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Leadership behaviours that nurture organizational trust: Re-examining the fundamentals

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the variable of trust in organizational relationships and found six leadership behaviors that foster trust. Using a confirmatory factor analysis, these leadership behaviors were examined to see the nature of the relationships among latent variables. The goal of the research was to establish whether there were some fundamental qualities that characterized trust-producing leadership behaviours. The study used data that were gathered from a survey among teachers in Jamaica. The participants work at various levels of the Jamaican education system and they were selected using a convenience sampling technique. The 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. The instrument used to collect the data was designed by the researcher and tested for reliability using Cronbach's Alpha and produced a result of .938. The study proposes recommendations for improving organizational trust.

KEY WORDS

leadership behaviors, trust, organizational health, employee well-being

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1 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.

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.

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In my work in the public education system I discovered that there were deep layers of distrust and I thus became interested in sharpening my understanding of what leadership behaviors would lead to improved trust. Given the pivotal nature of trust to the effective functioning of an organization and what I have learnt about the concerns of teachers, this study seeks to examine what factors or leadership behaviours advance or promote trust-building. The basic argument of this paper is that if trust is strong then organizations are better off, thus any behavior that would tend to promote trust is good for the organization.

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:

- (i) 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?
- (ii) 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.

2 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 is 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 relationships involve vulnerability. Savolainen 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. Savolainen 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. Savolainen 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. These 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. Thus 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. This 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 relationships 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 in 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 Savolainen 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:

1. Ability – demonstrating competence.
2. Believability – acting with integrity.
3. Connectedness – demonstrating care.
4. 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:

- (a) Competence.
- (b) Dependability/Reliability.
- (c) Consistency/Believability.
- (d) 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 trust-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.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 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.

3.2 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.

3.3 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 non-verbal 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.

The final composition of the sample, which comprised 97 participants, is outlined in Table 1. The sample shows a gender ratio of 3:1 in favor of females. This ratio is consistent with the ratio of the general teacher population in Jamaica. The qualifications profile of the sample, with reference to age, is outlined in Table 2.

Table 1: Age group and level educational institution employed cross-tabulation

		Level educational institution where you work					Total
		Early Childhood Level	Primary Level	Secondary Level	Tertiary Level	Other	
Age Group	20 - 30 years	1	3	0	7	2	13
	31 - 40 years	0	18	6	17	2	43
	41 - 50 years	0	7	3	8	2	20
	51 - 60 years	0	1	0	13	0	14
	60 + years	0	0	1	2	0	3
Total		1	29	10	47	6	93

Count

Table 2: Age group and highest qualification cross-tabulation

		Level educational institution where you work					Total
		Diploma	Bachelor's Degree	Master's Degree	Postgraduate Cert in Education	Doctorate	
Age Group	20 - 30 years	2	8	0	1	0	11
	31 - 40 years	9	22	13	1	0	45
	41 - 50 years	1	7	8	2	1	19
	51 - 60 years	1	4	9	0	0	14
	60 + years	0	2	1	0	0	3
Total		13	43	31	4	1	92

Count

3.4 DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS PROCEDURES

The instrument was distributed by hand as well as by email and returned by the same route. One hundred questionnaires were issued using each method with face-to-face recording a 75% response rate and the email method a 22% response rate. The instrument was coded and data entered into excel and later transported into SPSS, V. 22.0 and analyzed. This paper is one of several that have been drawn from the data collected and the analyses for this study were confirmatory factor analyses and correlations. The confirmatory factor analysis was used to determine how well the variables being measured represent the construct of the study. Confirmatory factor analysis is a tool used to determine the nature of relationships among latent constructs (Jackson, Gallapsy & Purc-Stephenson, 2009). In this case the data were utilized on principal leadership within Jamaica, consequently,

the researcher sought to measure trust as a subcategory of principal leadership based on several factors that were predetermined based on an exploratory factor analysis that was conducted in a previous study and also from the researcher's theoretical judgment. A type of modelling was done to determine the model fit and how well these factors represent the construct. Additionally, a Pearson product correlation coefficient was used to determine the relationship between the six factors associated with the constructs of trust.

