

Measuring the Relationship Between Organizational Transparency and Trust

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The literature on transparency and trust suggest the two concepts are related. While this idea is logical on its face, would it hold true if measured? Using an instrument that measures both transparency and trust, analysis of employee opinion supports this notion. In particular, organizations that encourage and allow public participation, share substantial information so their publics can make informed decisions, give balanced reports that hold them accountable, and open themselves up to public scrutiny, are more likely to be trusted.

While trust in government and media continues to decline, the 2007 Edelman Trust Barometer shows increased trust in business for the first time since 2002. Michael Deaver (Edelman Trust Barometer, 2007) attributes this increase to strong economic growth and the rise of responsible business behavior. Certain measures to ensure more accountability and transparency in reporting financial and social responsibility indicators, such as Sarbanes-Oxley, have also contributed to this increase in trust. In fact, the literature often draws a relationship between trust and transparency.

The literature is clear; to increase trust, organizations must be more open and transparent with their communication. In fact, the idea of organizational transparency is mentioned several times in the 2007 Edelman Trust Barometer. Pam Talbot implies that customers will seek mutual benefits from companies, and that “mutual benefits imply trust, which in turn implies transparency and honesty” (p. 6). Richard Edelman said that “continuous, transparent—and even passionate—communications is central” to business success in today’s new environment (p. 2). Chris Deri advises nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to also be more transparent, because their entire value is based on trust: “they need to be laser-focused on the trust they earn and on their transparency about their own successes and failures” (p. 12). Employees also need their organizations to be transparent to them, according to Gary Grates: “today’s management must still hold true to some basic tenets: authentic communication, relationship-building methods, and a communication style that affords open, transparent, ongoing discussion, which allows people to drive business strategy, and, most importantly, to voice opinions and suggestions that ultimately affect performance and business outcomes” (p. 11). A survey of 25,000 employees by Towers Perrin also concluded that employees prefer “communication that is an open and honest exchange of information—both the good and bad—and materials that are clear and understandable (Strategist 2005, p. 4). Finally Nancy Turett counsels healthcare organizations to embrace transparency, and concludes with the following insight: “openness trumps an image of perfection” (p. 25).

Of course, the idea of a connection between transparency and trust has roots much older than the 2007 Edelman Trust Barometer. The trust crisis that followed some of the biggest corporate frauds in U.S. history—with Enron, WorldCom, Arthur Anderson and Tyco as some of the biggest culprits—resulted in a flood of demands for more transparency to restore trust in corporate America and the stock market. After studying this decline of trust and credibility, the Public Relations Coalition (2003), a summit of communications organizations representing

50,000 professional communicators, recommended that organizations, in particular corporations, “articulate a set of ethical principles,” “create a process for transparency that is appropriate for current and future operations,” and “establish a formal system of measurement of trust.”

The PR trade magazines declared that “ethical standards and transparency through every aspect” of corporate communications was critical to restoring trust (Savage 2005, p. 11). To restore that trust, a 2003 Golin/Harris survey reported that people want companies to be more “open and honest in business practices,” “communicate more clearly, effectively and straightforwardly,” and to show more concern and consideration for its stakeholders, such as employees and customers (Golin 2004, pp. 4-5). In an age when nothing can be hidden for long, everything depends on trust and transparency according to David Silver (2005). He also said that stakeholders were demanding that organizations become more transparent—which he defined as honesty and accuracy—not only “in the numbers the release but also in how they’re run” (p. 16).

However, transparency also requires trust. Being transparent requires a willingness to be vulnerable, because you can’t ensure how people will use the information you share. Therefore, organizations must also trust their stakeholders in order to risk being transparent. As the authors of “The Naked Corporation” put it, “If you’re going to be naked, you’d better be buff” (Tapscott & Ticoll, 2003). This is the intimidating part of being transparent, because when organizations aren’t buff or have done something that justifiably will raise criticism, the temptation is to keep quiet.

