

Antecedents of Trust across Foci: A Comparative Study of Turkey and China

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ABSTRACT Instead of importing Western models of interpersonal trust, we adopted a qualitative approach to understand trust relationships from indigenous cultures' perspectives. We examined trust relationships directed at different foci in the organization (supervisor, peer, and subordinate) in two different countries, Turkey and China. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 30 Turkish and 30 Chinese employees working for a variety of large-scale organizations located in Istanbul, Turkey and Shenzhen, China. We report the content analysis of trust-building critical incidents narrated by the respondents. While the general antecedents of Ability, Benevolence, and Integrity were found to exist in both countries, Benevolence, with its culture-specific manifestations, played a very important role in trust-building across multiple foci in both countries. We also found that trust relationships in these two contexts tended to go beyond the professional domain, and to involve sharing of personal time, information, and space. Drawing on this evidence, we propose a trust-building process that is more affective in nature and which straddles both work and non-work domains.

KEYWORDS China, cross-cultural, culture, trust, Turkey

INTRODUCTION

The literature on dyadic trust has gained momentum after the seminal paper by Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman (1995), which proposed a parsimonious model distinguishing between trust and factors of trustworthiness. While no doubt capturing some etic (universal) attributes of trust formation, this model and subsequent work (e.g., McAllister, 1995) largely reflect the individualistic nature of American work habits and treat the organizational context as an overarching condition that limits the relevance of the social/emotional/relational elements of trust relations (Lewicki, McAllister, & Bies, 1998). In contrast, specifically in collectivist cultures, work settings and styles are observed to embody a much greater emphasis on affective and relational components (e.g., Triandis, 1995). For many Asian

cultures, establishing a highly personal connection is a necessary precondition to working with others (Hampden-Turner & Trompenaars, 1993). In collectivist cultures, while such personalized relationships are slow to develop, they permeate many facets of life and are difficult to break. Relationships in individualistic cultures, on the other hand, tend to be forged for a specific purpose in a particular context, often for a limited duration. Social cliques vary across activities and more rarely bridge the work/non-work divide (Sanchez-Burks, 2005). Recently, scholars have pointed to these fundamental differences in relationship orientation with respect to understanding dyadic trust in organizational settings across cultures (e.g., Chua, Morris, & Ingram, 2009).

The current study aims to contribute to this literature by exploring and comparing trust formation with various organizational foci (supervisor, peer, and subordinate) in two vertical (i.e., high-power distance) collectivist cultures, namely Turkey and China. In doing so, rather than assuming a normative view of how trust is developed in individualist cultures and using that as the basis for inferring trust development in collectivist cultures, we take an inductive approach that allows respondents to articulate the content and range of variables they consider relevant (see Kramer, 1996). As such, we heed the calls for greater use of qualitative research strategies in order to truly contribute to the cross-cultural organizational literature (e.g., Cheng, Wang, & Huang, 2009; Meyer, 2006).

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND LITERATURE REVIEW

In one of the first systematic integrations of the cross-cultural organizational and trust literatures, Doney, Cannon, and Mullen (1998) employed Hofstede's (1980) framework and proposed individualism–collectivism, power distance, masculinity–femininity, and uncertainty avoidance as moderators of the relationship between cognitive processes of trust-building and trust. For example, they argued that in collectivist cultures, which are characterized by a high degree of social connectedness (Hofstede, 2001), benevolent motivations are important processes in trust formation and the maintenance of harmony takes precedence. Further, the trustee's capability might not be salient because in such cultures cooperation and teamwork rather than individual abilities are promoted.

While Doney et al. (1998) provided a useful framework, it was also criticized (e.g., Noorderhaven, 1999) for assuming that trust and its theorized antecedents are universal. Yet, most work on cross-cultural trust continues to rely on models and scales of trust developed in North America (see Ferrin & Gillespie, 2010), an approach that is limiting in view of the evidence that operationalizations of some constructs do not appear to travel well across cultures (Wasti, Tan, Brower, & Önder, 2007). Increasingly, scholars are expressing a need to go beyond testing the cross-cultural generalizability of North American theories of organization and advocating indigenous, context-specific research (e.g., Barney & Zhang, 2009;

Gelfand, Erez, & Aycan, 2007; Tsui, 2009; Tsui, Nifadkar, & Ou, 2007; Whetten, 2009). No matter how sophisticated methodologically or statistically, the former type of research is criticized for being limited to constructs, operationalizations, and relationships reflecting primarily the North American context and, consequently, of uncertain cross-cultural relevance. Such research is undesirable not only because it potentially impedes the discovery of consequential emic (culture-specific) constructs (e.g., Katigbak, Church, Guanzon-Lapeña, Carlota, & del Pilar, 2002) but also because it can produce results biased towards finding cultural similarities (Cheung & Leung, 1998).

Indeed, the few empirical studies that have taken an indigenous approach to studying trust have made it clear that the impact of culture is not limited to a moderating effect. Farh, Tsui, Xin, and Cheng's (1998) investigation in China indicated that both *guanxi* (particularistic ties between individuals such as being a relative, former neighbour, etc.) and relational demography (similarities in demographic factors such as age, gender, education, race, religion, or occupation) were related to subordinate trust in the supervisor but the former is more important than the latter. In their exploratory study in Singapore, a Confucian-influenced society, Tan and Chee (2005) showed that in addition to universal aspects of trust, there are emic antecedents such as humbleness, filial piety, and magnanimity. They further noted that strong affective foundations and personal relationships were prerequisites for initial trust in this context. These observations concur with Chua et al.'s (2009) findings, which suggest that in a work context, the Chinese tend to build trust from an affective foundation and mix personal and professional concerns, whereas Americans tend to build trust from a cognitive foundation and are less likely to mix socio-emotional concerns with instrumentality.

