 percent of the variance changes. Meanwhile, the level of trust in the leaders through descriptive analysis found that two dimensions of trust in leaders based on the affective and cognitive based trust showed high level from the perspective of the lecturers. These results demonstrate the reliability of the instrument modified on trust in leaders for this study could represent a desired two good dimensions as the original version of McAllister (1995) and provide strong justification for using the instrument in the education organizations in Malaysia. In practice, this finding strengthen the organizational support for increasing the potential among the followers.

Keywords: *affect- and cognition trust, education organization*

INTRODUCTION

Trust in an organization is seen as a critical aspect that determines the performance of the organization. The goal of the organization will not be realized if there is no element of trust between leaders and followers. Moreover, the absence of the element of trust in the organization will lead to various conflicts which easily spread. Thus, without the element of trust between individuals is difficult to lead the organization to the effectiveness achievement.

Studies on the trust towards the organization effectiveness seen to be necessary in forming a relationship and effective cooperation as well as open communication within the organization. Overall, trust is seen as a sign of the beginning of the measurement on receiving the leadership process in an organization, apart from showing the willingness of one party to the other party based on the trust that the other party is more efficient, reliable, open, and caring (Tschannen-Moran, 2003).

Trust in leaders

Leaders play an important role in an organization, especially in building trust which is the key to the success of the organization. Efforts to create an environment of mutual trust is the primary responsibility of leaders. This is because the leader who succeeded in uniting the group and creates a culture of mutual trust will be binding his followers. This opinion is consistent with the theory of leader-followers which focus on the quality of the two ways relationship between the leader and the members of the organization. This theory also emphasized the element of trust as a key component in the two ways relationship.

Trust in the leader refers to the interpersonal trust based on daily interactions between the workers and leaders (Tan & Tan, 2000). According to Sherwood and DePaolo (2005), trust in the leader is a psychological condition among workers including his willingness to be occupied by the leader. This means that workers assess the situation and is willing to let himself be used by the leaders in hoping that this relationship would be profitable. They explained the theory of the background of trust in the leaders are divided into three types. First, the background in which cognitive aspect is a significant predictor of trust with leaders including leader behavior and interaction justice. Employee perceptions of ethical leader behavior also affects the psychology of employees in creating the trust in leader. The second category is the affective or emotional background of individuals while the third category is the level of trust exists on a person.

The importance of trust in education organizations

Trust is fundametal to the creation of a proactive work culture in an organization. Trust also allows the culture to grow lush and enable the full potential of individual empowerment. This is consistent with the opinion of Cross and Rice (2000) in which trust is needed to be integrated in an education organizational leadership because it describes the open, positive relationship, and able to motivate teachers in their jobs.

In an organization, interpersonal trust between the leaders and followers have proven significantly in influencing perceptions of performance evaluation, achievement, productivity, organization commitment, morale, turnover, absenteeism, and so on. Rempel, Holmes, and Zanna (1985) have found that trust is constantly evolving through interpersonal relationship between employers and employees based on the level of reliability, confidence, and sense of security.

Leaders' trust towards followers may reflect employers' awareness of the integrity of the employee who is reliable and responsible in carrying out its duties. People who have high degree of confidence are likely to expose themselves to information that is more accurate, relevant, and complete information about the problem, and thoughts, ideas and feelings. In this

case, Ouchi (1981) emphasized the trust between individuals involves expectations about the behavior of individuals in consistent and reliabe ways.

Lack of trust against an employer or employee will have a negative impact on the organization. In education context, this can reduce the enthusiasm and commitment of the teachers and restrict the expansion and development of the school. Lack of element of trust and respect in the work environment will harm the effect on the organization and the employees (Laschinger & Finegan, 2005). This is because workers will be less inclined to be suspicious to contribute to the goals and activities of the organization when compared to workers who have a high level of trust for their leaders.

