

Factors Determining the Relationship between Superiors and Their Subordinates: Evaluating the Trust Factor in Chinese Organizations

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Abstract

When it comes to the characteristics of superior behavior in trust development orientation, it includes five dimensions: guidance behavior, fair behavior, control sharing, integrity behavior and superior competence behavior; on the contrary, the features of subordinate behavior consists of four levels, namely, prudent behavior, loyal behavior, integrity behavior and subordinate competence behavior. This paper, proves that emotional trust has influence on employee's behavior and performance, including direct and indirect effects, which means that on the one hand, emotional trust imposes direct impact on employee's task performance and individual citizenship behavior, the mediating role via emotional trust on the other hand plays indirect role in employee's performance and organizational citizenship behavior. The last part is the conclusion of the whole paper, and reveals the weakness of the study and the future research orientation at the same time.

Keywords: Trust relationship; Organizational Behavior, Employee Characteristics

1.0 Introduction

The main purpose of this paper is to make a discussion on the superior behavior characteristics and subordinate behavior features, respectively, through empirical methods. Trust, as a cultural phenomenon, is mainly differentiated from West and East with little common features though. In light of Chinese cultural background, the relationship plays a hub place for that the power distance is stressed in Chinese relief. Going forward, the vertical trust in the organization is divided into superior trust and subordinated trust, discussing the structural dimensions of superior behavior characteristics that promote the development of superior trust and subordinate behavior characteristics that advance subordinate trust development, in order to deepen the understanding of interpersonal trust factors in the organization.

The different effects of individual behavior characteristics on cognitive trust and emotional trust are studied, simultaneously, the study of inter-level model of the development of trust between superior and subordinate in an organization is implemented with the combination of the factors of organizational formal system control and organizational social control. A fundamental core element of trust is risk. Risk leads to the need for trust, and the size of risk also affects the generation of trust. One of the effective ways for individuals to reduce the risk perception of others is to develop active and credible behavior; while one of the commonly used ways to shrink risk in organizations is control, including formal control based on institution and social control based on organizational atmosphere. It will be helpful to deepen the

understanding of the influencing factors of trust development in the organization by exploring the specific effects of the behavior characteristics at the individual level, and the control system at the organizational level on the two types of trust: cognitive trust and emotional trust. It also improves the initiative of individuals and organizations for the enhancement of the development of trust, launches and advances the trust development by taking active measures. The influence mechanism of superior and subordinate trust on behavior and performance in the organization is discussed. As a kind of trust behavior, authorization behavior is closely related to trust, but trust behavior is different from trust. As a risk-bearing behavior, trust behavior is also influenced by specific situational factors. The exploration of the relationship between superior subordinates' trust and superior's authorized behavior, and the influence of situational factors will help to deepen the understanding of the relationship between trust and trust behavior. There is no clear boundary in the mechanism of subordinates' relationship between superior trust and subordinates' performance.

Through the investigation of influence mechanism of superior cognitive trust and emotional trust on subordinates' performance, it was helpful to understand the relationship between trust and performance. Generally admitting, this study explores the contingent influence of trust on outcome variables, which can promote the understanding of the relationship between trust and outcome variables, and guide organizations and individuals to take effective measures to stimulate the production of positive trust outcome variables.

2.0 Literature Review

This study adopts one of the most commonly used concepts in interpersonal trust studies, namely, trust is a state of mind in which individuals predispose to expose their weaknesses based on positive expectations of their behavior and intentions (Rousseau et al., 1998). Trust, as a psychological state, occurs in specific interpersonal relationships (Hosmer,1995). According to the different subjects, the vertical trust in the organization is divided into superior trust and subordinate trust. Superior trust in subordinates (referred to as subordinate trust) is a psychological state in which superiors are willing to expose their weaknesses on the basis of positive expectations of subordinates' behavior and intentions and do not worry about being exploited by subordinates. Subordinate trust in their superiors (referred to as superior trust) is a psychological state in which subordinates are willing to expose their weaknesses based on positive expectations of their actions and intentions and do not worry about being exploited by their superiors.