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

4 RESULTS

4.1 TRUST-PRODUCING LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOURS

In laying the foundation for this study, I argued that trust is a critical determinant in the effectiveness of leaders. Against that background six qualities were identified as to be trust-producing leadership behaviours based on the literature and the distillation of data on which this study relies, as shown in Table 3. The six behaviours are:

- (1) Trusting in the collective wisdom of staff (Wisdom)
- (2) Encouraging diversity of perspectives (Perspectives/ Diverse Perspectives)
- (3) Willingness to debate issues in situations where opinions differ (Opinions)
- (4) Being a good listener (Listen)
- (5) Promoting collective responsibility (Responsibility)
- (6) Responding positively to staff members when there is disagreement (Positivity)

4.2 FACTORS TO WHICH TRUST-PRODUCING BEHAVIOURS ARE RELATED

In order to test the validity of claim that the six behaviours mentioned are in fact arguable as related to trust, an overall model fit was developed. Using the benchmarks established by Leach et al. (2008), the results as shown in Table 4 were found.

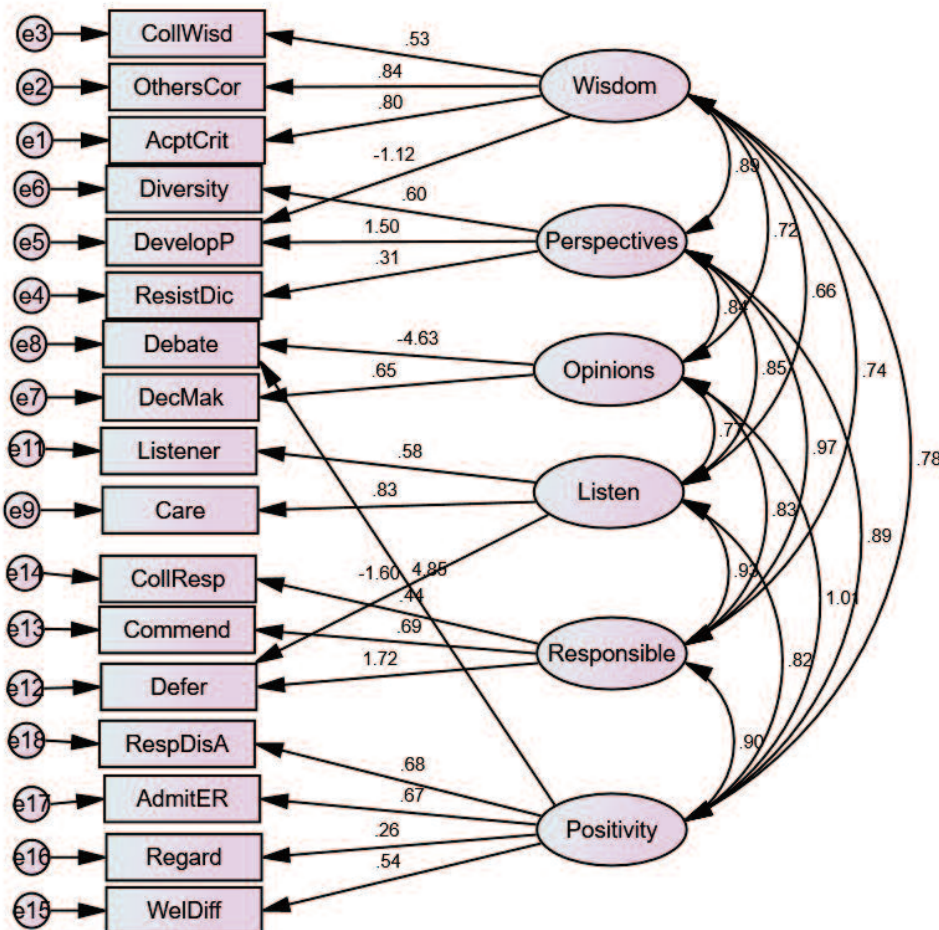
Table 4: Results of the goodness of fit for model

Fit Index	Model	Cited Bench Mark
CMIN	131.627	NA
DF	101	NA
CFI	.934	> .93
NFI	.779	> .93
GFI	.879	> .93
TLI	.911	> .93
IFI	.938	> .93
RMR	.029	< .05
RMSEA	.056	< .08
AIC	272.280	NA

Note: CMIN (Chi square); DF (Degree of Freedom), CFI (Comparative Fit Index); NFI (Normed Fit Index); GFI (Goodness of Fit Index); TLI (Tucker Lewis Index); IFI (the Incremental Fit Index); RMR (Root Mean Square Residual); RMSEA (Root Mean Square of Approximation); AIC (Akiake Information criterion).