Employees perceptions on organization support

The encouraging feedback environment created by the leaders will allow the followers to know their performance and improve their weaknesses. In addition, the follower will always be on the right career track based on the feedback received. Followers as active participants in the organization look towards the feedback from the leaders. Thus, if the followers trust on their leaders, they will receive, use, and act to the constant and ongoing feedback from their leaders. In other words, individuals with higher levels of high perception of organizational support will (1) meet the requirements for validation, recognition, and social identity, and (2) placing the expectation that outstanding performance and conduct in reaching role in the organization will be recognized and rewarded as described by Eisenberger, Cummings, Armeli, and Lynch (1997). Accordingly, when the organization has concerns over the employees, then this situation will encourage employees countervailing action by feelings, attitudes, and positive behavior in the organization (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). This opinion is supported by Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchson, and Sowa (1986) that the perception of high organizational support will create a sense of obligation to give consideration to the organization on the benefits received in the form of increased efforts to reach the role and behavior. Their views in line with Rousseau (1989), which explains when employees think the organization has done the best for them, they will feel obliged to give consideration to the organization through actions beyond their formal employees.

Previous empirical studies found that perceptions of organizational support associated with positive work (Hochwarter, Kacmar, Perrewe, & Johnson, 2003) as the increase in affective commitment (Rhoades, Eisenberger, & Armeli, 2001; Wayne, Shore, Bommer, & Tetrick, 2002), decrease downtime and absenteeism appointed intent (Eisenberger et al., 1986), job satisfaction (Shore & Tetrick, 1991), and organizational citizenship behavior (Wayne et al., 2002). This meta-analysis performed by Riggle, Edmondson, and Hansen (2008) shows the perception of organizational support has a positive and significant relationship with organizational commitment and job satisfaction.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The study aims to identify the level of trust in the leader and describes the psychometric nature of modified instrument for the trust in the leaders according to the situation and the unique

culture of the educational organization in Malaysia. This is done with the hope that further research to establish the trust in leaders as the educational organization support to enhance the self-efficacy of teaching among the instructors in particular.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research sample

The population of this study involved the polytechnic lecturers of Category 1. Referring to the *Pekeliling Perkhidmatan* No. 33 of 2007, lecturers of Category 1 refers to the lecturers involve in teaching task. A total of 247 people who worked at the conventional polytechnics at the states of Penang and Sarawak were randomly selected to participate in the study. This means that the data set represents 247 lecturers' perception on the leaders who are Head of Program/Head of Course based on their eveluation. There are four conventional polytechnics which have been selected to take part in this study namely Politeknik Seberang Perai (PSP), Politeknik Balik Pulau (PBU), Politeknik Kuching Sarawak (PKS), and Politeknik Mukah Sarawak (PMS).

Research instrument

This study used a survey method to collect data. This design is found to be applicable to large populations where the uniformity of the facts and information from respondents systematically tapped. For the purpose of this study, the questionnaire used was adapted to suit the local environment with the permission of the original researchers. So, the instrument consists of a questionnaire prepared to be answered by the respondents.

There are two parts contained in this questionnaire. The lecturer demographic information was used to get the data about the respondent's background. This section contains eight items presented to the respondent's personal information such as gender, race, teaching professional qualification, highest academic qualification, teaching experience, and age on 1 January 2014. Second part of the questionnaire, namely the trust in the leaders. In this part, respondents are asked to give their views about the trust in their leaders based on the affective and cognitive based trust in their workplace. For this purpose, the instrument Affect- and Cognition-based Trust which has been designed by McAllister (1995) was used to measure the trust in leaders in their workplace. There are two dimensions that make up a total of 19 items which were used in this study based on seven-point Likert Scale ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree". The dimensions included trust based on affective (9 items) and trust based on cognitive (10 items). All the items are translated into Malay language and modified to suit the current environment. Example of the original items that "We can both share our feelings" was translated into "*Saya boleh berkongsi perasaan saya dengan Ketua Program/Ketua Kursus*".

In addition, all the items from original questionnaire which has double-barreled, long sentence and flutter have been revised and re-written based on the comment and suggestions from the experts who participated in content validity aspects. Example of the original items that "We

would both feel a sense of loss if one of us was transferred and we could no longer work together" has been modified and translated into two different items, namely "*Ketua Program/Ketua Kursus dan saya akan merasa kehilangan jika salah seorang daripada kami dipindahkan*" and "*Ketua Program/Ketua Kursus dan saya akan merasa kehilangan jika kami tidak lagi bekerja bersama-sama*". All the dimensions have shown a good psychometric behavior and consistency.

The reliability of the findings of this study for the entire 19 items was 0.969. The nine items that measure affective-based trust subscale acquired the high Cronbach's Alpha 0.954. In addition, ten items that measure cognitive-based trust subscale was 0.953. Therefore, these items into Malay translation was shown to have reliability and validity convincing in the studies by Steelman et al. (2004).