The emphasis on relational, affective components is not specific to the Chinese culture. In their ethnographic research at an Israeli-Jordanian industrial site, Mizrachi, Drori, and Anspach (2007) described the Jordanians as associating trust with human motives and intentions rather than with evaluations of competence and reliability. They also characterized the Jordanian trust-building process as holistic in terms of seeking to share personal information, time, and space, thereby blurring the professional versus personal boundaries and expanding the bandwidth of trust. Chua et al. (2009) and Mizrachi et al.'s (2007) observations, which were based on co-worker relations, are also in line with the prevalence of and preference for a paternalistic leadership style in East Asian and Middle Eastern cultures (Aycan, 2001; Cheng, Chou, Wu, Huang, & Farh, 2004). It appears that in collectivist cultures, the professional/personal dichotomy is less clear than in the North American context (Sanchez-Burks & Lee, 2007), rendering the formation and development of interpersonal trust different than that proposed in the mainstream (i.e., North American) organizational literature. The present investigation further develops this idea with a comparative country-specific study in Turkey and China.

Trust across Foci, Domains, and Cultures

In taking an indigenous approach to trust formation, we examine how the foundations or antecedents of trust differ across various organizational foci. While there has been work in other areas of organizational behaviour taking a foci approach (e.g., commitment to the organization, supervisor, or work group; Becker, 1992), most research on trust has focused on direct leaders; supervisor, manager, and work group leader (e.g., Aryee, Budhwar, & Chen, 2002; Deluga, 1994; Tan & Tan, 2000). Albeit to a lesser extent, trust in organization (Aryee et al., 2002; Stinglhamber, De Cremer, & Mercken, 2006; Tan & Tan, 2000) and management (Mayer & Davis, 1999; Mayer & Gavin, 2005) have also been investigated. While trust in direct leaders and top management are important areas of study, it is useful to view an organization in terms of its various ‘coalitions and constituencies’ (Reichers, 1985) such as co-workers and subordinates. Indeed, the meta-analysis by Dirks and Ferrin (2002) revealed differential antecedents and outcomes for trust in leaders and trust in organizational leadership. If differences are found in the seemingly similar referent of direct leaders and organizational leadership, then we would certainly expect different sets of dynamics in the antecedents of trust towards different foci.

In particular, we would expect that power differences and information asymmetry associated with hierarchical structure will have implications for trust formation (Schoorman, Mayer, & Davis, 2007). Studies have found that employees tend to communicate work-related ideas and problems to fellow co-workers rather than to formally designated parties (Stevenson & Gilly, 1991). The current study extends this literature by focusing on both horizontal and vertical (both upward and downward) targets of trust (for notable exceptions see Brower, Lester, Korsgaard, & Dineen, 2009; Lau & Liden, 2008; McAllister, 1995; Tan & Lim, 2009).

At this point, it is important to note that while Turkey and China are characterized as vertical collectivist cultures (e.g., House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman, & Gupta, 2004), there is reason to expect nuances in trust formation across these two cultures. In particular, we draw on the recent study by Morris, Podolny, and Sullivan (2008), who argued for different ‘species’ of collectivism based on Parsons’ (1951) theory of social systems. Specifically, they contrasted the achievement-oriented Chinese collectivism with the ascription-oriented Spanish collectivism, and argued that the latter would be characterized by greater endorsement of sociability and affectivity norms. Morris et al. (2008) further proposed that Spanish collectivism would be predictive of greater affective closeness and more multiplex relationships (i.e., overlap of informal ties with formal relationships) among co-workers, whereas Chinese collectivism would be associated with greater favours and affective deference in hierarchical relations. Indeed, they found Spanish employees to engage in significantly higher levels on non-job required communi-

cation compared with Chinese, German, and American employees. They further noted that in Latin cultures, there was greater negative reaction to being solely task-focused and that displaying warmth and generosity towards workplace friends was a matter of honour. Drawing on her extensive research in Turkey, Kağıtçıbaşı (1997) has also argued that the East Asian variant of collectivism is not the same as Latin American or Mediterranean collectivism. By comparing trust formation in China and Turkey from a multi-foci perspective, we also seek to understand the implications of different types of collectivism on trust formation, an issue neglected in the literature.

In sum, with the present investigation we aim to build on the research on interpersonal trust development in vertical collectivist cultures. We also heed the call of Lewicki, Tomlinson, and Gillespie (2006) to use qualitative techniques such as critical incidents and in-depth interviews to better understand the development of trust relationships over time. Specifically, we address three research questions: First, what are the antecedents of supervisor, peer, and subordinate trust in Turkey and China in comparison with existing frameworks of trust? Second (how) does trust development straddle personal and professional life domains? Finally, are there any differences across these two contexts that are broadly categorized as vertical collectivist cultures, and what are some plausible explanations to account for such differences?

METHOD

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 30 Turkish and 30 Chinese employees in various organizations in Istanbul, Turkey and Shenzhen, China (see Table 1 for sample characteristics). In both countries, organizational contacts were established using personal and professional networks. The key contact recruited respondents from managerial and non-managerial positions who had organizational tenure of greater than 6 months. In line with the recommendation of between 20 to 50 participants for grounded theory building (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006), the sample size was 30 participants from each country. In both samples, the majority of the participants were male, in their mid-30s, and highly educated (90 percent with at least a university degree). In the Turkish sample, 20 out of the 30 respondents and in the Chinese sample, 27 out of 30 respondents had supervisory experience.