The results show that with respect to the CFI (.934) and the IFI (.938) the model was a good fit with readings slightly above the bench mark of .93. With respect to TLI, GFI, and NFI, the model produced a reasonable fit with readings of .911, .879, .779, respectively relative to the benchmark of .93. Leach et al. (2008) suggest that if the RMR and the RMSEA fell below .05 and .08, respectively, then the model is a good fit; this model measured at .029 for RMR and .056 for RMSEA. The RMSEA score of .056, which is well below the benchmark of .08, indicates a solidly good model fit. The standardized estimates of the model are shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Standardized estimates of the model of the six behaviours or factors associated with trust



A correlation of the six behaviours or factors showed weak to moderate correlations between the factors. Weak correlations were observed between listen and responsibility, listen and diversity of perspectives, responsibility and positivity, responsibility and diversity of perspectives, and opinions and diversity of perspectives. All other relationships were moderately positive interactions as shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Relationships among the six behaviors associated with trust

		Correlations					
		Wisdom	Opinions	Listen	Responsibility	Positivity	Diversity Perspectives
Wisdom	Pearson Correlation	1	.579**	.416**	.421**	.535**	.515**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	96	96	96	96	96	96
Opinions	Pearson Correlation	.579**	1	.451**	.488**	.346**	.359**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.001	.000
	N	96	97	97	97	97	97
Listen	Pearson Correlation	.416**	.451**	1	.284**	.431**	.313**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.005	.000	.002
	N	96	97	97	97	97	97
Responsibility	Pearson Correlation	.421**	.488**	.284**	1	.205*	.281**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.005		.044	.005
	N	96	97	97	97	97	97
Positivity	Pearson Correlation	.535**	.346**	.431**	.205*	1	.414**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.001	.000	.044		.000
	N	96	97	97	97	97	97
Diversity Perspectives	Pearson Correlation	.515**	.359**	.313**	.281**	.414**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.002	.005	.000	
	N	96	97	97	97	97	97

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

5 DISCUSSION

The 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 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. The 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.

5.1 TRUSTING THE COLLECTIVE WISDOM OF STAFF

The first of six leadership behaviours found by this study to be a trust producer is that of the leader demonstrating confidence in the collective wisdom of his or her team. That this is a trust-producing behaviour is almost a truism. It strikes as very basic that if a leader conveys to his or her team that he or she trusts their know-how these staff members will in turn “trust the boss”. What this means, among other things, is that if team members are called upon

to make decisions they will do so confidently. This leadership producing behaviour has moderately strong positive correlation of .462, .415, and .411 and levels of significance of .000, with three other variables.

In the first correlation it is revealed that trusting the wisdom of staff means conveying that one's views and approaches are not the only correct views and approaches; that indeed those of others can be correct. The leader who trusts the wisdom of his staff will not insist on things being done his or her way only but will be open to the approaches which others take. The second and third correlations confirm that team members will develop confidence in a leader who is willing to accept criticism and who does not behave as though his or her opinions should be those that team members hold. This idea that when a leader demonstrates confidence in his or her team members that leader creates the conditions for trust to be built is supported by Hurley (2006) who asserts that trust is confident reliance upon another. This confident reliance, while creating vulnerabilities according to Mayer et al. (1995), is inescapable as relationship cannot function without trust as Savolainen and Hakkinen (2011) have shown. Thus by assuming the postures of conveying that others' approaches can be correct and by being willing to accept criticism a leader is providing the basic requirements to make his or her relationships with team members functional and meaningful. This is particularly relevant in the context today's schools which are being increasingly staffed by highly qualified teachers which is in contrast to a previous era in which the principal was the most highly trained and experienced and therefore wielded strong knowledge power (French and Raven, 1959) and who also controlled the flow of information and thus possessing superior knowledge power (Raven, 1965).

