The Importance of Interpersonal Trust: Now More than Ever

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Request: What do we know about trust? Where does future research in this arena need to go?

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- **CNN’s Today in Politics 24 Jan 18 5:40AM**
  - Onscreen footer: “Little Trust as Immigration Debate Begins Anew”
  - I could demonstrate we are talking past each other regarding trust
  - Our first work in 1990s was to get us on same page
  - Revisit that model first for same reason, then turn to future

- Separates:
  - Propensity to trust others (generalized willingness to trust: how trusting are you?)
  - Trust (willingness to be vulnerable to specific trustee)
  - Risk Taking in Relationship (actual risk taking to trustee’s actions)
  - Trustworthiness (characteristics of trustee)
    - Ability: trustee is perceived to have skills & abilities to accomplish what is needed
    - Benevolence: trustee is perceived to care about welfare of trustor (trusting party)
    - Integrity: trustee is perceived to consistently follow values trustor finds acceptable
  - Risk (how much harm or gain might happen- distinct from considerations about trustee)

- Ability, Benevolence, Integrity, Propensity all contribute independently to trust in a specific party (meta-analysis by Colquitt, Scott, & LePine, 2007, JAP)
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Note 1: Constraining risk is distinct from increasing trust.
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• Some things we know about trust (willingness to be vulnerable to another party one cannot monitor or control: Mayer, Davis, & Schoorman, 1995, AMR)
  • Trust in leaders affects employees’ performance, OCBs (helping behaviors), ability to focus attention on what needs to be accomplished
  • Trust between groups evolves as each reacts to the other’s moves, then reacts reciprocally with more/less trustworthy behavior
  • Trust in leader affects an organization’s performance
  • Model was explicitly designed to apply to various levels of analysis including groups & organizations
  • Evidence that it applies to trusting federal government
• Where to go with trust research?
  • Trust is one human response to risk
  • Look for areas of high risk to people/decision makers, or where risk is increasing
    • Esp. in VUCA situations (volatile, uncertain, complex, & ambiguous)
  • Understanding, building, & rebuilding damaged trust
  • Trusting human vs computer, cognitive/behavioral reactions to each esp. when info sources conflict
  • Trust in government, trust between governments
  • Trust in MDs, medical system (Damodaran, Shulruf, & Jones 2017 [Sept], Medical Education)
  • Effects of culture on trust
  • Police-community trust—looking at trust in both directions
  • The interplay of religion, culture, & trust (e.g., Thomas Fingar’s earlier example of polio vaccination programs being blocked in Muslim cultures)
My challenge to the National Academies of Sciences:

• Solving “Grand Challenges” is largely interdisciplinary

• Help universities to truly appreciate interdisciplinary research, understand the challenges it presents, and what they could/should do to promote & facilitate it

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