Interviews were conducted on site by the first two authors (principal investigators) in their respective native languages. Respondents were asked to define trust and to identify a supervisor, a peer and, if relevant, a subordinate with whom they have developed a strong trust relationship, if any. They were subsequently asked to discuss which characteristics or behaviours of these trustees affected their trust development at early as well as later stages of their relationship. They reported one critical incident with each trustee that was a milestone event for trust formation.

Table 1. Sample characteristics

	<i>Turkey</i>	<i>China</i>
Number of organizations represented in study	10 (2 Turkish multinational companies, 6 joint ventures or wholly owned subsidiaries, 2 companies of family-owned conglomerates)	2 (a Chinese multinational company and a Hong Kong joint venture)
Size of organizations	Ranging from 210–11000 full-time employees	Chinese MNC: 2000 full-time employees Hong Kong joint venture: 2200 full-time employees
Number of interviewees	30	30
Number of interviewees who reported trust relationship with various foci	Supervisors – 30 Peers – 22 Subordinates – 12	Supervisors – 30 Peers – 29 Subordinates – 27
Number of interviewees who reported a critical incident (CI)	CI with supervisor – 19 CI with peer – 8 CI with subordinate – 7	CI with supervisor – 14 CI with peer – 7 CI with subordinate – 6

We used the critical incident method (Flanagan, 1954) because trustworthy behaviours refer to specific actions and hence it was important to cue participants to think of a specific event (Korsgaard, Brodt, & Whitener, 2002). As reported in Table 1, not all respondents experienced a trusting relationship with these foci and those who did, could not always recount a critical incident. In total, the Turkish and Chinese respondents reported 34 and 27 critical incidents, respectively. The majority of the incidents were with the supervisor (19 Turkish and 14 Chinese), followed by peers (8 Turkish and 7 Chinese), and finally subordinates (7 Turkish and 6 Chinese).

All interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed verbatim. The principal investigators read the transcripts in their native language and then jointly designed a coding manual to systematically summarize the data regarding the critical incident. For each country sample, two trained research assistants who were blind to the research questions were instructed to code the domain of the incident (personal, professional, or both personal and professional), and to identify as many factors as possible that contributed to trust development. The coders concurrently developed a list of these inductively derived antecedents, in which they labelled and defined each factor of trust identified. After coding all transcripts independently, the two coders were instructed to individually revise their antecedent list to be mutually exclusive and collectively exhaustive. Next, the two coders met to resolve discrepancies through extensive discussions. The principal investigators then compared and contrasted the lists obtained in each country to

identify identical antecedents and to label them accordingly. Care was taken to create as parsimonious a classification as possible. The final version of the list was then provided to a third coder in each country, who independently coded all incidents (in terms of presence vs. absence of the antecedents). All remaining discrepancies were resolved through a discussion moderated by one of the principal investigators.

Finally, the two principal investigators jointly coded each antecedent to a main category drawing on Dietz and Den Hartog's (2006) content analysis of 14 recently published empirical measures of intra-organizational trust. While these authors identified four main categories, namely Benevolence, Competence, Integrity, and Predictability, the last one did not emerge as a meaningful distinction and consequently, this study employed the main categories of Benevolence, Ability, and Integrity. Antecedents that did not fit under the categories provided by Dietz and Den Hartog (2006) were labelled in line with the relevant literature (e.g., Gillespie, 2003; Gillespie & Mann, 2004).

RESULTS

Antecedents of Trust in Turkey and China

The content analysis of the critical incidents across foci revealed a total of 16 and 12 trust antecedents for the Turkish and Chinese samples, respectively, and they are summarized in Table 2. Most of the antecedents could be classified under the main category of 'Benevolence' or 'Integrity' with one under 'Ability' (Mayer et al., 1995). We also identified two distinct categories, as explained in detail below: Reciprocity and Common Values.

Antecedents within main categories. We observed common as well as distinct antecedents categorized under Benevolence for the two countries. Common antecedents included being Understanding, which refers to being non-judgmental, tolerant, and taking the trustor's perspective; Support, mainly in the form of career guidance and support; Cooperation, which refers to the trustee endorsing a win-win approach; Sympathy, which involves compassionate attitudes or behaviour, particularly in times of distress; and finally Modesty, which is an antecedent specific to trust in supervisor denoting an attitude of treating subordinates with respect and not looking down on them due to their status. While Support was classified as Benevolence if elicited by a supervisor or a peer; it was perceived as Ability when manifested by a subordinate and coded accordingly. Whereas Support, Cooperation, and Sympathy are represented in existing operationalizations of Benevolence (Dietz & Den Hartog, 2006), being Understanding and Modesty are characteristics of paternalistic leadership (Cheng et al., 2004) and appear to be particularly salient in these high-power distance societies.

Table 2. List and frequency of antecedents across Turkish and Chinese respondents for all foci (supervisor, peer, and subordinate)

