Trust Tests: An Active Approach to Evaluating Trustworthiness

Abstract

The broad topic area of interpersonal trust has been extensively researched by scientists in several disciplines including psychology, sociology, management and ethics. Substantial research exists that address how individuals organize and codify social knowledge or more directly, how they acquire and use information about the present state of their interpersonal relationships. Trust tests are premeditated or situational evaluations that allow individuals to determine to what level and extent they can actively trust or rely on another person’s future actions, intent, and commitment as well as to develop confidence in their skills and abilities. There is an absence of a clear construct or conceptual element definition of how trust tests are created and used by all types of organizational stakeholders. This can restrict our ability to understand how certain business entities are able to maintain sufficient levels of trust to the benefit of key business indicators such as financial performance, stress management, as well as leadership continuity and effectiveness. Through our current investigation, we strive to provide a clear typology on the forms that trust tests assume with the intention of more fully developing our understanding of how these evaluations are initiated in the context of modern business interpersonal interactions.