



THE IMPACT OF LEADERSHIP ON EMPLOYEES' TRUST AND ORGANISATIONAL PERFORMANCE WITH REFERENCE TO THE UAE

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: For businesses, trust is a fundamental component in ensuring competitiveness. The purpose of this exploratory research is to help the business community build trust with its various employees in the industrial sector in the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

Methodology: Questionnaires were sent to the managers of 121 companies in three sectors of the economy (namely manufacturing, services, and agricultural sectors), representing 52% of the industrial firms in Abu Dhabi Emirate (according to the Abu Dhabi Chamber of Commerce, 2016)

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Annual Report). Only 109 firms returned their forms, representing a 90% response rate that was acceptable statistically. These forms were used in the data analysis.

The aim of this exploratory research was to demonstrate why companies should invest in trust-building, and to explore how trust issues manifest across industries. It also aimed to establish a link between employee trust and firm performance, and to outline possible mechanisms through which the relationship may operate.

Findings: Findings revealed that understanding trust and management perceptions based on managers' individual perception and managerial style, have a negative relationship with the perceived benefits of these creativity negligence factors. Only five motivators out of nine were found significant for motivating trust between the three clusters in the economic sectors in the sample. Analysis shows that management initiatives highlight the fact that not all of them are necessarily successful.

Keywords: Trust; performance; employees' loyalty; management; cooperation relationships; UAE

INTRODUCTION

Trust is an intangible element that influences employees' loyalty, productivity, retention, engagement and health (Zeffane, 2010). In business, a firm's success not only depends on the cooperation level between employees in different departments, but also on the feasible coordinative power mechanism established within the cooperation arrangement. Thus, there is a need to create unique sets of resources to ensure sustainable corporate success. Such contribution of cooperation for performance should be regarded as an ongoing process and long term in nature. Such cooperative relationships become a risky venture in cases where departments may contradict each other in the achievement of the required work or results. However, such contradiction may be removed through the practical experience in inter-firm cooperation relationships.

In organisational learning theory, firms developed their capacity to manage complex work through extracting inferences from experience gained, and extrapolate them to future situations in order to achieve improvements in their behaviour. These competencies grow together with the experience of its management, and the experience gained in a firm's relationship with its employees (Nie and Lämsä, 2015). Within such understanding, both sides will decide their own communication in a credible manner. This in turn reinforces the initial expectations and justifies additional acts of both management and employees in creating trust within the work environment. As a result, a trust relationship evolves. Therefore, it is not only the firm's experience, but also the coordination and behavioural mechanism within these firms that makes the trust building process successful. In this context, trust is not regarded as

an alternative due to its institutional roots, which prevent any non-rational behaviour from management or employees, and with such insight enhancing the crucial role and phenomenon of trust in economic thinking. In fact, the ability to maintain such relationships will enhance these firms in the market place and the economy. However, this research does not focus on the role of trust in the economic context.

Concerns about building trust will restrict management and employees' inclination towards any possible behaviour that reduces risks and uncertainties; betrayal can be partly absorbed in order to build trust and prevent dilemmas within the firm. Both partners (employees and management) will enhance interaction and remove any behavioural uncertainty. When the two parties have committed themselves to each other in a cooperative manner, we can assume that a trust relationship has been established between them. Building and maintaining such relationships of trust between both partners enables them to handle the behavioural uncertainty in their firms (Kong et al., 2015). Therefore, managers are able to capitalise opportunities to reduce competition with their rivals; with such a positive effect of trust, firms' will increase their competitive advantages and improve employees' performance. Through building a personal relationship and self-commitment, it is necessary to handle behavioural uncertainty and build trust by using the firms' available resources that positively affect the employees' and its business performance. Therefore, the mutual trust between partners may be achieved when partners' commitment and interaction has evolved in this direction.

Exchanging opinions between management and employees through an open door policy, transparency and quality of communication is crucial in building trust. This means that both sides are willing to look for the opportunity to express ideas to safeguard their interests. With such interpersonal communications, all participants are contributing positively. In this respect trust is achieved insofar as partners provide such insight and deal with each other openly and honestly as well. Each side is able to assess the situation and are well informed of what the other side is feeling. With such preciseness for building a trust relationship, cooperation will evolve and relationship intensity rises automatically. Although cooperation experience contributes to business performance, management's contribution to success is significantly higher for achieving trust. Again, with more experience of cooperation, management is more successful in building trust. Thus, as far as these firms are able to manage and maintain a cooperative relationship with its employees, its performance is better.