<i>Antecedent</i>	<i>Main Category</i>	<i>Definition</i>	<i>Frequency (Turkey)</i>	<i>Frequency (China)</i>
			<i>n</i> = 34	<i>n</i> = 27
Support	Benevolence/ Ability [†]	Trustee guides the trustor in development and growth as well as in solving his/her problems and providing encouragement	7 (20.6%) 3 (8.8%)	6 (22.2%)
Understanding	Benevolence	Trustee is tolerant, non-judgmental, forgiving in general or in a specific situation, taking trustor's perspective	6 (17.6%)	1 (3.7%)
Cooperation	Benevolence	Trustee endorses a win-win approach, to act together willingly	4 (11.8%)	3 (11.1%)
Sympathy	Benevolence	Trustee shows compassion to the trustor or a third person	6 (17.6%)	1 (3.7%)
Modesty	Benevolence	Trustee does not look down on others in lower status, respects subordinates as individuals, and treats them with great consideration	1 (2.9%)	2 (7.4%)
Intimacy	Benevolence	Trustee displays affectionate closeness	2 (5.9%)	–
Unselfish behaviour	Benevolence	Trustee is considerate of others' needs even if at the expense of own needs/desires	5 (14.7%)	–
Personalized generosity	Benevolence	Trustee allocates 'extra' time, material support	1 (2.9%)	–
Protection	Benevolence	Trustee protects interests of the trustor without necessarily being objective	1 (2.9%)	–
Affability	Benevolence	Trustee is able to relate well to others and is sincere and kind	–	2 (7.4%)
Capacity	Ability	Trustee has work-related ability in terms of decision making, execution, vision as well as experience, success, position	2 (5.9%)	7 (25.9%)
Reliability	Integrity	Trustee is consistent in behaviours, words and deeds, is honest, corrects for mistakes	3 (8.8%)	3 (11.1%)
Fairness	Integrity	Trustee is objective, fair, protective of everybody's rights, and refrains from exploiting others	2 (5.9%)	1 (3.7%)
Being responsible	Integrity	Trustee can be relied upon for successful completion of assigned tasks and in having high work standards	3 (8.8%)	1 (3.7%)
Openness	Integrity	Trustee is open and frank in communication, shares expectations, allows free exchange of ideas	2 (5.9%)	1 (3.7%)
Reciprocity	Reciprocity	Trustee shows willingness to be vulnerable (i.e., his or her trust) towards the trustor by engaging in behaviours like delegation, empowerment, and disclosure, and trustor reciprocates by trusting back	6 (17.6%)	10 (37.0%)
Common Values	Common Values	Similarity and approval of trustee's values and lifestyle particularly relating to family	2 (5.9%)	–

Notes:

The denominator for the reported percentages across every antecedent is the total number of critical incidents in each country (34 for Turkey and 27 for China).

[†]Support is a facet of Benevolence when elicited by a supervisor or peer. When exercised by a subordinate, it is perceived as a manifestation of Ability.

Four antecedents under Benevolence are unique to Turkey and one is unique to China. Intimacy, Unselfish Behaviour, Personalized Generosity, and Protection are specific to the Turkish sample; and Affability is specific to the Chinese sample. Intimacy denotes the trustee's display of affectionate closeness towards the trustor. Unselfish Behaviour refers to considerate behaviour even if at the expense of one's own needs or wishes. Personalized Generosity, which was specific to supervisor trust, refers to the supervisor giving extra time or even financial resources to the subordinate as a demonstration of personalized, 'fatherly' care. Protection is an antecedent also specific to trust in the supervisor, which refers to the supervisor protecting the interests of the trustor without necessarily being objective. Intimacy and Personalized Generosity as manifestations of Benevolence represent a notable departure from the existing literature. For the Chinese sample, the distinct antecedent of Affability involved incidents where respondents concluded that the character traits of being kind-hearted and amicable are evidence of trustworthiness. While Affability is a personality trait and arguably is distinct from benevolence, which is a characteristic of the dyadic relationship, for the sake of parsimony, we categorized it under Benevolence due to the high likelihood that it was conducive to perceptions of benevolence.

The antecedents categorized under Ability or Integrity were not only common across the Turkish and Chinese samples but also were considerably similar to the mainstream operationalizations of these constructs. Under the Ability category, there was a single antecedent labelled Capacity, which refers to the trustee's work-related skills, abilities, experience, background, and the like. Manifestations of Integrity consisted of the antecedents labelled as Reliability, Fairness, Being Responsible and Openness. Reliability consists of behavioural consistency and integrity as defined by Whitener, Brodt, Korsgaard, and Werner (1998). Fairness refers to the trustee being objective, just, and protective of everybody's rights. Being Responsible indicates that the trustee can be relied on to complete assignments adequately. Openness, when manifested by a supervisor, reflected Whitener et al.'s (1998) communication category where the emphasis is on accuracy and explanation. When a subordinate demonstrated Openness, it came across primarily as honesty. Finally, the antecedent of Reciprocity is in line with Deutsch's (1958: 268) proposition that the dyadic partner feels an obligation to reciprocate trust because 'the trustworthy person is aware of being trusted and that he is somehow bound by the trust which is invested in him' and behaves accordingly. Parallel to Gillespie's (2003) scale development study, trustors became aware of being trusted when trustees in vertical dyads shared and delegated control and trustees in horizontal dyads disclosed their private lives. This awareness in turn led to reciprocal trust.

The final distinct antecedent in the Turkish sample was 'Common Values'. Common Values refer to values, lifestyles, and interests that are shared by both

trustee and trustor. Gillespie and Mann (2004) have found common values to be one of the strongest predictors of overall trust in a leader in a team environment. In the Turkish sample, Common Values were mentioned regarding family life, which is in line with Tan and Chee's (2005) qualitative study in Singaporean organizations, where filial piety and family values, which do not concern the realm of work, emerged as important antecedents of trust.

Prevalence across cultures. Having described the antecedents and the main categories, we turn to a discussion of the extent to which different antecedents impact trust-building in the Turkish and Chinese samples. To this end, we calculated the number of critical incidents that involved a particular antecedent. The denominator for the reported percentages across every antecedent is the total number of critical incidents in each country (34 for Turkey and 27 for China, see Table 2). As most of the critical incidents involved more than one antecedent either within or across categories, it should be noted that the sum of the frequencies is larger than the number of critical incidents.