However, trust is a reciprocal relationship. Organizations can’t expect trust from stakeholders if they are not willing to trust them first or in return. In the case of transparency, the organizations must trust their stakeholders to use the information responsibly. As Fort (1996) explained,

Institutions that are trustworthy open themselves to criticism. Their decisions and the reasons for such decisions are open to examination and evaluation by stakeholders. Stakeholder management thus requires corporations to be accountable to questions similar to those of professions [such as law and medicine]. (Fort, 1996, p. 214)

Fort (1996) cited Koehn’s (1996) argument that “institutionalized self-critique engenders trustworthiness” (Fort, 1996, p. 214). Fort argued that through transparency, organizations encourage a similar self-analysis and ultimately a public accounting. In this sense, transparency, like trust, demands an act of good faith. Fort (1996) and Koehn (1996) referred to this act of faith as “willed trust” (Fort, 1996, p. 214; and Koehn, 1996, p. 201). Koehn categorized this faith in the good will of stakeholders as “trusting as a matter of policy” (p. 201). He explained,

Because human relations are extremely nuanced, involving risks we cannot calculate and conditions of action we cannot predict, and because descriptions of actions are open to dispute, we are, in this view, better off simply proceeding on the assumption that others mean well and will respond generously to our trust in them. (p. 201)

This paper takes a closer look at the two concepts, trust and transparency, that have received so much attention in the trade press and management books. In particular, care will be taken to define trust and transparency. Both concepts are complex and multidimensional. Then, the results of an employee survey will be tested to determine whether there is empirical evidence that trust and transparency are significantly related to each other. The survey included questions developed to measure their trust and their perceptions of their organization’s transparency. This

is the first time that the two multidimensional concepts have been measured together and the first time the intuitive notion of their association has been measured empirically.

Literature Review

Defining and Measuring Trust

“Trust is fundamental to functioning in our complex and interdependent society” (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy 2000, p. 549). There are few who would disagree with the above statement. However, trust has been difficult to define and measure (Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt, & Camerer, 1998). The attempts at defining trust have been called anything from a “confusing potpourri” (Shapiro 1987, p. 625) to a “conceptual morass” (Barber 1983, p. 1). At first, scholars treated trust as a single concept (Rotter, 1971), but recent research suggests it is multidimensional (Mayer, Davis, & Schoorman 1995; Rousseau et al. 1998). Nonetheless, the literature isn’t entirely in agreement with the dimensions that constitute trust.

While some have claimed that trust is a feeling or an emotion (Swan, Trawick, Rink & Roberts 1988), others disagree. Zand (1971) wrote that trust is not a feeling but the conscious regulation of one’s dependence on another. Trust is the social lubricant that fosters interdependency on others. In these interdependent relationships, trust functions as a way of reducing uncertainty (Holmes & Rempel, 1989; Luhmann, 1979).

After a rather comprehensive and multidisciplinary look at the trust literature, Tschannen-Moran & Hoy (2000) summarized the development of trust scholarship in the following way: in the 1960s trust was conceptualized as generalized personality trait (Rotter, 1967); by the 1980s it had turned to interpersonal relationships (Johnson-George & Swap, 1982; Lazerlere & Huston, 1980; Rempel, Holmes & Zanna, 1985); and by the 1990s, trust shifted to a focus on sociology (Coleman, 1990) and organizational science (Kramer & Tyler, 1996; Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt & Camerer, 1988).

Definitions of trust often include the following elements: willing vulnerability, benevolence, reliability, competence, honesty, integrity, predictability, good judgment, concerned, and openness (Ellison & Firestone, 1974; Butler & Cantrell, 1984; Mishra, 1996). After summarizing several definitions, Tschannen-Moran & Hoy (2000) provide a fairly comprehensive definition with the following: “Trust is one party’s willingness to be vulnerable to another party based on the confidence that the latter party is (a) benevolent, (b) reliable, (c) competent, (d) honest, and (e) open” (p. 556).