5.2 ENCOURAGING DIVERSITY OF PERSPECTIVES

A second leadership behaviour found in this study to stimulate and foster trust on the part of employees is when the leader encourages diversity of perspectives. This underlying meaning of this behaviour is similar to what it means to trust collective wisdom. By encouraging diverse perspectives a leader is showing that he or she has regard for what people think or believe and is prepared to rely upon those perspectives.

This leadership behaviour has correlations of .466, .462, and .423 with the variables 'commend staff who demonstrate commitment', 'shows willingness to accept criticism', and 'encourages staff members to continue professional development'. The second of these three related variables was found to be related to the first leadership behaviour and was already discussed. The meaning of the other two could be an affirmation that, contrary to perceptions that some leaders have that difference of views mean disloyalty, diversity of view could in fact be an act of commitment worthy of commendation. Diversity of perspectives should, the data seem to suggest, invite interventions that seek to nurture further independence of thought through encouraging staff to expand their skills. The tendency in some organizations to only reward and promote those who fall in line with group think as Handy (1993) observes is declared anathema by this finding which sees as a trust-producing behaviour actions that would serve to create the conditions for increased diversity of perspectives.

Encouraging diversity of perspectives alters the dynamic of power in relationships. Taking into account that power is at work in all relationships as Galbraith (1983), Handy (1993) and de Moll (2010) have found, and given that one source of power is knowledge as French and Raven (1959) have established, the act of encouraging diverse perspectives amounts to power-sharing. One of the drivers of distrust is the fear that power will be used in ways that are not aligned to one's interest as Lewicki et al. (2006) assert. Thus when diverse views are allowed by a leader, the conditions for the alignment of interests are created and this act serves to increase cooperation resulting in the decline of distrust.

5.3 WILLINGNESS TO ENGAGE IN DEBATE

When a leader shows a willingness to engage in debate that willingness is a statement about openness to other views; but perhaps more powerfully it is a sign that the leader is prepared to subject his or her own views to challenge. It takes a courageous and confident leader to do this. This leadership behaviour is aligned to the previous two and is correlated to two variables with which the previous two are also correlated, namely conveying that others' views and approaches can be correct and willingness to accept criticism. The correlations on this case are .441 and .396.

The basic meaning of this leadership behaviour is that in order to stimulate trust, the leader must do more than just being willing to listen to others' view, he or she must take the further active step of engaging in debate. This action-oriented approach is precisely what Beslin et al (2004) describe when they suggest that too often leaders talk about having trust, rather than taking action to build trust.

The importance of debate on issues before taking decisions is particularly important to teachers who see themselves, quite correctly, as experts in their respective fields. Thus to embark on major initiatives without their

input and pledge of cooperation risks probable failure as they value deference towards their expertise, as indeed most professionals do (Thompson, 2015).

5.4 LISTENING

Beslin et al. (2004), and Gordon (2001) suggest that one of the most effective ways through which a leader can build trust is through listening. It is inescapable that employees will have confidence in leaders whom they feel respect them, as Thompson (2009) has found. Several blogs support the view that listening is critical in the trust-building process as can be found in Green (2011), Conley (2011), and Newell (2014). When a leader takes the time to listen, he or she is making an investment of time and energy in the life of another and one of the emotions that the person being listened to feels is that he or she is valuable. People who come to believe that another person values them are likely to feel safe with the decisions that the person will make concerning them and from that emerges the trust that employees feel towards a person who listens.

The two variables with which listening is correlated in this study are “demonstrates care’ and ‘conveys by actions that others’ views and approaches can be correct’. These have a correlation with ‘a good listener’ of .485 and .413, respectively. The clear message from these correlations is that listening is first and foremost a demonstration of care. People generally, and employees in particular, will hardly fear the actions of people whom they believe care. The act of care provides a basis for alignment of interest or, at a minimum, taking one’s interest into consideration. It also reduces the sense of vulnerability (Clinebell, 1984; Savolainen & Hakkinen, 2011) that employees feel when they must leave their affairs in the hands of others whose decisions they cannot dictate or control.

One probable meaning of the relationship between being a good listener and the variable ‘conveying by actions that others’ views and approaches can be correct’ is the acknowledgement that by listening, the leader is affirming that others’ views are legitimate and credible. This acknowledgement strengthens bonds of trust.