For the Turkish respondents, Support (Benevolence) is the antecedent that is mentioned most frequently, followed by being Understanding (Benevolence), Sympathy (Benevolence), and Reciprocity. For the Chinese respondents, Reciprocity is mentioned most frequently, followed by Capacity (Ability), and Support (Benevolence).

In the next section, we present a comparative analysis of the critical incidents across foci and domains with quotations from respondents to illustrate the manifestations of the main trust antecedents across the two cultures.

Trust Antecedents: Comparisons across Foci and Domain

Table 3 presents each critical incident in terms of the main antecedent categories (i.e., Benevolence, Ability, Integrity, Reciprocity, Common Values) across foci (supervisor, peer, and subordinate) and domain (professional, personal, or mixed). Respondents experienced critical incidents in all domains with the supervisor and peer. With subordinates, respondents typically narrated critical incidents in the professional domain and there was only one incident in the personal and two incidents in mixed domains.

Trust in Supervisor

Professional domain. Across both samples, trust in supervisors was formed or reinforced predominantly in the professional domain and Benevolence emerged as the most prevalent antecedent. This was particularly true for the Turkish sample. In the Turkish sample, Benevolence involved Support in the form of career guidance,

Table 3. Antecedents (main categories) in each critical incident (CI) across foci and domains

	Turkey			China		
	Professional	Personal	Both	Professional	Personal	Both
Supervisor	12 CIs	5 CIs	2 CIs	11 CIs	1 CI	2 CIs
	Benevolence	6 Benevolence	3 Benevolence	Benevolence – Reciprocity	3 Benevolence	1 Benevolence
	Benevolence – Integrity	2 Reciprocity	1 Benevolence – Reciprocity	Ability	2	Benevolence – Integrity
	Ability – Benevolence – Integrity	1 Common Values	1	Reciprocity	2	
	Integrity	1		Benevolence	2	
Peer	Common Values	1		Integrity	1	
	Reciprocity	1		Integrity – Benevolence	1	
	4 CIs	4 CIs		4 CIs	3 CIs	
	Benevolence	2 Benevolence	3	Benevolence	1 Benevolence	2
	Benevolence – Reciprocity	2 Reciprocity	1	Integrity	1 Benevolence – Reciprocity	1
Subordinate	5 CIs	1 CI	1 CI	5 CIs	1 CI	1 CI
	Ability – Integrity	3 Benevolence	1 Integrity	Ability	3	Reciprocity – Integrity
	Ability – Integrity – Benevolence	1		Reciprocity	1	
	Integrity	1		Benevolence	1	

being Understanding in terms of work-related issues (e.g., forgiving a serious process-related blunder), being Unselfish (e.g., encouraging a subordinate to take a better job offer while in very high need of his/her skills) and Cooperation, as exemplified in the following quote:

During the initial years of my job, there was this new customer. The product specifications had to be set and the process needed to be adjusted to meet the new specifications. He helped me out, and in fact, we were both back from a whole day training, but he stayed with me until late at night to complete that task. (Turkish interviewee 4)

In the Chinese sample, while Benevolence (by itself or in combination with other antecedents) was dominant, Ability, Integrity, and Reciprocity also played a role. Benevolence involved Support, Modesty, and Cooperation.

In the Turkish sample, Integrity followed Benevolence as an important antecedent of trust in a supervisor. Integrity mainly referred to assessments regarding Fairness and Reliability. This is similar to the Chinese sample where Integrity appeared in two incidents. The following incident from China exemplifies the role of Integrity:

As we are into marketing, sometimes some customers want lots of favors from us, but he always protects us, as he feels that one's character is more important than whatever good we get from these customers out of that exchange. So in that way I feel that he has integrity. (Chinese interviewee 14)

Despite the fact that Ability of the supervisor was explicitly mentioned as a trust formation criterion in most of the Turkish interviews, in the critical incidents, it did not emerge except for one case. In contrast, Ability was an important antecedent for the Chinese as exemplified by the following quote:

One year my boss was able to make a billion dollars of wealth out of his own operational ability and so I trusted his ability even more. (Chinese interviewee 11)

Finally, in the Chinese sample, Reciprocity, which was typically triggered by the supervisor's empowerment, was an important means to trust-building in the professional domain as the following quote illustrates:

Last year I was involved in a large marketing exercise. During that time, as I was new, I was not familiar with many aspects of it. But he gave me full responsibility on the exercise . . . I personally feel that the outcome was not great, but in effect, it was acceptable. This year we did the same exercise. This time round, he only

gave me a general idea of how he wanted it to be and I handled everything, of course with the help of my colleagues. It was a huge success. (Chinese interviewee 6)

Personal domain. In the Turkish sample, five critical incidents with the supervisor refer to experiences in the personal domain, creating quite a contrast to the Chinese context in which only one such incident emerged. In each sample, two incidents had both personal and professional components. The incidents that had a personal element to them were primarily driven by an assessment of Benevolence. In the Chinese context, the only manifestation of Benevolence in the personal domain involved Sympathy in a crisis situation:

I was having a very bad cold then. My relatives do not live close by and I do not have much interaction with them. He noticed my cold, and the next day, he left medication for me on the table. (Chinese interviewee 29)

Similarly, in the Turkish sample, Benevolence typically involved showing Personalized Generosity, Understanding, Support, and Sympathy regarding a personal or family situation, sometimes in view of its interference with work. Interestingly, the Turkish respondent emphasizing Personalized Generosity, while currently employed in a large private organization, narrated a critical incident with the owner manager from his previous work experience at a family firm:

I was freshly out of college, and having completed my military service, I got married as soon as I found this job in 1983. I was married for a month and he supported me in many ways including financially. He did not know me at the time; still he helped me. Later when I had my first child he supported me again, he paid for the hospital expenses, I paid him back later. Amazing, treating me like this when I did not have a long history in the company! (Turkish interviewee 22)

In the Turkish sample, critical incidents in the personal domain that also bridged into the professional domain involved Reciprocity as exemplified by the following incident:

We had been on couple of business trips abroad. There he shared with me some very personal stuff about himself that probably no one else knew of – at least that's what I felt. At that time I said to myself he must trust me to disclose such personal stuff. (Turkish interviewee 29)

When the supervisor showed that he or she trusted the subordinate by disclosing more of his/her personal life, the subordinate was observed to trust in kind. This

suggests that employees in high-power distance cultures consider attitudes and behaviours that minimize hierarchy and ‘professional’ distance as significant for trust formation.