McKnight, Choudhury, and Kacmar (2002) identified four dimensions of trust: (a) disposition to trust, which is the extent one has a tendency to depend on others across a broad spectrum of situations and persons; (b) trusting beliefs, which is the extent a person is confident that the trustee has three qualities, namely competence, benevolence, and integrity; (c) trusting intentions, which is the extent one is willing to depend on the trustee; and (d) trust-related behaviors, which is a demonstrated dependence on a trustee that makes one vulnerable or increases one’s risk.

From an organizational perspective, trust is often a collective judgment of one group that another group will be honest, meet commitments, and will not take advantage of others (Bradach & Eccles, 1989; Cummings & Bromily, 1996). For organizations, trust is necessary for cooperation and communication, and the foundation for productive relationships (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy 2000, p. 55). According to Govier (1992), distrust impedes the communication that could overcome it, so that “suspiciousness builds on itself and our negative beliefs about the other tend in the worst case toward immunity to refutation by evidence” (p. 52).

Hon and Grunig (1999) identified trust as an essential component of satisfactory relationships between organizations and their stakeholders. They defined trust as “one party’s level of confidence in and willingness to open oneself to the other party” (p. 2). They then identified three dimensions to trust: integrity, or the belief that an organization is fair and just; dependability, or the belief that an organization will do what it says it will do; and competence, or the belief that the organization has the ability to do what it says it will do.

In an international study to measure organizational trust, funded by IABC, Shockley-Zalabak, Ellis, and Cesaria (2000) applied the trust literature to define organizational trust, which they concluded was “The organization's willingness, based on its culture and communication behaviors in relationships and transactions, to be appropriately vulnerable if it believes that another individual, group or organization is competent, open and honest, concerned, reliable, and identified with common goals, norms and values” (p. 8).

From this literature, the author focused on the concept of trusting beliefs, or judgments, and developed and adapted 13 questions that measured an overall willingness to trust (which included a sense of vulnerability) based on the confidence employees had on an organizations competence, goodwill (beneficence), and integrity. Some of the questions were adapted and modified from questions used by Hon and Grunig (1999), McKnight et al. (2002), and Paine (2003).

Defining and Measuring Transparency

The idea of organizational transparency isn’t new, but the use of the term “transparency” increased after the corporate scandals of the early 21st century, such as Enron, WorldCom, and Tyco. The concept has not received as much academic attention as trust. Therefore, it is a little harder to define and measure.

The 2005 edition of the Miriam-Webster Dictionary defines transparency as “free from pretense,” “easily detected or seen through,” and “readily understood.” Simply put, transparency is the opposite of secrecy. In her book *Secrets*, Sissela Bok (1989) defined a secret as intentionally concealing information or evidence from another “to prevent him from learning it, and thus from possessing it, making use of it, or revealing it” (p. 6). Ann Florini (1998), of the Brookings Institute, states, “Secrecy means deliberately hiding your actions; transparency means deliberately revealing them” (p. 50). This definition is both broad in its generalization of transparency and specific in its application of transparent actions. This definition as a guideline would allow organizations to gauge their level of transparency by asking, “Am I trying to hide something by this action, practice or policy?”

But what are the elements of transparent communication? Balkin (1999) identified three types of transparency, which “work together but are analytically distinct” (p. 393): informational, participatory, and accountability. Transparency efforts of organizations need all three qualities in order to build and restore trust with stakeholders. Therefore, transparency is defined as having these three important elements: information that is truthful, substantial, and useful; participation of stakeholders in identifying the information they need; and objective, balanced reporting of an organization’s activities and policies that holds the organization accountable.

Transparent organizations “make available publicly all legally releasable information—whether positive or negative in nature—in a manner which is accurate, timely, balanced, and unequivocal” (Heise, 1985, p. 209). The goal of transparency is “to *truthfully* communicate the reality of a particular subject-incident-event-etc” (Martinson, 1996-97, p. 43). You can be truthful without revealing all information. But truthful information must meet a standard

Klaidman and Beauchamp (1987) call *substantial completeness*. This is the level at which a reasonable person's requirements for information are satisfied. Substantial completeness is concerned with the needs of the receiver rather than the sender.

