BUILDING TRUST: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF THE RECENT LITERATURE ON THE ORGANIZATIONAL AND POLITICAL LEADERSHIP PRACTICES

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1 INTRODUCTION

Trust is a critical component of social interaction, businesses, and culturally diverse environments (SODERBERG; ROMNEY, 2022; MEYER, 2014). Yet, there is a growing trust gap in leadership: only one in three employees claim to trust their leaders (HARTER, 2019). Additionally, several external events, such as civil arrests and political disputes, erode trust in government (SODERBERG; ROMNEY, 2022). To close this gap, leaders from politics to the private sector must develop specific skills and critical behaviors to gain the trust of their followers.

In a recent study, Gallup asked 10,000 employees what leadership skills mattered most, and trust was among the top four skills (ROBINSON, 2021). The same study showed that when employee trusts their leaders, one in two claims to be engaged. When they do not, only one in 12 claims to be motivated. Engagement is correlated to performance. Therefore, building trust is critical to increasing engagement and performance in organizations.

In politics, the situation is similar. A study conducted in the United States showed that only 39% of adult Americans trust their federal government, 37% in the legislative, 44% in the executive, and 54% in the judiciary (BRENAN, 2021). The study shows that this index has fallen consistently over time. Another study suggests that polarization in the country might compromise community bonds and trust in others (RITTER, 2020). Lack of trust causes disengagement with the government and might also have been causing side effects within the communities.

Leveraging trust seems to be the key to increasing the engagement of individuals towards their organizations, communities, and government. This study proposes a critical appraisal of the last two years of academic articles to identify the practices used by leaders in organizations and governmental institutions to build trust. This study's objectives are to (a) summarize the most recent studies about the practices leaders use or can use to build trust, (b) analyze those practices in comparison to the existing integrative model of trust (MAYER; DAVIS; SCHOORMAN, 1995), and (c) highlight differences between governmental and private organizations.

2 METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

This paper is a qualitative study combining two frameworks. The first consists of the model for critical appraisal of academic articles proposed by Davis and Logan (2017). This model offers a systematic review checklist for scholarly articles. The second framework is based on the model of trust (MAYER; DAVIS; SCHOORMAN, 1995), which is the first comprehensive model for building trust in organizational environments.

First, articles were selected using EBSCO Complete Database during the months of June and July 2022, according to the following criteria: (a) published within the last two years, (b) be in the field of business or government, (c) peer-reviewed article, (d) published in an academic journal, (e) language of publication is English, Spanish, or Portuguese. The key terms used to find the articles were those related to the term "building trust" and synonyms. The timeframe proposed of two years coincides with the first year of the Pandemic of Covid-19, 2020. That is intentional because the outburst of Covid-19 increased uncertainties worldwide, changing how people build relationships in the workplace and in politics. Trust is based on relationships built among two or more people, and the level of uncertainty is a factor that impacts the willingness to trust.

During the first round of analysis, the researcher produced 790 articles for possible inclusion in the study. However, when analyzing the articles' abstracts, most of them related to trust in the relationship between patient-care providers, the healthcare industry, finances, police, relationships between student-professor, blockchain, machines, social media, and other articles related to technology. Those topics were carefully eliminated from the list of articles to be appraised. In contrast, articles on building trust in private and public institutions were retained. In the end, the researcher selected 11 articles that give a good perspective of how leaders build trust in private and public organizations.

The selected articles were systematically analyzed according to the following sections: abstract, introduction, research design, data collection and analysis, findings, and overall impressions (DAVIS; LOGAN, 2017). Throughout the systematic review of all these articles' components, the research selected the principal results and practices for building trust in organizations and governmental institutions.

Finally, this author analyzed the current literature compared to the integrative model of trust (MAYER; DAVIS; SCHOORMAN, 1995), which proposes a set of factors influencing the propensity to trust and the perceived risks. This framework has been used in organizations and governmental institutions throughout the last decade (SCHOORMAN; MAYER; DAVIS, 2007; FRICKER; KULZY; COMBS, 2014). Essentially, this analysis provided the primary outcomes of this study, which are greater understanding of whether the factors remain the same in the current literature, and the recognition of the new elements that emerged in recent years.