Trust in Peers

Professional domain. For the Chinese sample, Benevolence, Ability, and Integrity played largely equal roles in determining peer trust. Ability involved work-related ability and fulfilment of responsibility that comes with it. Benevolence incidents were related to Cooperation among team members. Integrity involved Reliability, i.e., keeping promises, acknowledging mistakes, and making changes immediately. In the Turkish sample, trust formation in the professional domain again appeared to be Benevolence driven. Benevolence involved Cooperation, Unselfish Behavior as well as Support. The following incident illustrates Unselfish Behavior:

She got a job offer but she recommended me instead, saying that I was a better fit for this position. It was a good career move for her, but instead she thought of me and that I could be a better match. I don’t think this is a relationship you get to see a lot in professional life. For this reason, I consider myself very lucky. (Turkish interviewee 13)

The conspicuous absence of Ability and Integrity for building peer trust in the Turkish sample made us curious as to why such assessments did not exist at all leading us to delve into the full interviews of these respondents. For two of our eight respondents, we observed that their trusted peers were not those with whom they had very interdependent work relations, which consequently led to assessments of Benevolence in the personal domain. In the remaining six cases, the peers were co-workers and in four of them, some assessment of Ability and Integrity was also made. Nonetheless, Benevolence clearly was the most salient antecedent and constituted the turning point in the relationship.

Personal domain. In both samples, trust formation towards peers in the personal domain appeared primarily based on perceptions of Benevolence and secondarily on Reciprocity. In the Turkish sample, such Benevolence involved Sympathy, Unselfish Behaviour, being Understanding, particularly in times of personal distress or conflict. These antecedents were typically accompanied by Intimacy. Similar observations were made for the Chinese sample as evident in the words of one participant:

There were a couple of instances when I was sick and needed to go to the hospital. He brought me to the hospital. Once it was really late at night and the other time it happened during a formal organization function when everyone was busy and unable to bring me to the hospital. (Chinese interviewee 3)

A final antecedent with respect to trust formation or confirmation among peers for both samples was Reciprocity. Thus, in horizontal relationships, as there is a relative lack of organizational sanctions that might be mobilized in case of trust violations, peer trust appears to be determined to a greater extent by assessment of good intentions, closeness, and demonstrations of risk-taking behaviours (i.e., the trustee making the first move in terms of becoming vulnerable).

Trust in Subordinate

Professional domain. Different from peers and supervisors, trust in subordinates was mostly formed in the professional domain in both samples. Across the two samples, Benevolence was not a determining antecedent and the process was largely cognitive (i.e., based on dependability rather than interpersonal care and concern), a finding in line with mainstream evidence (e.g., Wells & Kipnis, 2001). The most significant antecedent in both samples involved Capacity (Ability), that is, demonstration of work-related skills or Being Responsible (Integrity).

In the Turkish sample, three incidents involved the subordinate providing Support or solution to the supervisor's work-related dilemmas. Although assistance of this sort is typically categorized as Benevolence (see Dietz & Den Hartog, 2006), in the context of supervisor trust in subordinates, such behaviours appear to be perceived as demonstration of Ability. Assessment of Ability was followed by Integrity (Openness in particular) in the Turkish sample, a demonstration of courage along with honesty, which can be observed in the following quotation:

When I came to work there was a problem: Many products were rejected on the production line. I cried out 'How come? Why did you reject so many? What kind of production is this? Don't you take precautions?' My work experience had been in hierarchical organizations and naturally I spoke in such a way. But he came and slammed his fist on the table. 'You!' he said, 'Did you come here to accuse people or to build a system?' That he said this so openly was such a feedback. I saw his boldness and realized that position power was not the right currency to manage him. (Turkish interviewee 2)

In the high-power distant context of Turkey, it appears that supervisors are expectant as well as weary of impression management behaviours, and are visibly impressed when given frank feedback or even criticized openly (meaning directly not necessarily publicly).

For the Chinese sample, the second most frequently mentioned antecedent was Reciprocity – a finding that diverges from the Turkish sample. Reciprocity with subordinates involved work assignments, where the supervisor first took a risk with

the subordinate and with that, built a cycle of mutual trust. In both samples, Benevolence (typically in the form of Cooperation) also emerged as an antecedent of trust.

DISCUSSION

Trust-building involves dyadic interactions over a period of time. Our critical incident study took a snapshot of an important moment in the trust relationship through which we attempted to understand how trust is cemented in two contexts, Turkey and China. Our first research question explored the antecedents of supervisor, peer, and subordinate trust. The findings revealed that across contexts and hierarchical levels, antecedents of trust are largely similar to those identified in existing literature but there are also some noticeable differences. In particular, the perceived Ability, Integrity, and Benevolence of the trustee seem to be the crucial factors of trustworthiness in Turkish and Chinese employees' minds. In addition, Reciprocity – trustor's reciprocation of trustee's trusting behaviours such as delegation and/or disclosure – emerged as a prominent antecedent. While delegation has previously been found to lead to greater trust (Schoorman, Mayer, & Davis, 1996), such reciprocity in trust relations has not been explicitly examined (Schoorman et al., 2007) despite having a long history (see Zand, 1972). One exception is Brower et al. (2009), who found that the effect of trust in supervisor on organizational citizenship behaviour became stronger when there was high trust in the subordinate by the supervisor. Our findings corroborate the role of reciprocity in cementing trust relations.