5.5 PROMOTING COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY

The fifth trust-producing leadership behaviour that this study has identified is the promoting of collective responsibility. At face value what this means is that a leader assigns and delegates responsibility and holds responsible those to whom such responsibilities are assigned and delegated. This idea carries with it the notion of power-sharing which means that the power scales in the relationship between the leader and those he or she leads are re-balanced.

The issue of power is at play in every relationship as de Moll (2010), French and Raven (1959), Galbraith (1983), Handy (1993), and Hurley (2006) and have asserted. This is even more so the case for employer-employee relationship. The existence of disparities in the amount of power held between and among parties in a relationship becomes a basis for distrust as the party with less power can never be sure whether the other party’s action will serve to meet or frustrate one’s needs (Rousseau et al., 1998).

Thus by nurturing a culture of collective responsibility, a leader is signaling that power is shared and this reduces the anxiety that followers are likely to have, and the distrust that they feel when there is no indication or action that power is shared. The nurturing of a culture of collective responsibility, translates to real power-sharing when the leader ‘conveys by actions that others’ views and approaches can be correct’ and ‘commends staff who demonstrate commitment’ as the correlations of .434 and .391 show.

5.6 RESPONDING POSITIVELY TO DISAGREEMENTS

The sixth trust-producing leadership behaviour, ‘responds positively when there are disagreements, represents somewhat of an incipient motif. The act of trusting the collective wisdom of staff will involve and require openness to disagreements; so do the acts of encouraging diversity, willingness to debate, and listening. In essence none of those behaviours is possible without the attitude and action of welcoming disagreements. The centrality of this disposition is further reinforced by the fact that five of the six leadership behaviours had strong correlations with the variable ‘conveys by action that others’ views and approaches can be correct’. To the extent that this sixth leadership behaviour is a motif across the other five behaviours means that one of the most formidable trust-producing behaviour on the part of a leader is that of signaling that others have legitimate and authentic perspectives which may differ from his or her own.

Another variable with which most (four) of the six trust-producing leadership behaviours is strongly correlated is ‘shows willingness to accept criticism’. Opening up one’s self to criticism is not easy but a leader who does so conveys to others that they can feel free to express themselves. When a leader consistently permits the sharing of criticism without recoiling or engaging in recriminations he or she is creating the environment for the highest levels

of trust. Such environments are likely to promote good health and productivity and result in increased levels of innovation and commitment.

6 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study, while providing some helpful perspectives on behaviours that support leadership effectiveness has a number of limitations. These include:

- (a) The population and sample size: The results of the study would have been more generalizable had the population included professionals from a number of organizations and disciplines and a sample at least twice the size used.
- (b) The sampling technique: While a convenience sampling technique is a credible method of data gathering the validity of the results with respect to the realities faced by organizations would have been stronger if a stratified random sampling technique been employed, within the context of the first limitation. In light of the foregoing a follow-up study that takes account of the foregoing limitations would be useful and is to be undertaken.

This study has identified six leadership behaviours which are deemed to be trust-producing. These behaviours are strongly correlated with, and expressed in, some supportive together with the primary leadership behaviours identified can create conditions that make for meaningful trust in the workplace. The need for improved trust in the workplace is an urgent one given what global research has found about levels of employee distrust.

Improvements in trust in the workplace has implications for employee and organizational health and is thus a psychological, sociological, and managerial issue which ultimately impacts on productivity and innovation and by extension employee commitment and organizational profitability. It is, therefore, a principal duty of the leader to create the conditions for trust. This means, among other things, behaving in ways that shift the power imbalance in employer-employee and supervisor-supervisee relationships. Given that trust implies vulnerability and thus evokes fear and anxiety about whether decisions will be adverse to, or advance one's interests, actions that produce trust include those that lend to the conclusion that the interests of the leader are aligned to that of the follower and therefore the risk of harm is lessened. It is in the contexts of the reduction of fear of harm, for example from the act of expressing disagreement, that employees become more trustful. Trust is also built when there is the display, by the leader, of confidence in the wisdom of his or her team; an embrace of diverse perspectives, a willingness to listen, and the promoting of collective responsibility.

To the extent that these behaviours have the potential of increasing levels of trust in organizations, and given the high levels of distrust as shown by the data, the following recommendations are being made concerning how organizations may produce higher levels of trust.