3 BUILDING TRUST: DEFINITIONS AND THE INTEGRATIVE MODEL OF TRUST

Soderberg and Romney (2022) explained that trust is the social glue that catalyzes and facilitates relationships. It positively predicts commitment, motivation, performance, and citizenship behavior (SODERBERG; ROMNEY, 2022). The definition of trust intertwines with characteristics of leadership and relationship.

The concept of trust used in this study is "the willingness of a party to be vulnerable to the actions of another party based on the expectation that the other will perform a particular action important to the trustor, irrespective of the ability to monitor or control that other part" (MAYER; DAVIS; SCHOORMAN, 1995, p. 712). Trustor is the person with a propensity to trust the other party, and the trustee is the person who receives trust. This definition assumes that being vulnerable means that a person willing to trust the other part is intentionally open to taking risks or losing something important to this person.

Trust is commonly mistaken for the concept of cooperation (MAYER; DAVIS; SCHOORMAN, 1995). Thus, it is also important to clarify that even though trust might lead to cooperation, cooperation itself does not necessarily require a party to take a risk. Essentially, team members might cooperate not because they trust each other but because of coercion, manipulation, or influence. In that case, there is no willingness to be vulnerable nor expectations that the action will bring anything significant to the trustor.

3.1 AN INTEGRATIVE MODEL OF TRUST

In 1995, three scholars, Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman, developed a model of trust to fill a gap in the organizational trust literature at that time (MAYER; DAVIS; SCHOORMAN, 1995). Since then, this model has been applied to explain interpersonal trust outcomes in business

organizations (SCHOORMAN; MAYER; DAVIS, 2007), citizens' trust in government institutions (FRICKER; KULZY; COMBS, 2014), and other professional and political environments situations. Its direct application to organizations and governmental institutions has made this model a benchmark in support of the literature review proposed in this paper.

The proposed model of trust (MAYER; DAVIS; SCHOORMAN, 1995) is illustrated in Figure 1. In this model, the trustor is the person with the propensity to trust, and the trustee is the person who will give that trust. The model begins with the factors of perceived trustworthiness: ability, benevolence, and integrity. Those factors are usually demonstrated by the party seeking to be trusted in a particular situation. Such characteristics determine the trustee's motivation to lie. If the trustee demonstrates a high motivation to lie and the trustor perceives that, the trust propensity will be lower. Another important factor the trustor analyzes is the perceived risk in a given situation. The propensity to trust and the perceived risks lead to the willingness to be vulnerable as the ultimate outcome.

Figure 1 - Model of Trust
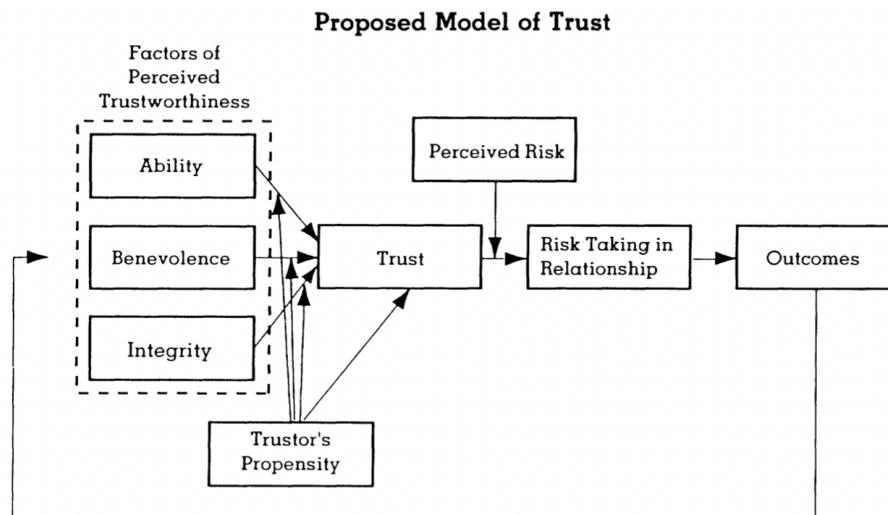
Source: Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman, 1995. (1995), p. 715.