Beyond that, however, there are several findings that speak to the possible impact of culture. First, echoing Doney et al. (1998), there are some cultural differences in the relative salience of trust-building processes. In particular, highlighting the relevance of collectivist norms, benevolence emerges as the most significant factor in trust development. The manifestations of benevolence appear broader and deeper, encompassing behaviours such as generosity in terms of both the professional and personal welfare of the trustor. Furthermore, in contrast to the assumption in the mainstream literature that cognitive bases are a prerequisite to the development of affective bases of trust (McAllister, 1995), we observed several incidences where benevolence was primary in a relationship – a finding in line with Ng and Chua's (2006) experimental study with Chinese students. In fact, based on the Turkish incident that involved Personalized Generosity, where the supervisor paid for the subordinate's wedding expenses 'without knowing him' as put by the respondent, one could make the argument that benevolence gained personal loyalty that ensured task effort and integrity in future dealings. This observation supports Chen, Chen, and Meindl's (1998) argument that collectivists' personal attachment to significant others can be highly motivating for task achievement, which, in turn, leads to cognitive trust.

This brings us to our second research question about how trust development straddles personal and professional life domains. Triandis (1995) observed that while individualists form and move with greater ease in and out of multiple, loosely affiliated groups based on needs and objectives, collectivists are more likely to form and stay in a few, stable, close-knit groups that satisfy members' multiple needs and objectives. Hence, for collectivists it seems natural and even desirable that professional relationships spillover to the personal domain and vice versa. In other words, in collectivist cultures multiplexity, which refers to affective and instrumental resources being exchanged in the same relationship (Morris, Podolny, & Ariel, 2000) is a common characteristic of relationships (e.g., Chen & Peng, 2007; Gelfand, Leslie, & Fehr, 2008).

Given that in the North American context the individualistic backdrop is also characterized by the Protestant Relational Ideology, which refers to a deep-seated sentiment that affective and relational concerns ought to be put aside at work in order to direct one's attention to the task at hand (Sanchez-Burks, 2005), it is hardly surprising that the personal–professional diffusion has been irrelevant in mainstream organizational analysis. Indeed, the mainstream operationalization of affect-based trust (e.g., McAllister, 1995) consists of items largely limited to workplace interactions, presumably based on the assumption that relationships forged at work remain there (Sanchez-Burks, 2005). In contrast, one of the most interesting findings of the present analysis is the observation regarding the occurrence of critical incidents in the personal life domain.

Our study findings suggest that the incorporation of multiplexity as a relationship variable is crucial for the advancement of cross-cultural research on trust. Notably, multiplexity is recognized in the paternalism literature, where paternalistic behaviours are associated with outcomes such as trust and commitment (Pellegrini & Scandura, 2008). The salience of benevolence in our findings indicates that Turkish and Chinese employees evaluate benevolent but not authoritarian paternalism as conducive to trust formation (see also Cheng et al., 2004; Niu, Wang, & Cheng, 2009).

Our findings suggest that multiplexity is particularly relevant for understanding peer trust. Interestingly, despite trends such as flatter organizations and increased team-based work that have magnified the relevance of horizontal relationships (Chiaburu & Harrison, 2008), mainstream research on peer or co-worker trust is relatively scarce (Lau & Liden, 2008). Further, existing meta-analytic evidence suggests with the exception of integrity, antecedents and consequences of trust do not vary across the referents of leader and co-worker (Colquitt, Scott, & LePine, 2007). This conclusion is different from our findings that horizontal trust formation occurs with different currencies such as goodwill, good intentions, and good times together – a finding further corroborated in Chinese settings (Tan & Chee, 2005; Tan & Lim, 2009). The key to this discrepancy may lie in cross-cultural differences in relationship multiplexity.

Finally, speaking to our third question regarding differences across Chinese and Turkish contexts, which are broadly categorized as vertical collectivist cultures, we found many similarities in terms of the antecedents and processes by which trust is built. What is different though, is that Turkish respondents' manifestations of benevolence are more related to intimacy and to experiences in the personal domain while Chinese respondents' manifestations are in the form of cooperation as well as support in the professional domain. More generally, the ratio of personal versus professional incidents was higher for the Turkish sample, particularly with respect to the supervisor. Furthermore, ability emerged as an important antecedent in China, and in particular, this antecedent was found to be a factor of trustworthiness across all three foci, whereas in Turkey, ability did not emerge to be salient in supervisor trust and was non-existent in peer trust. These observations are in line with the ascription- versus achievement-based collectivism variants discussed by Morris et al. (2008).

Limitations and Future Research

While the strength of this study lies in the use of rich qualitative data focusing on specific points in the relationship, retrospective methodology raises alternative interpretations (Korsgaard et al., 2002), as attributions made at the time of the incident may affect memory for trustworthy behaviour. Although attributions can lead to reconstructed recall of events (e.g., Sedikides & Anderson, 1992), causal reasoning also enhances memory and accurate recall of attribution-relevant information (i.e., behaviour and cues surrounding the event; Hamilton, Grubb, Acorn, Trolier, & Carpenter, 1990). Nonetheless, our results should be evaluated in view of possible recall biases inherent to such research designs. In particular, Lapidot, Kark, and Shamir (2007) found that benevolence was more salient (recalled and reported) than ability or integrity in the narration of trust-building incidents. Benevolence was also more salient than ability and integrity in low-vulnerability situations. Given that this study focused on trust-building, it is possible that benevolence incidents were more salient to the respondents and that this tendency was stronger for horizontal relations, which can be argued to involve lower vulnerability than hierarchical relations.