- (1) In keeping with the finding that trust is produced through engaging the collective wisdom of staff as well as in the promotion of collective responsibility, it is recommended that organizations implement or strengthen mechanisms to allow for greater involvement of the widest cross-section of staff in the decision-making processes of the organization through, among other things, creating more opportunities for staff to lead organizational processes and activities.
- (2) Taking into account the positive effects that the encouragement of diverse perspectives and tolerance of disagreement have on building trust through approaches such as debating options, organizations are invited to implement or strengthen systems through which organizational growth and employee-enrichment solutions are subject to debate among employees.
- (3) Given the critical role listening plays in effective leadership and trust-building, it is recommended that organizations invest in training all persons in leadership positions, as well as those who aspire to leadership positions, in "Effective Listening Training" programmes.

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APPENDIX QUESTIONNAIRE

SA = Strongly Agree; A = Agree; U = Undecided; D = Disagree; SD = Strongly Disagree

	SA	A	U	D	SD
Do you think that in order to be an effective leader a principal should:					
(1) Take an interest in the opinions of staff members					
(2) Show high regard for the professional judgment of staff members					
(3) Welcome the points of view of staff members even when those views are different to his/her					
(4) Respond positively even when there are disagreements between his/her views and that of staff members					
(5) Resist any inclination on his or her part to dictate how staff members should think					
(6) Show respect to staff members					
(7) Make an effort to keep staff motivated					
(8) Encourage staff members to continue to develop their professional skills					
(9) Demonstrate care for the needs of members of staff					
(10) Seek to influence staff rather than use power to enforce his / her will					
(11) Commend staff who demonstrate commitment					
(12) Publicly recognize staff who produce spectacular results					
(13) Admit error on his/her part when this is established					
(14) Show a willingness to accept criticism					
(15) Convey by his/her actions that views and approaches other than his/her own can be correct					
(16) Show mastery of the job of school management					
(17) Defer to other members of staff on matters on which they are more knowledgeable					
(18) Model the behaviours he/she requires of staff members					
(19) Be willing to debate issues on which there are diverse opinions					
(20) Be willing to subject his/her positions to the collective wisdom of staff members					
(21) Be a good listener					
(22) Encourage diversity of perspectives					
(23) Encourage camaraderie among staff members					
(24) Promote collective responsibility					
(25) Ensure performance evaluations are done of every staff member					
(26) Ensure that low performing staff members receive support to improve					
(27) Create the conditions for members of staff to participate in decision-making					
(28) Lead in the development of a strategic plan					
(29) Be trained in the fundamentals of strategic planning					
(30) Be an advocate for justice					
(31) Promote the value of learning from the successful practices of other schools					
(32) Utilize the diverse strengths of members of staff in the operations of the school, in addition to their primary competencies					
(33) Allow leaders to develop at all levels in the organization					
(34) Be firm with repeated failures to meet standards of excellence					
(35) Create an environment that makes work exciting					

PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS

- (36) Your age group is:
- (a) 20 – 30 []
 - (b) 31 – 40 []
 - (c) 41 – 50 []
 - (d) 51 – 60 []
 - (e) 60+ []
- (37) You have been a teacher for:
- (a) 5 years or less []
 - (b) 6 – 10 years []
 - (c) 11 – 15 years []
 - (d) 16 – 20 years []
 - (e) Over 20 years []
- (38) You have been teaching at your current school for:
- (a) 5 years or less []
 - (b) 6 – 10 years []
 - (c) 11 – 15 years []
 - (d) 16 – 20 years []
 - (e) Over 20 years []
- (39) Your highest professional qualification is:
- (a) Diploma []
 - (b) Bachelor's Degree []
 - (c) Master's Degree []
 - (d) Postgraduate Cert in Education []
 - (e) Doctorate []
- (40) You are:
- (a) Male []
 - (b) Female []
- (41) You currently teacher at the:
- (a) Early Childhood Level []
 - (b) Primary Level []
 - (c) Secondary Level []
 - (d) Tertiary Level []
 - (e) Other _____ []
- (42) You are currently based in the:
- (a) Corporate area []
 - (b) Rural area []
- (43) You are currently working in a:
- (a) Public school []
 - (b) Private school []
- (44) You are a principal:
- (a) Yes []
 - (b) No []