From the organisational point of view, the indication of greater success of the firm is partly due to building a continuous relationship between both partners in a systematic way and as an ongoing process; this will widen the firm's business and its strategic portfolio (Agnihotri and Krush, 2015). The contrast with an ever changing of the partners' attitude does not contribute to the required performance. In fact, the contrast means firms have no experience in cooperation to make employees' performance positive or gain stronger trust. In this context, as mentioned previously, trust is not built

on resources to achieve a possible variable for developing competitive advantage. This means that when management is unable to create cooperation with employees, or cannot coordinate otherwise, then expectation is to evolve the situation to complexity and uncertainty. In other words, what is required is that the quality of the cooperation relationship, and not the quantity of the firm's experience or the intensity of the created relationships by the management is what contributes to future success.

Within the firm, management should encourage those employees willing to commit themselves to positive relationship. Self-commitment through the quality of communication will build trust and is regarded as a leap of faith and step for moving forward.

From the above discussion we may conclude that the main variables for encouraging trust between the firm and employees are:

- an organisation's cultural behaviour;
- effective communication;
- reduce the ambiguity of change;
- be open and upfront with employees;
- a leader's ability to inspire employees;
- aligning management words and actions;
- encourage rather than command;
- leader/management competency;
- take blame but give credit.

The aim of this exploratory research was to demonstrate why companies should invest in trust-building. It also explored how trust issues manifest across industries, to establish a link between employee trust and firm performance, and to outline possible mechanisms through which the relationship may operate.

Due to the existing dearth of research concerning human resource management in the Gulf area in general, and the Middle East in particular, it is hoped that this paper will have a positive contribution to this area.

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With any organisation that is trying to ensure that its employees are making good decisions, the manager often starts by building trust. Management soon realise that trust and telling its employees what to do without sensitivity, implies that such management has faith in their decision-making abilities. This can result in their becoming proactive rather than defensive. In addition, the employees can enhance their faith in their own confidence to make decisions. When employees do not have faith in themselves, then the manager's faith in them decreases even more and building trust has to restart (Lu, 2014). Thus the negative message is that what the employee has done is wrong or not good enough.

Managers have to evaluate their employees from their own point of view and then give them the required assignments; the strategy is to cultivate the habit of listening to them. The feeling is a positive one towards the employees. Managers should not interrupt the employees who are attempting to communicate, who should be acknowledged by their managers, having a positive emotion towards them. In such an environment, managers acknowledge their employees' feelings and opinions. In fact, this is the surest way to improve communication and build trust.

For managers, it is very crucial to let their employees know that they are willing to listen, even though it may not result in agreement from both sides (Bergman et al., 2012). Such a working relationship environment is based on trust, as both sides feel safe; the implicit message is that each has the other's best interests in mind. Employees can accept their managers' criticism, at the same time having their trust. Thus, to have the optimum working relationship, managers/employees feel a sense of trust. In this context managers know that the delegation of tasks is essential for building trust within the workplace environment, and they should not deprive their employees of any opportunity to advance their skills, knowledge, experience and improvement in performance. Employees' feelings within such an environment are that their management treats them as being responsible for undertaking their work, and empowering them to improve their performance. The next step is to focus on the progress made by the employees, with something positive being achieved and still more expectation of maintaining that progress. This is regarded as a positive step for employees' incentives for doing their tasks, thoughts and communications.

In any organisation, communication, teambuilding, and competency will be eroded if trust between leader/management and employees' did not exist (Carmeli et al., 2012). Therefore, these three elements may be regarded as strategies used by management to build its employees' trust. If trust does not exist, and as a result of this lack of trust, the turnover of employees will be increased and workplace morale would be low. Such elements are then regarded as enablers for creating an innovative, profitable and creative environment and organisations to work.

Building management/employees' long-lasting relationships within a healthy work environment will grow over time, and should be regarded as a long-term strategy. These concepts will encourage the establishment of positive perceived thinking and reputation between both parties. They will also create a willingness to take the initiative and accept risks by the employees and reducing frustration. What is needed is trust for the improvement of the firms' performance by employees. It should not be regarded as a short-term management intervention, but the predisposition underlying the entrepreneurs' decisions and actions as a key to achieving competitive advantage and quality of performance in the long-term.

To reduce a firm's challenges, the management should be aware of enhancing coordination between its employees on one side and their management on the other in an attempt to boost performance and intersection of ideas. With the quality of

cooperation, experienced firms are able to build up and maintain effective handling of uncertainty and unaccepted behaviour of employees within such a cooperation relationship. Such challenges for a firm's coordination relationship may increase uncertainty and the complexity of work, and trust may be not regarded as a priority for a period of time when more valuable resources are needed. Therefore, a more co-operative arrangement by the management would rely on maximising trust and more success may be achieved in order to boost its performance.