RESEARCH FINDINGS

In determining the level of trust in leaders among the followers in the educational organization, mean scores between 0.0 and 3.0 for low, 3.1 to 5.0 for moderate, while the mean score above 5.0 as high. Analysis found that the dimension of affective-based trust in the leader on a mean score as high as 5.15 which is on the high level. Dimension of cognitive-based trust had the mean score of 5.49, on a high level as well.

Table 1. Mean score, standard deviation, the practice level of trust in the polytechnics' leaders (N=251)

Dimension	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	Level
Affective-based Trust	5.15	1.081	High
Cognitive-based Trust	5.49	0.912	High

Factor analysis determination of feedback environment questionnaire

Determining factor analysis varimax rotation through principal component extraction limited to two factors have been implimented. Loading factor exceeding 0.30 is considered to be suitable for the selected criteria and is accepted as an instrument item as done by Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, dan Tatham (2006). The result for the analytical determination from Table 2 found two factors emerged. The two factors that appeared to be significant in this study obtained the eigenvalues at least worth 1.4. Result also shows that there are two factors that have emerged and explained 65.6 percent of the overall variance. The correlation matrix indicators, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Test (.949) dan Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (X^2=5132.932, df=171, p<.05) and antimej correlation (All items r>.05) obtained are significant, thus

multicollinearity or singularity effect do not happen. These results also confirmed the suitability of the sampling to perform factor analysis.

Based on Table 2, the first factor consisted of five items such as D13, D18, D14, D16, and D19 were explained 65.6 percent of the variance in the construct labeled "Affective-based Trust" with the eigenvalues 12.5. All these items have obtained the loading item .824, .777, .752, .750, and .700. The second factor contains five items namely "Cognitive-based Trust" with D4, D2, D5, D3, and D6 also explained 7.5 percent of the variance change with eigenvalues 1.4. Under the second factor, all the items have earned the loading items of .830, .828, .806, .794, and .791.

In addition, the reliability of Cronbach's Alpha for the first factor "Affective-based Trust" is .899 while the reliability of Cronbach's Alpha for the second factor "Cognitive-based Trust" is about .932. The analysis also found that the reliability of the overall Cronbach's Alpha for the nineteen items in these two factors identified is .935. Through factor analysis, nine items were dropped from the instrument of trust in the leaders such as D1, D7, D8, D9, D10, D11, D12, D15, and D17.

Table 2. Factor Analysis result for Trust in Leaders Questionnaire (N=247)

Num.	Item Details	1	2
	Factor 1: Affective-based Trust		
D13	*Dengan rekod Ketua Program/Ketua Kursus, saya melihat tidak ada sebab untuk meragui persediaannya untuk bekerja.*	.824	
D18	*Orang akan lebih mengambil berat tentang prestasi Ketua Program/Ketua Kursus saya jika mereka mengenali latar belakangnya.*	.777	
D14	*Saya boleh bergantung kepada Ketua Program/Ketua Kursus untuk tidak menyukarkan sebarang kerja yang dilakukan dengan kecuaian.*	.752	
D16	*Kebanyakan orang, walaupun tidak rapat dengan Ketua Program/Ketua Kursus saya, mereka mempercayainya sebagai seorang rakan sekerja.*	.750	
D19	*Orang akan memantau prestasi Ketua Program/Ketua Kursus saya jika mereka mengenali latar belakangnya.*	.700	
	Factor 2: Cognitive-based Trust		
D4	*Saya tahu Ketua Program/Ketua Kursus mahu mendengar masalah saya di tempat kerja.*		.830
D2	*Saya boleh berkongsi perasaan saya dengan Ketua Program/Ketua Kursus.*		.828
D5	*Ketua Program/Ketua Kursus dan saya akan merasa kehilangan*		.80

	jika salah seorang daripada kami dipindahkan.		6
D3	*Saya boleh bercakap dengan bebas kepada Ketua Program/Ketua*		.79
	Kursus tentang kesukaran yang saya hadapi di tempat kerja.		4
D6	*Ketua Program/Ketua Kursus dan saya akan merasa kehilangan*		.79
	jika kami tidak lagi bekerja bersama-sama.		1