In summary, this model illustrates the process and factors that influence when an employee trusts their leader. Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman (1995) explain that ability refers to competence, knowledge, and skills. Benevolence refers to the goodwill and the confidence that the other person is seeking the other party's wellbeing. Finally, integrity relates to honesty, character, and authenticity.

Suppose a follower perceives their leader shows enough ability, benevolence, and integrity, and the perceived risks are acceptable. In that case, the follower will be willing to be vulnerable to the leader's guidance and directions (FRICKER; KULZY; COMBS, 2014). When a person seeking to earn trust, the trustee, possesses all three factors, they are considered trustworthy.

The model of trust helps to understand the process and factors involved in building trust. However, the existing research has not clearly articulated actionable steps leaders can take to proactively build trust within their organizations (SODERBERG; ROMNEY, 2022, p. 175). This is a gap in the model that the current literature and future research might help to build on.

4 SYSTEMATIC REVIEW: BUILDING TRUST IN PRIVATE AND PUBLIC ORGANIZATIONS

Two outcomes were explored from the systematic review of the selected articles. The first outcome is a list of leaders' attitudes towards building trust in organizations, despite being public or private. The second outcome is an analysis of the attitudes of leaders in public institutions.

4.1 LEADERS' CURRENT PRACTICES TO BUILD TRUST

Table 1 summarizes the leaders' attitudes toward building trust highlighted in the selected scholarly articles. In this study, attitudes are actions that leaders take or can take to create, restore, or increase their level of trustworthiness. In this table, leaders' attitudes were categorized into the three characteristics of trustworthiness proposed by Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman (1995) in the Model of Trust: ability, benevolence, and integrity. All attitudes that do not fall into any of the categories of the Model of Trust were placed in the last row, which is called other leadership attitudes of trustworthiness.

Table 1 - Model of Trust and Leaders' Attitudes

Model of Trust	Leaders' Attitude
Ability	Coordinating employees' tasks and responsibilities, and system of routines (SODERBERG; ROMNEY, 2022, BROWN III, 2021)
	Business knowledge: supported by the financial ability and the future perspective (KOSONEN; IKONEN, 2022)
Benevolence	Providing positive and negative feedback (SODERBERG; ROMNEY, 2022)
	Asking and encouraging questions, promoting openness, and challenging assumptions (SODERBERG; ROMNEY, 2022, RICE; STANTON; TAYLOR, 2021)
	Actively listening (SODERBERG; ROMNEY, 2022, RICE; STANTON; TAYLOR, 2021)
	Compassionate behaviour (SODERBERG; ROMNEY, 2022)
	Leading by example (SODERBERG; ROMNEY, 2022)
	Showing kindness and politeness (SODERBERG; ROMNEY, 2022), and treating people with fairness and respect (OHEMENG; DARKO; AMOAKO-ASIEDU, 2019)
	Socio-emotional dialogue and empathetic expressions (RHEU; SHIN; PENG; HUH-YOO, 2021)
	Teaching and/or co-orienting others (SODERBERG; ROMNEY, 2022, RICE; STANTON; TAYLOR, 2021)
	Acknowledging and praising staff past accomplishments (BROWN III, 2021)
	Preparing for Engagement in the conversations with the others (RICE; STANTON; TAYLOR, 2021)
Integrity	Avoiding and eliminating gossip (SODERBERG; ROMNEY, 2022)
	Walking the talk (SODERBERG; ROMNEY, 2022) and consistent communication strategy (BROWN III, 2021)
	Being honest regarding self and cooperative interests, encouraging openness and transparency (ZHAO; TAN-MULLINS, 2021, HERRERA; KYDD, 2022, RHEU *et al*., 2021, BROWN III, 2021, RICE; STANTON; TAYLOR, 2021, RADU, 2022)
	Building credibility (OHEMENG; DARKO; AMOAKO-ASIEDU, 2019)
	Do not betray because any betrayal undermines the credibility (ZHAO; TAN-MULLINS, 2021)
Other Leadership Attitudes of Trustworthiness	Discursive leadership (KOSONEN; IKONEN, 2022) and Inclusive discourse, using we instead of I (KOSONEN; IKONEN, 2022)