In day-to-day work, managers are usually aware of the strong trust they have with their employees. They need to build a successful business environment and diminish any negative feeling towards them created by the organisation's previous leaders, otherwise the performance required will suffer. As trust is part of human nature, it is a pivotal element in the management context. Thus, a lack of trust between leaders/management with employees happens when employees know that they are working in an unsafe environment; this results in less innovation. Then, the powerful attribute of leadership is trustworthiness in an attempt to build a track of fairness and honesty.

Building trust by leaders/management should be regarded as an ongoing process. In doing so, this will encourage managers within their organisation to demand high performance from their employees. The misuse of power by some managers in their organisations will have an adverse effect on their employees' careers, resulting in their disappointment and losing trust. In fact managers have to transcend employees' fears to reach the full potential.

ORGANISATIONAL EFFORTS AT PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT

In discussing trust, we are talking about an organisation's ability to achieve success. In this context, employees should believe in their leadership capacities for achieving their organisational objectives; they should also trust each other. In such a relationship between management and its employees on one side, and between employees themselves on the other side, teamwork building, communication and performance is inevitably enhanced in the workplace (Huang et al., 2010).

In business, building conscious teamwork with a specific plan is the most essential variable for achieving success. Employees will react faster, overcome obstacles, build trust and obtain better performance (Gao et al., 2011). In other words, building trust means establishing a high performing team within the organisations based on shared value creation, and leadership/management's openness with employees. Such understanding of building trust will enhance a two-way interaction and improve organisational performance.

Enhancing a positive relationship between management and employees that is based on trust, improves the organisational performance (Yang and Mossholder, 2010). It assume that both parties have the best interests in mind for the organisation, and a sense of trust. Therefore, employees accept criticism for their faults from their

leadership management. It is a situation for achieving performance rather than finding mistakes, and trust is a quality hard to capture.

One may conclude that achieving high performance is a case of how to develop trust within the organisational hierarchy between employees in the workplace. The reasons for this is probably the existence of diversity in the workplace as there are employees from various backgrounds working in the organisation. Leadership/management have to reconcile between employees with different backgrounds within the workplace, with no basis of trust among them (Kelloway et al., 2012). Managers have to be proactive through building an environment of trust to improve or achieve the required performance.

Listening and valuing employees' suggestions and ideas promote management's capacity and resources to effectively communicate with them. With their knowledge, managers are able of assessing and judging ideas mentioned by their employees who may then improve their performance and achieve organisational objectives (Travis et al., 2011). Such an environment increases employees' self-confidence, builds open communication between parties, and creates a habit of listening to learn the promotion of positive emotion. Listening is a way of acknowledging an organisation's employees.

Delegating authority and responsibilities to employees is regarded as a way of building trust and improving performance in the workplace. Such empowering of employees is an opportunity for them to release their skills, strengthen communications with the management, and improve their professional development.

Management should focus on the progress when an assignment is delegated and completed instead of concentrating on perfection (Carmeli et al., 2011). In this case, the required performance may be achieved when employees understand what the expectations are from such tasks, with the supervision of their leadership/managers. In such a work place environment, managers will expect a response, and employees should accept criticism.

In this respect, self-empowerment is more effective than empowerment of employees, as management in this case is giving ideas, therefore enabling positive communications that are not destructive. Beyond this understanding, leaders/managers should notify their employees' that changes are built on their strengths rather than working on their weaknesses (Zhang et al., 2015). Then, performance was achieved on what employees can do within their knowledge and experience, and boosting employees' trust, motivation and candour. In other words managers are enhancing trustworthiness.

Another way of improving employees' performance through building trust is when managers encourage employees to undertake the assignments, providing them with the required information rather than commanding them. In this way employees are motivated to do these tasks (Norman et al., 2010). In the management context, this means delegating authority and responsibilities and granting autonomy for doing these tasks professionally.

In fact, leaders/managers have to be competent to be trusted by their employees. Contacting them on a daily basis as an ongoing process will encourage managers to update their skills, reduce their mistakes and make more commitment to their organisation.

The above discussion reveals that building trust for improving performance is the influence of three enablers, namely motivation, perception, and communication. These elements are regarded as incentives for employees. Effective motivation influences trust when directed. Having highly motivated employees within their organisations means encouraging them to achieve objectives and being aware that employees undertake tasks with high performance. When employees' trust is high, they are likely to proceed with the required changes even if there are no immediate benefits (Palanski and Yammarino, 2011).