Eigenvalues	12.5	1.4
Percent on variance explained	65.6	7.5
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin = .949		
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity Approx. Chi Square = 5132.932, df = 171, Sig = .000		
% Total variance = 73.1%		
Cronbach's Alpha	.898	.932
Cronbach's Alpha value for 13 items is .935		

DISCUSSION, RESEARCH IMPLICATION AND CONCLUSION

The main purpose of this study was to identify the level of trust in leaders in educational organizations in Malaysia and describes the psychometric properties of the modified instrument for trust in leaders according to the situation and the culture of the educational organizations in Malaysia. This study utilizes the basic theory and statistics to identify the ten items on the trust in leaders. Proposed questionnaire containing nineteen items was analyzed by experts on the content validity and exploratory factor analysis. Factor analysis for the ten items was the creation of two main factors again. These factors are "Affective-based trust" and "Cognitive-based Trust" as suggested in the model of McAllister (1995). The analysis also showed the correlation between the factors' correlation which is less than .70 which proves both factors are distinct.

The findings of this study also viewed the dimensions of the trust in the leaders produce good reliability to measure the perception of trust in leaders among the polytechnic lecturers. The overall reliability is .935 while both dimensions are .899 and .932 respectively. Therefore, these items can be used in exploratory studies.

In terms of instruments, the survey can be considered as the study which is still in the exploration stage since the instrument for trust in leaders should be more comprehensive in the Malaysia educational organizations, particularly polytechnic organizations. Thus, it is hoped that this instrument will be modified in terms of psychometrics in the future.

REFERENCES

Cross, C. T., & Rice, R. C. (2000). The role of the principal as instructional leader in a standards-driven system. *NASSP Bulletin*, *84*(620), 61-65.

Eisenberger, R., Cummings, J., Armeli, S., & Lynch, P. (1997). Perceived organizational support, discreationarty treatment, and job satisfaction. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *82*(5), 812-820.

Eisenberger, R., Huntington, R., Hutchison, S., & Sowa, D. (1986). Perceived organizational support. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *71*(3), 500-507.

Hochwarter, W. A., Kacmar, C., Perrewe, P. L., & Johnson, D. (2003). Perceived organizational support as a mediator of relationship between politics perceptions and work outcomes. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, *63*(3), 438-456.

Laschinger, H. K. S., & Finegan, J. (2005). Using empowerment to build trust and respect in the workplace: A strategy for addressing the nursing shortage. *Nursing Economic*, *23*, 6-13. doi: 10.1108/01437731011043320

McAllister, D. J. (1995). Affect- and cognition based trust as foundations for interpersonal cooperation in organizations. *Academy of Management Review*, *23*(3), 473-490.

Ouchi, W. G. (1981). *Theory Z: How American business can meet the Japanese challenge.* Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Rempel, J. K., Holmes, J. G., & Zanna, M. P. (1985). Trust in close relationship. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *49*, 95-112.

Rhoades, L., Eisenberger, R., & Armeli, S. (2001). Affective commitment to the organization: The contribution of perceived organizational support. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *86*(5), 825-836.

Riggle, R. J., Edmondson, D. R., & Hansen, J. D. (2008). A meta-analysis of the relationship between perceived organizational support and job outcomes: 20 years of research. *Journal of Business Research*, *62*(10), 1027-1030.

Rousseau, D. M. (1989). Psychological and implied contracts in organizations. *Employee Rights and Responsibilities Journaal*, *2*(2), 121-139.

Sherwood, L., & DePaolo, C. A. (2005). Task and relationship-oriented trust in leaders. *Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies* , *12*(2), 65-81.

Shore, L. M., & Tetrick, L. E. (1991). A construct validity study of the survey of perceived organizational support. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *76*(5), 637-643.

Tan, H. H., & Tan, C. S. (2000). Toward the differentiation of trust in supercvisor and trust in organization. *Genetic, Social, and Psychology Monographs*, *126*, 241-260.

Tschannen-Moran, M. (2003). Fostering organizational citizenship behavior. In Hoy, W., & Miskel, C., *Studies in leading and organizing schools*. Connecticut: Information Age Publishing.

Wayne, S. J., Shore, L. M., Bommer, W. H., & Tetrick, L. E. (2002). The role of fair treatment and rewards in perceptions of organizational support and leader-member exchange. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *87*(3), 590-598.