Transparency cannot meet the needs of the stakeholders unless the organization knows what they want and need to know. Therefore, stakeholder participation elevates disclosure to transparency. Stakeholders must be invited to participate in identifying the information they need to make accurate decisions.

Transparency also requires accountability. Transparent organizations are accountable for their actions, words, and decisions, because these are available for others to see and evaluate. It requires that persons in transparent organizations contemplate their decisions and behaviors, because they will most likely have to justify them before an open court of opinion. As one author put it: "if you disclose, you hide neither your light nor your trash under a bushel; you get to shine, but you have to clean up your act, too" (Szwajkowski, 2000, p. 391)

In summarizing the elements found in the transparency literature, Rawlins (2006) developed the following operational definition: "Transparency is the deliberate attempt to make available all legally releasable information—whether positive or negative in nature—in a manner that is accurate, timely, balanced, and unequivocal, for the purpose of enhancing the reasoning ability of publics and holding organizations accountable for their actions, policies and practices" (p. 5). This definition contains the three elements of transparency found in the literature.

From this definition, Rawlins (2006) developed an instrument that measures stakeholder perceptions of organizational transparency. Communication efforts to be transparent were broken down into four elements that measure the dimensions of transparency: stakeholder participation, sharing substantial information, accountability, and secretiveness (a reverse item element measuring the opposite of openness). The *participation* component included statements about involvement, feedback, detailed information, and the ease in finding the information. The *substantial information* component included statements about the relevance, clarity, completeness, accuracy, reliability and verifiability of information shared. The *accountability* component included statements about the organization sharing information that covers more than one side of controversial issues, might be damaging to the organization, admitting mistakes, and that can be compared to industry standards. The *secrecy* component is composed of reversed-item statements that reflect a lack of openness, or attempts at secrecy. This includes statements about sharing only part of the story, using language that obfuscates meaning, and only disclosing when required. The questions measuring the four transparency components were used in this research to measure employee perception of organizational transparency.

Research Questions

While the literature has drawn connections between transparency and trust, it has never been measured. The concept of "openness" has been measured as a part of the concept of trust, but not the more multidimensional construct of transparency. In part, this is because there hasn't been an instrument to measure transparency. With the Rawlins (2006) transparency measurement instrument, this question can be answered. This instrument has been tested for reliability and validity, and breaks down transparency efforts into four components: participation, substantial information, accountability, and secrecy (a reverse item component).

There have been many instruments that measure trust and its many dimensions. This project relies on questions measuring trust from Hon and Grunig (1999) and Paine (2003), and breaks it down into three trusting belief components: competence, integrity, and goodwill.

Additionally, three questions that ask about trusting behaviors, which are used as the overall trust construct. This trust instrument has been tested previously for reliability and validity (Hon & Brunner, 2002; Jo, Hon & Brunner, 2004; and Ki & Hon, 2007.). To see the questions used to measure trust and transparency, see Table 1.

Insert Table 1 About Here

Because these instruments are being used together for the first time, they will be tested for reliability and measured for their relationship to each other. In particular, this study will attempt to answer the following research questions:

1. Are the components of trust and transparency reliable constructs?
2. Are the components of trust significantly related to overall trust?
3. Are the components of transparency significantly related to overall transparency?
4. Is overall transparency related to overall trust?
5. Are the components of transparency related to overall trust and its components?
6. Which components of transparency contribute the most to overall trust and to the components of trust?

To measure the first research question, the individual items in each construct will be tested with reliability alphas. The last five research questions will be tested with correlations, using Pearson's R to test for significance, and regression analysis to determine which components contribute the most to the relationship.