Management perception for any required changes will specify the ways of accomplishing these changes and the behaviour or tasks that will be implemented. Changes should improve the employees' performance and be not regarded as a threat to their positions. Trust in this respect will be the basis of the extent of motivating the employees, and their future behaviour (Rubin et al., 2010). When trust is low or negative, this changes the perception of employees, which are more likely to be perceived as negative as well.

Positive communication through the process of changes affects employees' understanding of these changes, and in this respect internalisation cannot be overstated. Employees' trust will enhance their professional work who, in turn, are likely to determine and believe the rationale and their organisations' need for such changes.

METHODOLOGY AND ANALYSIS

The present study employed a survey type methodology, and involved the leadership/management of those companies in the sample. The population of the study was selected through stratified sampling. Questionnaires were sent to the managers of 121 companies (representing more than 52% of the industrial firms, according to the Abu Dhabi Chamber of Commerce, 2015 Annual Report) with significant responsibility for leadership/management contribution to motivating a trust-oriented management. From 121 questionnaires distributed, 109 managers completed and returned their questionnaires, a 90% response rate. Measures were adopted and used to weigh each of the nine variables of motivating trust, namely:

- an organisation's cultural behaviour;
- effective communication;
- a reduction in the ambiguity of change;
- being open and upfront with employees;
- a leader's ability to inspire employees;

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- aligning management words and actions;
- encourage rather than command;
- leader/management competency; and
- take blame but give credit.

Only five motivators were found significant for motivating trust between these three clusters in the economic sectors in the sample. Therefore, a one-way ANOVA analysis was used to assess such similarity. The study used a five-point rating scale, i.e. from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The research investigated the status of these constructed variables as enablers for motivating trust in the industrial sector (see Table 1).

From Table 1, the F value between factors motivating trust factors within the companies surveyed in the sample was high and significant in 0.01. The rank of the F

Table 1 Factors Motivating Creativity: Similarities/Differences

<i>Factors Encouraging Trust</i>	<i>Manufacturing group I</i>		<i>Services group II</i>		<i>Agriculture group III</i>		<i>One-way ANOVA & Scheffe's test</i>		
	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>P-value</i>	<i>Scheffe's test</i>
An organisation's cultural behaviour	4.31	0.94	4.89	0.62	4.51	0.70	3.33	0.10	
Effective communication	4.71	0.74	4.65	0.74	4.41	0.74	1.27	0.36	
A reduction in the ambiguity of change	3.31	0.95	3.36	0.63	3.61	0.68	1.68	0.28	
Being open and upfront with Employees	4.67	0.63	4.95	0.68	4.63	0.57	4.09	0.03	
Leader's ability to inspire employees	4.41	0.92	3.99	1.00	4.22	0.57	3.13	0.15	III > II, III > I
Aligning management words and actions	4.02	0.84	4.15	1.09	4.13	0.61	9.15	0.00*	III > I
Encourage rather than command	3.03	0.71	3.61	0.78	5.01	0.78	6.68	0.00*	
Leader/ Management competency	4.02	0.74	3.82	0.94	4.01	0.68	1.08	0.76	
Take blame but give credit	4.24	0.80	4.74	0.61	4.54	0.65	3.29	0.16	

Alpha Value 0.89

*P < 0.01

Source: Devised by authors from data sample analysis

value indicators for an organisation's cultural behaviour, being open and upfront with employees, a leader's ability to inspire employees, aligning management words and actions, and encourage rather than command as the highest is: 3.33, 4.09, 3.13, 9.15, and 6.68 respectively. Aligning management words and actions was first, encourage rather than command second, open and upfront with employees was third, an organisation's cultural behaviour was fourth, and a leader's ability to inspire employees was last. Using the *P*-value method, leader/management competency was found to be 0.76, and an organisation's cultural behaviour was lowest at 0.10. However, such *P*-value has a rather high value. The alpha value of 0.89 indicates that the research instrument enjoys a rather high validity.

The mean values on a five-point scale (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree) of the five indicators concerning motivating trust were: 18.45, 19.38, 13.10, 37.67 and 20.66 for an organisation's cultural behaviour, being open and upfront with employees, a leader's ability to inspire employees, aligning management words and actions, encourage rather than command respectively. The mean value of aligning management words and actions is 37.67 in the high ranking, indicating that management in the firms surveyed is encouraging diversity at work, the open door system, high participation for employees in the decision making process, and is aware that motivating trust plays a significant role in the success of the organisation. Encourage rather than command was second with 20.66, indicating that solving organisational problems through teamwork was high, and that management empowered their employees with responsibility. This indicator is compatible with the third ranking elements, being open and upfront with employees, which had a value of 19.38. In fact, the respondents believe management and employees in these firms are judged enough by what they do, and the knowledge of departing employees is not passed in a pervasive way to successors. In fact, such issues reflect that these companies have a suitable network of knowledge workers; furthermore they believe there is an active programme for developing ideas.