2.1 Importance of Trust

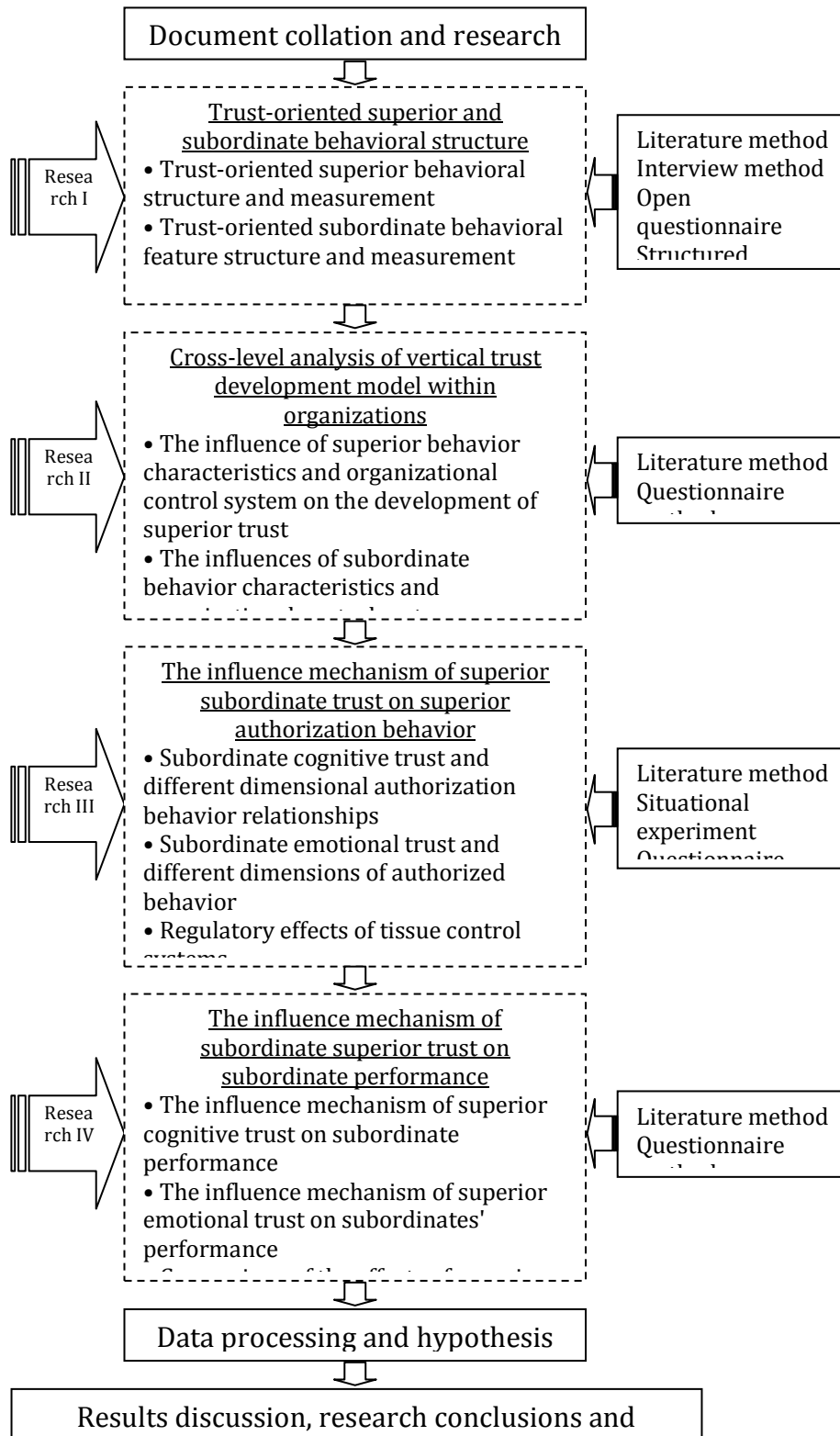
As a kind of psychological state, trust is the result of the combination of cognitive rational thinking and emotional pay, so the two basic dimensions of trust is divided into rational cognition and irrational emotion. In light of the literature on intra-organizational interpersonal trust, the most commonly accepted and applied methods of inter-organizational interpersonal trust, as well as the differences in the basis and source of trust formation, this study divides intra-organizational trust into cognitive trust and emotional trust.

Among others, Cognitive trust is a kind of trust formed on the basis of rational judgment of individual characteristics such as ability and personality, which is based on the belief of credibility and reliability of others. On the other aspect, emotional trust is the outcome of mutual care, reflecting the specific emotional relationship between the two sides of trust, so the emotional trust is more a kind of emotional performance.