Methodology

A large regional healthcare organization agreed to participate in testing the relationship between trust and transparency with its employees. The not-for-profit organization had 25,000 employees and provided medical attention at 150 sites, including 21 hospitals, in two states. It also offered healthcare plans to individuals and employers. Employees were chosen because they were intimate enough with the organization to establish trust judgments and evaluate its efforts at transparency.

The organization had a stated mission that included values suggesting it would value trust and try to practice transparency. Those values were:

- Mutual respect: "We treat others the way we want to be treated."
- Accountability: "We accept responsibility for our actions, attitudes and mistakes."
- Trust: "We can count on each other."
- Excellence: "We do our best at all times and look for ways to do it even better."

Survey Sample

The instrument was administered as a Web-based survey, through Survey Monkey. An email invitation, with a link to the survey, was sent to 1,200 employees. The survey was conducted over a 5-day period, and 385 surveys were completed for a 32% response rate. Twenty-four surveys were deleted because they were incomplete, leaving 361 surveys for analysis. The sample demographics matched approximately those of the healthcare organization's population. Seventy three percent of respondents were female (75% in population), 78% were full-time employees (65% in population), 47% were in positions that provided direct care to patients, such as doctors, nurses, and therapists (54% in population), 19%

worked in administration (8% in population), and 66% worked in a hospital (78% in population). Additionally, 57% had worked for the organization for 6 years or more, compared to 50% of the population.

Results

The alpha reliabilities of items used to measure overall trust, overall transparency, and their component ranged from .79 to .93 (see Table 2), meeting the basic standards for reliability. Churchill (1979) has recommended that minimum reliabilities should be .6, which all of the measures exceed, some by a large margin. The reliability of the constructs were not improved by removing items, therefore the full set of items were used for subsequent analysis. The two measures that could be improved in subsequent research are the overall trust and secrecy constructs. This answers the first research question.

Insert Table 2 About Here

The first step to answering research questions 2 through 5 was a simple correlations matrix of all constructs, which shows that they are all significantly related to each other at the $p < .001$ level (see Table 3). Of the trust components, all are significantly related to overall trust (RQ 2), with competence having the weakest relationship (.63), and integrity and goodwill strongly related (.82 and .81 respectively). The trust components are also significantly related to each other, with the strongest relationship being between integrity and goodwill (.89).

All of the component measures of transparency are also significantly related to the measure of overall transparency (RQ 3), with strong correlations of nearly equal value for the components of participation, substantial information, and accountability (from .80 to .81), and an inverse relationship with secrecy (-.65). The direction and strength of the relationships fit the model of transparency developed by Rawlins (2006). The participation, information, and accountability components have significantly strong relationships with each other (from .74 to .82). Since secrecy is a reverse construct of the concept of openness, it should have a negative relationship with overall trust and the other components, which the correlations matrix shows are weaker than the relationships among the positive components (-.62 to -.67). These correlations suggest that the components are strongly related to the concept of overall transparency.

The relationship between overall trust and overall transparency is strongly correlated (.75), which provides evidence that these two concepts are strongly related in the minds of the employees who participated in this study (RQ 4). The correlation matrix also shows significantly moderate to strong relationships among components of trust and transparency (from -.47 to .81). This answer to RQ 5, suggests a certain mental overlap of these concepts in the minds of the hospital employees.

Insert Table 3 About Here

A second analysis of the strength of the relationships between trust and its components, transparency and its components, and between trust and transparency was conducted by linear regressions. About 70% of the variation in overall trust could be explained by the three components of competency, integrity, and goodwill ($F = 259.56, p < .001$). Using a stepwise

procedure, the model with all three components explained for the most variance. The standardized regression coefficients suggested that integrity (Beta = .44) and goodwill (Beta = .38) contributed the most to overall trust, while competency (Beta = .06) was not a significant contributor in a model that included all three components. While all three components are strongly correlated with overall trust, integrity and goodwill are more closely associated than competence among the hospital employees who participated in the study. (See Table 4 for all regressions.)