We also recognize that there are generalizability concerns, particularly due to the fact that there is notable within-country variation both in Turkey and China. For instance, the Chinese sample is from Shenzhen, a special economic zone set up by the Chinese government to drive economic growth in the country. There is certainly the need to undertake further investigations within each culture, particularly along the dimensions of organizational ownership (state-owned enterprises vs. joint ventures) and size (family firms vs. large-scale corporations vs. MNCs). Furthermore, the samples, in addition to being limited in terms of size, were not fully equivalent across China and Turkey and the differences observed may be in part

due to the differences in samples drawn from each country. For instance, it is possible that in the manufacturing intensive region of Shenzhen where there is a prevalence of migrant workers, personalized concern or support is not a managerial priority. Hence, although personalized generosity is a typical Chinese leadership attribute (e.g., Cheng et al., 2004), we did not observe it in this particular sample.

It should also be noted that we have not explicitly discussed the role of the institutional context in organizational trust in these two countries. For instance, Child and Möllering (2003) note that active trust development via establishing personal rapport is very relevant for modernizing societies such as China where the strong institutions commonly associated with modernity do not work reliably. Yet, evidence suggests that the Chinese emphasis on socio-emotional ties in business transactions stems more from socio-cultural roots than from poorly regulated institutions (Chua et al., 2009) and therefore, we have primarily taken a cultural perspective in our interpretation. Furthermore, our samples are drawn from large and/or multinational organizations with formalized human resource practices rendering the institutional arguments perhaps less relevant. Nonetheless, we feel that future research would benefit from incorporating the institutional context and its interplay with culture more explicitly.

Another concern regarding the cultural perspective is with respect to the reliance on Hofstede's (1980) taxonomy. It may be fruitful to pursue some other cultural dimensions. For example, according to the GLOBE study, China's performance orientation is 4.45, above the mean and close to that of the U.S. (4.49). This is in notable contrast to the performance orientation of Turkey, which is below the mean at 3.83. This difference may have implications regarding the role of ability in trustworthiness assessments. We advocate the use of both qualitative and comparative quantitative studies to explore this possibility. More generally, and ideally, it is important that future studies treat culture differences as a constellation rather than focus on a single facet (Tsui et al., 2007).

Another promising research direction involves deeper investigation of differences in trust formation across organizational foci. While Mayer et al. (1995) assert that the Ability, Benevolence, and Integrity trust model transfers across all situations, our results show that there are differences in the salience of antecedents across trust foci. Future research that incorporates contextual as well as perceptual variables regarding power differentials, availability of sanctions, and competition versus cooperation can contribute to a better understanding of trust towards different organizational constituencies. Further, while the same behaviours (e.g., support) may be relevant for trust-building across foci, their specific meanings ought to be studied to understand the nuances hierarchical differences create in trust-building.

Last but not least, future research can also capitalize on our findings regarding multiplexity. First, multiplexity underlines the need to incorporate a broader array of antecedents to models of interpersonal trust than available in existing frameworks. This may involve the inclusion of specific variables (e.g., family values) or broader operationalizations of existing constructs (e.g., personalized generosity as a manifestation of benevolence), as suggested by our analysis. Second, multiplexity as a precursor to stronger levels of trust (Lewicki et al., 2006) highlights the importance of understanding the nature (i.e., what constitutes trust behaviours) and implications of affect-based trust in professional relationships. Recently, multiplexity has been incorporated to the investigation of co-worker relationships (see Chen & Peng, 2007; Chua et al., 2009; Kacperczyk, Sanchez-Burks, & Baker, 2008; Morris et al., 2008). This emergent stream of cultural research has so far focused on the content of multiplex ties, or their positive outcomes like increased energy levels (e.g., Kacperczyk et al., 2008). Likewise, trust has also typically been investigated as a precursor to positive outcomes (e.g., Brower et al., 2009; see Gargiulo & Ertug, 2006; Langfred, 2004; McAllister, 1997 for notable exceptions). However, multiplex relationships in the workplace are often characterized by dual tensions, which may give rise to role conflicts as the expectations of affective closeness may contradict the role-based expectations of work associations (Bridge & Baxter, 1992; Ingram & Zou, 2008). The poor management of these tensions is likely to lead to outcomes that are less than optimal for the individual as well as the organization. For instance, because of friendship or loyalty norms against breaking ties, the individual may preserve ties that are no longer instrumentally valuable or those that are even detrimental (e.g., necessitating favouritism). Hence, notwithstanding the positive role multiplexity may have in an organizational context, for instance, in terms of lower transaction costs we feel that its risks, labelled as the dark side of trust (Gargiulo & Ertug, 2006; McAllister, 1997), are an important area for further research.

CONCLUSION

The present study provides a qualitative understanding into cross-cultural differences in trust development across two collectivist countries, Turkey and China. We found that trust development in these two countries is largely similar with that of existing trust models, particularly regarding the operationalization of ability and integrity as observed for trust in supervisors and subordinates. However, we also found trust antecedents that are emic, specifically regarding manifestations of benevolence. More importantly, the data raise the need to consider not only the professional domain but also the interactions between parties in the personal domain to understand trust formation in collectivist societies. To this end, multiplexity may be an important phenomenon to explore in future cross-cultural trust research.

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