	Signalling and Knowledge, making the signal reach the other party's knowledge in an honestly way (ZHAO; TAN-MULLINS, 2021), and facilitating Common Ground between both parties (RICE; STANTON; TAYLOR, 2021)
	Positive Observation, taking the chance to observe how others behave (HERRERA; KYDD, 2022)
	Creating in-group attachment is positive in building trust (HERRERA; KYDD, 2022)
	Voice and accent: culturally familiar communication styles (RHEU *et al*, 2021)
	Use of persuasion when necessary and in conflict resolution (RICE; STANTON; TAYLOR, 2021)
	Decision-making is decentralized and more democratic in normal times, and more centralized in times of crisis (RADU, 2022)

Source: Elaborated by the author, 2022.

The studies showed a set of seven attitudes that cannot be included in the three factors of trustworthiness from Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman (1995). Some of those attitudes refer to how those leaders communicate, including their discourse, signals, voice, and accent. Another set of attitudes refers to the leader's observational abilities inside and outside the group they are working with. Finally, some attitudes relate to leaders' ability to persuade and conduct decision-making, especially in complex arenas, such as politics.

4.2 CHARACTERISTICS OF LEADERS IN POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS

On an individual level, it is possible to perceive several similarities in how leaders from public and private organizations build trust. However, the main difference is that public organizations are inserted into the political arena, and their ultimate purpose is to serve the citizens, society, and the country. The political arena includes people from diverse communities and divergent interests, and as such, some leaders will pursue the interests of their communities instead of the country's common good. While in private organizations, leaders will pursue purposes aligned with the company's objectives and values. In the latter, it is easier for the leader to align narratives.

Several narratives mark building trust in political institutions, which increases complexity. In politics, several narratives co-exist: the politicians, the parties, the citizens, and the representatives from the executive, legislative, and judiciary. When analyzing the country's international relations, there are also narratives from the other countries' governments. Trust-building in such an environment is harsh because of the distinct perceptions among all those actors and the complexity of the decision-making process (ZHAO; TAN-MULLINS, 2021). Therefore, discursive leadership is even more essential in public organizations to bring all people together in decision-making (KOSONEN; IKONEN, 2022).

Persuasion is also a more particular aspect of public institutions and government in building trust (RICE; STANTON; TAYLOR, 2021). It is a tool to solve conflicts and negotiate terms among opposing parties. However, before using persuasion, a leader must take action to prepare their subordinates for building or restoring trust. The leader must signal their intentions and make sure the other party has the knowledge to interpret the signals honestly (ZHAO; TAN-MULLINS, 2021). Facilitating the common ground between the parties is vital to opening a dialogue and creating conditions for trust-building (RICE; STANTON; TAYLOR, 2021).

Another particularity of trust-building in governmental institutions is the need to build social trust. According to Bargués and Morillas (2021), governmental institutions work for the

common good of society or the community. Social trust is paramount to fostering resilience in that community so they can overcome difficulties. To enhance social trust, it is vital to strengthen society's social-economic status, competitiveness, and growth. By doing that, the government is showing competency to govern.

Finally, one study pointed out that leaders' strategies to build and maintain trust in public institutions during times of crisis, like the Pandemic of Covid-19, differ from everyday situations (RADU, 2022). For example, in non-crisis cases, leaders in public institutions tend to use more high transparency, engage more with citizens in the decision-making process and adopt more decentralized decisions. In contrast, during times of crisis, those leaders tend to withhold information to exercise a higher level of control over national information and engage with crisis experts to make more centralized decisions.

5 DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The systematic review on building trust offers an important list of actions leaders use to inspire trust in their followers. It has also revealed gaps in the literature and opportunities for improving the current practices and model of trust. The three main opportunities to build on the contemporary literature are (a) the need for a systematic revision of the model of trust, including new factors of worthiness, (b) innate characteristics that may influence trust, and (c) the unique characteristics leaders use to build trust in times of crisis.

5.1 MODEL OF TRUST: A CALL FOR REVISION

First, the data collected and summarized in Table 1 reveals that leaders use trust-building practices related to the three factors of perceived worthiness presented in the model of trust—integrity, benevolence, and ability (MAYER; DAVIS; SCHOORMAN, 1995) — which supports the validation of those factors. However, the current literature also showed that leaders use practices unrelated to those three factors. This suggests a need for improvement or the creation of a new model of trust.