The above concepts can be summarized in Table -2

Table 2-3 Commonly used interpersonal trust scale

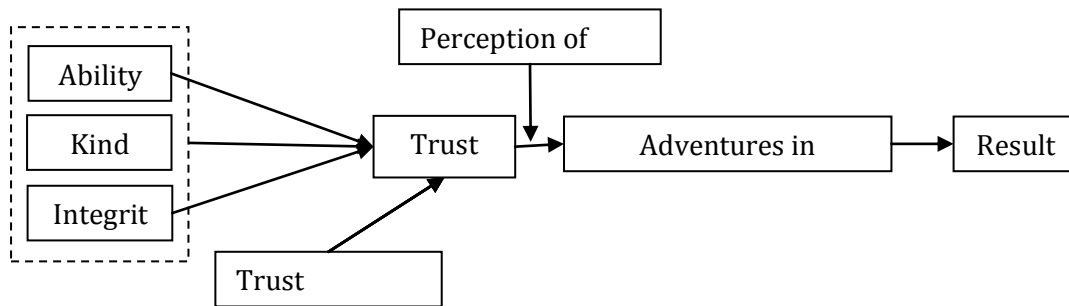
Researcher	Trust measurement content	Item number	Evaluate
Mayer, Davis (1999)	Trust in the other's willingness to expose their weaknesses	Four	The value of α is low, but the measurement definition is clear and the trust of retest is stable.
Mayer et al. (2005)	Two factors: willingness to expose one's weaknesses and willingness to engage in specific risk behaviors.	Ten	Concerned about the problem of small α value, but produced two dimensions.
Schoorman, Ballinger (2006)	Trust the other person's willingness to expose their weaknesses.	Seven	Concerned about the problem of small α value, and did not produce two dimensions
Gillespie (2003)	Behavioral Trust Scale Based on the Willingness to Expose Weaknesses by Defining Trust	Ten	Good psychometric characteristics
McAllister, (1995)	Emotional-based trust and cognitive-based trust	Eleven	Reliability in different studies is stable, and it can measure different types of trust.



3.0 Research Methodology

The paper makes use of an array of empirical research methods such as literature, interview, questionnaire, situation experiment methods, and other statistical analysis methods including SPSS, LISREL and HLM. Extensive reading of domestic and foreign related research literature, it is useful to grasp the relevant background of trust

research, the factors influencing the development of interpersonal trust in the organization, and the research progress of the relationship between interpersonal trust and outcome variables. At the same time, it will provide a solid theoretical preparation for research, design, and implementation. Interview method with the help of interviews, it will be beneficial to understand the characteristics of superior behavior and subordinate behavior that promote the development of superior trust and subordinate trust, as well as the specific influence of different behavior characteristics on vertical trust development within the organization.



Questionnaire method: it contains two aspects. One is to understand the characteristics of individual behavior that influence the development of vertical trust in the organization on a larger scale through the open questionnaire. The other is to establish interpersonal trust development model and trust and the relationship between the outcome variables model through structured questionnaire to collect large-scale information. Situation experiment method: The contingency mechanism of trust and trust behavior through situational experiments is discussed. It is mainly about the relationship between superior trust and superior authorization behavior and the influence of individual and organizational characteristics.

4.0 Data Analysis

The preliminary model of individual behavior characteristics guided by trust development is established after making an analysis of selected projects through exploratory factors in the statistical tools of SPSS, LISREL and HLM. The structural validity of individual behavior is verified by confirmatory factor analysis. Going forward, the inter-level model of vertical trust development within an organization, and the contingency model of the relationship between trust and outcome variables is discussed through multilevel linear model, structural equation modeling, multivariate ANOVA and hierarchical regression analysis.

The technical route of the research is the overall research plan, which includes research topic, conception, investigation, data analysis and conclusion summary. The main expected innovations in this study are from the perspective of individual behavior characteristics, this paper discusses the differences between superior behavior characteristics and subordinate behavior characteristics that promote the development of vertical trust in organizations. The five dimensions of superior behavior are as follows: guidance behavior, fair behavior, control sharing, integrity behavior and superior competence behavior; The four dimensions of behavior characteristics of subordinates are: prudent behavior, loyalty behavior, integrity behavior and subordinate competence behavior. Based on the Cross-Hierarchical