An organisation's cultural behaviour element was fourth, with a value of 18.45. From this score the clear interpretation for such situations is that the employees and their companies have been acting rather effectively in the case of regular and wide exchange of knowledge, and using of information systems and communication have been higher than average. A leader's ability to inspire employees was last, with a mean value of 13.10. The lower level of value indicated that employees had simple knowledge about the trust concept. The mean of trust motivation factors was 119.730, which indicated that respondents in the sample believed that management efforts for the trust concept between employees with respect to the present criteria, together with the companies' internal environment, were less than the average (see Table 2).

Through discussions with those managers in the companies that were surveyed, the researchers asked respondents to elaborate on their answers. Respondents mentioned other motivational variables for trust in their firms. The researchers believe that

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Table 2 Statistics Analysis

<i>The Variables</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Deviation</i>	<i>Kurtosis</i>	<i>Skewness</i>
An organisation's cultural behaviour	18.45	8.8	-0.085	-0.624
Being open and upfront with employees	19.38	9.8	-0.223	-0.752
A leader's ability to inspire employees	13.10	8.2	-0.292	-0.852
Aligning management words and actions	37.67	11.2	-0.333	-0.534
Encourage rather than command	20.66	10.2	-0.099	-0.118
Total Factors Motivating Trust	119.730			

Source: Devised by authors from data sample analysis

Table 3 Kruscal-Wallis Test

	<i>Aligning management words and actions</i>	<i>Encourage rather than command</i>	<i>Open and upfront with employees</i>	<i>An organisation's cultural behaviour</i>	<i>A leader's ability to inspire employees</i>	<i>Total Factors Motivating Trust</i>
Chi-Square	36.379	21.286	16.953	8.993	7.225	19.931
Asymp. Sig.	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.720	0.244	0.030
∂f	2.000	2.000	2.000	2.000	2.000	2.000

Source: Devised by authors from data sample analysis

leadership/managers' education was probably behind such revelations. Motivational factors mentioned by those managers may be specified such as: internal or external competition, organisational culture, no fear of criticism by the management, financial and economic resources, and management risk tolerance. To assess if the education element is behind such problems' expectations, we used the Kruscal-Wallis techniques. The results are shown in Table 3.

From Table 3, results revealed that there is a relationship between the aligning management words and actions, encourage rather than command, and open and upfront with employees, and total trust motivational factors with employees' and the managers' education level. With ($K\partial f = 2.000$, $P < .01$), the value of the construct variables are: ($K\partial f = 36.379$), ($K\partial f = 21.286$), ($K\partial f = 16.953$), ($K\partial f = 19.931$). There were no significant differences between education and the other two motivational variables (i.e., a leader's ability to inspire employees, and an organisation's cultural behaviour).

CONCLUSIONS

The results of this research revealed that leadership/management is aware of trust as an enabler for a positive contribution towards high performance. Therefore, building trust within an organisation depends on its experience, and enhancing the coordinative power within its managements' efforts.

In this research the relationship between building employees' trust and organisational performance was explored, and indicated the mechanisms through which such a relationship may operate in the workplace. Employees' trust by their managers in the workplace environment explicitly influences those employees to accept the changes that an organisation intends to consider. Conclusions are then that trust is important between employees' for workplace performance, and the level of such trust is influenced by job and work related characteristics. In other words, trust is the key builder when considering changes, and there is a negative impact due to a lack of trust. Therefore, a low level of trust may undermine management's efforts for changes, and leadership/management has to understand and be aware of the trust of their employees in the organisation.

The high level of trust of employees in their managers affords a significant competitive advantage. Such sustainability may encourage managers to accept and take risks of changes in their organisations. Managers may demonstrate trust through an environment characterised by transparency, involving employees in the decision-making process, and problem solving and openness with the employees in the workplace. In other words, the organisational structure is signalling that it trusts its employees. Using active rather than passive methods of communication by the managers with employees helps to maintain and enhance trust in the workplace environment. On the other hand, transparencies in communication between both sides are helping to remove the ambiguity of changes and the employees' resistance to such changes. This will help the management to achieve the required outcome.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

In light of our empirical results, further research in this field is certainly worthwhile, both from a scientific as well as a practical point of view. There could be more research about trust in terms of a major challenge with regard to the autonomy of the respondents, to assess if the findings are regarded as a cultural context in other industries.

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BIOGRAPHY

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