Therefore, this study's first recommendation is to revise the current model of trust. This revision must include factors related to personal communication, observation, and innate characteristics. Communication strategies relate to the use of leadership discourse (KOSONEN; IKONEN, 2022), inclusive speech (KOSONEN; IKONEN, 2022), signaling techniques (ZHAO; TAN-MULLINS, 2021), persuasion, and the ability to reach the common ground (RICE; STANTON; TAYLOR, 2021). The group dynamic observation strategies include observing how members behave (HERRERA; KYDD, 2022) and their in-group attachment (HERRERA; KYDD, 2022). Finally, there is a group of factors that are considered born or biological characteristics, such as the tone of voice and familiar accents (RHEU *et al*., 2021).

5.2 INNATE CHARACTERISTICS AS FACTORS OF TRUSTWORTHINESS

Voice and accent contribute to inspiring trust (RHEU *et al*., 2021). According to Rheu *et al*. (2021), people are more willing to trust when the interlocutor uses culturally familiar communication. For example, consider a person who was born in the United Kingdom. This study showed that British people tend to have a higher propensity to trust in people with same accent than people with distinct accent such as Americans. This fact might suggest that innate and

biological characteristics are perceived positively by specific groups of people and contribute to their propensity to trust. However, more research needs to be conducted to understand all innate characteristics and how they might affect the willingness to trust.

5.3 BUILDING TRUST IN TIMES OF CRISIS

Finally, one of the appraised articles illustrates an analysis of leadership practices used to build trust during the Pandemic of Covid-19 that differ from non-crisis situations (RADU, 2022). They tend to use measures that lack transparency and involvement of citizens in decision-making. Those characteristics oppose two factors in the trust model: integrity and benevolence (MAYER; DAVIS; SCHOORMAN, 1995). Radu (2022) pointed out that leaders withhold more information during a crisis to exercise a higher level of control, avoiding generalized panic. Also, they do not involve the population in decision-making, taking more centralized and authoritarian decisions to speed the actions to solve the crisis. Although these two practices are used by leaders during the crisis of the Pandemic of Covid-19, a more in-depth analysis is required to understand the extent and effectiveness of those practices to build trust. From the additional research, this author recommends an investigation to know if a new model of trust in times of crisis is necessary.

6 CONCLUSION

This paper offered a summarized systematic review of the last two years' literature on building trust in private and public organizations. From the list of articles, this author created a list of practices that leaders use to build, increase, and restore trust in their organizations. Additionally, by comparing the current literature and the model of trust, this paper revealed opportunities to build on the current model of trust and literature. Such opportunities include: (a) reviewing the model of trust, (b) analyzing the innate characteristics of trustworthiness, and (c) possible creation of a model for building trust in times of crisis.

6.1 LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE STUDIES

This study also presents some limitations. The first limitation relates to the timeframe. This study comprises literature from the last two years, coinciding with the period of the Pandemic of Covid-19. This timeframe was important to guarantee that the articles refer to current leadership practices. However, the Covid-19 Pandemic might have influenced and limited researchers during the time of social distancing. Another limitation relates to this study's purpose, which was to analyze the practices present in current literature but not validate them with new empirical research. To address those limitations, this author recommends future studies involving other timeframes, resources other than academic articles, and empirical research with leaders to validate the practices to build trust and improve the current model of trust.

6.2 SCARCITY IN THE CURRENT LITERATURE

As a final note, this author wants to draw attention to the scarcity of current literature that refers to the practices leaders use to build, increase, and restore trust. Currently, some books propose models and practices leaders use to build trust (see e.g., COVEY; MERRIL, 2018; COVEY, 2022; FOLKMAN, 2022; STICKEL, 2022). However, there are few recent scholarly

articles addressing the topic. Even though this author started with 790 articles when researching the keywords related to building trust, very few pieces met criteria for inclusion in the study. Also, few papers were related to leadership practices. Therefore, this paper's last suggestion is a call for more scholarly articles discussing and testing new approaches leaders can use to build, increase, and restore trust in both non- and crisis situations.

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