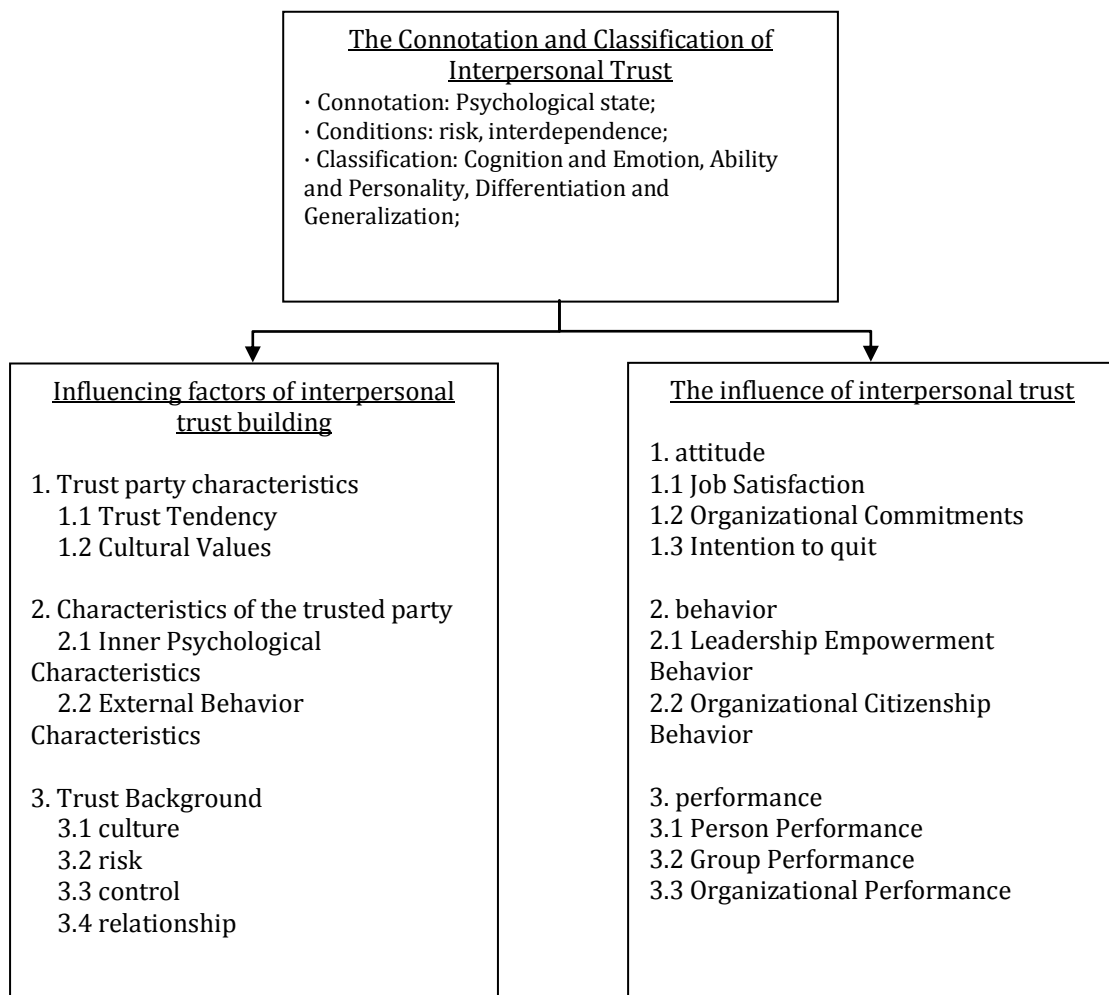
Analysis of organization and individual, this paper puts forward a cross-hierarchical synthesis model of vertical trust development in organizations. As far as the development of superior trust is concerned, the integrity behavior in the characteristics of individual behavior of the superior has the greatest effect on the cognitive trust of the superior, and the guiding behavior exerts the largest impact on the emotional trust of the superior. The institutional control and organizational atmosphere in the organizational control system have the same positive effect on the superior cognitive trust and emotional trust., when it comes to the development of subordinate trust, the subordinate competence behavior in the individual behavior characteristics of subordinates plays the most important role in promoting the subordinate cognitive trust development, and loyalty behavior plays the most important role in improving the subordinate emotional trust. In the organizational control system, the influence of institutional control on subordinate cognitive trust is greater than that on subordinate emotional trust, and the influence of organizational atmosphere on subordinate emotional trust is greater than that on subordinate cognitive trust. By the research of the influence of the subordinate cognitive trust and emotional trust on the superior authorized behavior in different dimensions, the contingency model of the subordinate trust's influence on the superior authorized behavior is put forward, combined with the sense of individual power distance, and the organizational system control.

Cognitive trust to subordinates has the greatest positive effect on decision-making participation, and emotional trust on subordinates has a great positive influence on helping guidance and information sharing. The sense of power distance and institutional control of superior have a significant effect on the relationship between subordinate cognitive trust and three-dimensional degree of authorized power. However, only institutional control plays a significant role in regulating the relationship between subordinate emotional trust and three-dimensional authorization.

But trust is specific to a specific situation, and the relationship between trust and trust behavior is influenced by specific contextual factors. In the study of trust within organizations, focusing on active trust development has become an increasingly obvious trend (Williams, 2007; Whitener, Brodt, et al., 1998). This research has a more important meaning in the contemporary Chinese environment with fierce economic competition. China is a country with low trust (Fei Xue Wang and Yamagishi Toshio, 1999), but the organization faces a rapidly changing business environment and needs the rapid development of trust. Active trust development is an effective strategy to strengthen trust (Child & Mollering, 2003). Therefore, organizations and individuals should no longer regard trust development as a passive process that slowly accumulates over time, but actively promotes trust to build and develop more quickly. However, one of the basic core elements of trust is risk. Risks lead to the need for trust, and the magnitude of the risk also affects the generation of trust. An effective way for a trusted party to reduce the perceived risk of a trusted party is through trust-oriented individual behavior (Williams, 2007). Therefore, the trusted party needs to take the initiative and take certain actions to promote the active development of trust. At the same time, a common way to reduce risk is through the organization's control system, which mainly includes formal control based on the system and social control based on the organizational atmosphere. The risk control and relationship between individual active trust development behavior and organization is becoming a focus of research on trust development. This study

explores the development of trust within organizations from the dual perspectives of individual behavioral characteristics and organizational risk control, and attempts to examine the cross-hierarchical model of trust development within organizations through cross-hierarchical comprehensive analysis at the individual and organizational levels, with a view to promoting individual and organizational organizations. Initiative in the atmosphere of trust, take positive measures to promote the research and practice of active trust development. And on this basis, further test the impact of trust on individual behavior within the organization.

This study explores the impact patterns of individual behavioral characteristics and organizational control systems on the development of trust in the organization, as well as the impact of the level of vertical trust development within the organization on individual behavior. The general idea of the research is to explore the cross-hierarchical development model of vertical trust development in the organization, including the characteristics of individual behavior and the influence of organizational control system, on the basis of establishing the characteristics and measurement methods of superior and subordinate behavioral orientations in the organization. On this basis, further analyze the contingency relationship between trust and individual behavior in the vertical relationship within the organization.



Sample Characteristics	Group Standard	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	263	61.45%
	Female	165	38.55%
Age	Under 25 years old	56	13.30%
	25 to 35 years old	191	45.37%
	36 to 45 years old	122	28.98%
	46 to 55 years old	45	10.69%
	Over 55 years old	7	1.66%
Educational level	Below High School	23	5.58%
	Senior High School/Technical Secondary School	70	16.99%
	Junior College	121	29.37%
	Undergraduate	159	38.59%
	Master and above	39	9.47%

Table 2

Analysis of CITC value and α coefficient of the initial questionnaire of superior behavior characteristics

Subscale	Initial α	Item number	CITC	Coefficient α after deleting the item
Integrity Behavior	.8551	Int1	0.7039	0.8171
		Int2	0.6580	0.8280
		Int3	0.6732	0.8236
		Int4	0.7810	0.7936
		Int5	0.5454	0.8585
Role Competence Behavior of Superior	.8559	Com1	0.5578	0.8440
		Com2	0.6320	0.8361
		Com3	0.5546	0.8446
		Com4	0.7262	0.8195
		Com5	0.5888	0.8408
		Com6	0.6013	0.8398
		Com7	0.6858	0.8263
Fair Conduct	.7999	Fair1	0.5762	0.7695
		Fair2	0.6200	0.7474

		Fair3	0.663 8	0.7364
		Fair4	0.606 1	0.7528
Coaching Behavior	.9059	Coach1	0.685 7	0.8957
		Coach2	0.715 4	0.8924
		Coach3	0.745 8	0.8897
		Coach4	0.741 0	0.8896
		Coach5	0.698 5	0.8943
		Coach6	0.737 7	0.8899
		Coach7	0.714 1	0.8923
Sharing of Control Rights	.8616	Share1	0.637 9	0.8432
		Share2	0.754 6	0.8169
		Share3	0.719 2	0.8234
		Share4	0.729 6	0.8206
		Share5	0.571 3	0.8605

Table 3.1

3.0 Research Methodology

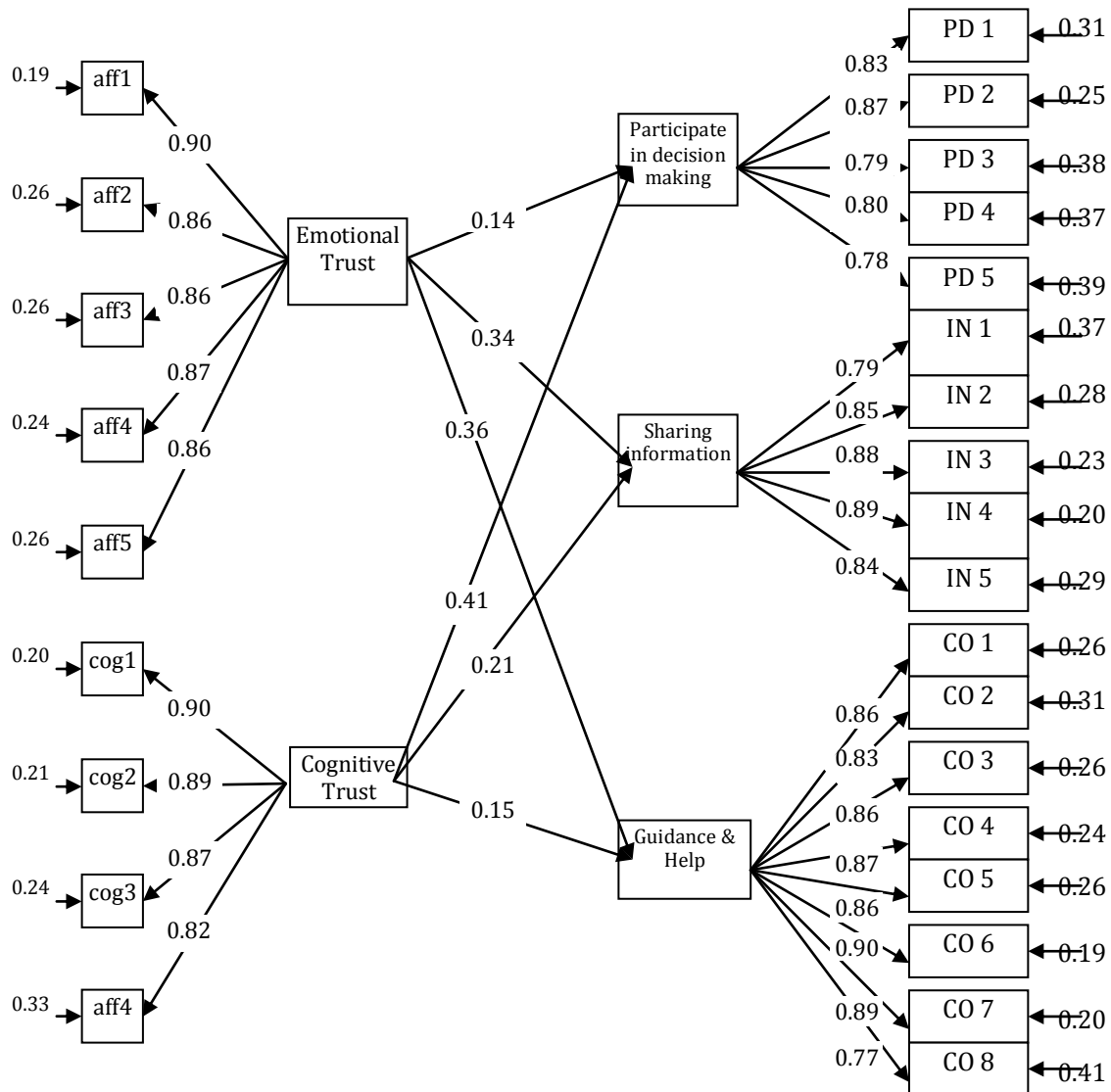
A total of 500 questionnaires were sent out from Hu Bei, Hu Nan, Guang Xi, Zhe Jiang and Shanghai. 472 questionnaires were recovered. After deleting the invalid questionnaires, 453 valid questionnaires were obtained, with a recovery rate of 90.6%. After eliminating the unfilled items, 60.59% of the samples were males and 39.41% were females. According to the composition of educational background, 4.82% are below senior high school, 10.78% are senior high school, 36.47% are junior college, 40.37% are undergraduate, and 7.57% are master's degree or above. The basic personal information in the sample is shown in Table 4.

4.0 Data Analysis

Confirmatory factor analysis results of superior self-survey questionnaire,

The LISREL8.30 software was used to analyze the factors of the self-investigation questionnaire of the superiors, and the two-factor model (individual level of power distance and organizational system control) and the single factor model

(both research variables belong to one factor). The results show that the two-factor model is the best fit for the data, SRMR=0.052, lower than 0.08, IFI=0.92, CFI=0.92, NNFI=0.91, both higher than 0.90. The fitting index of the single factor model was poor, SRMR=0.14, IFI=0.63, CFI=0.63, NNFI=0.58. Therefore, the self-investigation questionnaire of the superiors measured two different factors and had a high structural validity.



The confirmatory factor analysis was used to test the employee evaluation scale of the superiors, and the two-factor model (subordinate cognitive trust and subordinate emotional trust) and the single factor model (two research variables belong to one factor) were compared. The analysis results show that the two-factor model fits the data better, SRMR=0.032, lower than 0.08, IFI=0.96, CFI=0.96, NNFI=0.94, both higher than 0.90; and the single factor model fitting index Poor, SRMR = 0.11, although less than 0.1, but IFI = 0.77, CFI = 0.77, NNFI = 0.69, both less than 0.90. Therefore, the employee evaluation of the superiors measured two different factors and had a high structural validity.

Table 4: The basic information of conductor subjects

Sample Characteristics	Group Standard	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	269	60.59%
	Female	175	39.41%
Age	Under 25 years old	15	3.41%
	25 to 35 years old	175	39.78%
	36 to 45 years old	165	37.50%
	46 to 55 years old	71	16.14%
	Over 55 years old	14	3.18%
Educational level	Below High School	21	4.82%
	Senior High School/Technical	47	10.78%
	Secondary School	159	36.47%
	Junior College	176	40.37%
	Undergraduate	33	7.57%
	Master and above		

Note: The total frequency of less than 453 is the missing value.

5.0 Conclusion

The study of the influencing factors of interpersonal trust development is a focus issue in trust research. Many trust researchers have a great interest in the factors affecting interpersonal trust, and have produced rich research results and opinions in this field. It should be noted here that although researchers agree that there are many factors influencing interpersonal trust, there is no agreement on the specific elements. The relationship between trust, risk and control is an important issue in trust research. Control can serve as a risk mitigation mechanism that goes beyond credibility. For a long time, there are two main viewpoints about the relationship between control and trust, namely, the concept of substitution and the concept of complementation. There is a difference between trust and trust behavior. The most fundamental difference between the two is the willingness to take risks and the actual risk-taking behavior. As a state of mind, trust is not the risk itself, but the willingness to take risks, and truly exposes its own weaknesses, so that accepting the influence of the other party is the risk (Rabdi, 2013).

It is found that superior emotional trust is more conducive to the formation of high-quality social exchange relationship between employees and managers and the formation of employee emotional commitment. Only emotional commitment plays a part of intermediary role between superior emotional trust and subordinate behavior and performance. A time-honored tradition of emotion has been valued in China. When the subordinates feel the “kindness and care” from the superior, they will generate a sense of obligation or responsibility, then give returns to the superior, one of which may do their duties well, even showing more roles out of work. Therefore, the emotional trust in the superior positively affects the employee’s task performance and organizational citizenship behavior. Superior affective trust originates from the increase of affinities and emotional connections in the process of mutual interaction between employees and superiors. As a result, managers at all levels of the organization should strengthen the emotional communication with their employees and show their care and concern for the subordinates, that is, to implement certain soft

management, which reflects the value in the context of the relationship based Chinese culture. (Rabdi, 2013).

Trust increases the likelihood that a trusted party will accept the influence of the behavior of the trusted party on itself. The result of trust may be the actual risk-taking behavior of the relying party in its interactions with the trusted party. The higher the level of trust, the more trustworthy behavior the trustee may have (Mayer, 1995). Risk taking is the most direct behavioral outcome and performance of trust (Mayer et al., 1995; Ross et al., 1996).

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