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Regressing transparency on its four components accounts for 78% of the variation in this measure ($F = 267.88$, $p < .001$). The stepwise procedure indicated that all four components provided the model that explained the most variance, although it only increased the model without the secrecy component by one percent. The standardized regression coefficients suggested that participation (Beta = .26), substantial information (Beta = .27), and accountability (Beta = .39) contributed the most to overall transparency, while secrecy (Beta = -.06) was not a significant contributor in the model that included all four components. When secrecy is included in a model without participation, it is a significant contributor (Beta = -.25), but with is a weaker predictor of overall transparency when all of the other components are present. The correlation matrix shows that all four components are related to overall transparency, but accountability explains for more of transparency than the other components, with participation and substantial information making strong contributions. While all three components are strongly correlated with overall trust, integrity and goodwill are more closely associated than competence among the hospital employees who participated in the study.

While the correlations indicated that the components of transparency were also significantly related to trust, regressing overall trust to the four transparency components explained 55% of the variance ($F=94.36$, $p<.001$). The transparency components aren't as strongly related to the concept of overall trust as they are to overall transparency, but the linear regression shows a definite relationship. Of the transparency components, accountability had the highest standardized coefficient (Beta = .31), followed by substantial information (Beta = .25), secrecy (Beta = -.14) and participation (Beta = .13). Interestingly, participation wasn't a significant coefficient. So, accountability, substantial information, and openness (reverse of secrecy) were the transparency components the hospital employees most closely associated to the concept of trust (RQ 6).

Insert Table 4 About Here

To further explore the relationship between trust and transparency, regression analyses were also conducted on the trust components (dependent variables) and transparency components (individual variables). When competence was regressed on the transparency

components, it produced an adjusted R^2 of .52 ($F=82.43$, $p < .001$). Substantial information was the strongest predictor (Beta = .76) among the transparency components, while participation and accountability were also significant, but considerably weaker. Secrecy was a weak and insignificant coefficient.

The transparency components explained 75% of the variation of integrity. Substantial information (Beta = .41) and accountability (Beta = .36) were the major contributors, while participation (Beta = .13) was also significant. Again, secrecy was not a significant coefficient. This result is somewhat surprising, because one would suppose that being open (the opposite of secrecy) would be a central component to integrity. A regression model that includes secrecy and excludes accountability shows secrecy as a significant contributor. Secrecy has a significant negative correlation with integrity, but when all of the transparency components are present, secrecy doesn't help explain a significant amount of variation in the integrity measure.

For goodwill, the transparency components explained 72% of the variation, with participation and accountability as the strongest coefficients. Substantial information had a significant standardized Beta, but secrecy was insignificant again.

Discussion and Conclusion

The results of the correlations and regressions provide strong evidence that trust and transparency are positively related. As employee perceptions of organizational transparency increased so did trust in the hospital. Simple correlations indicate that overall trust and overall transparency are positively correlated. Additionally, the three components of trust (competence, integrity, and goodwill) and three components of transparency (participation, substantial information, and accountability) are positively related, while the fourth transparency component, secrecy, has an inverse relationship with the other components. The multiple regressions also support the evidence of the correlations that the concepts are related.

Regression analyses indicate that the employees found integrity and goodwill more important to overall trust than competency. Employee participation that leads to an organization sharing information that employees find useful and substantial, and that holds an organization accountable, are strongest predictors of overall transparency.

The regressions also found that certain components of transparency have stronger explanatory power in predicting the relationship between trust and transparency. Sharing information that is useful and that holds the organization accountable were the transparency coefficients that explained the most in the relationship between transparency and overall trust. Sharing substantial information was the most important transparency component for evaluating competence. When evaluating the integrity of an organization, the transparency components of accountability and sharing substantial information were the most important. Accountability and participation were the strongest transparency coefficients for explaining goodwill.

Overall, secrecy was the weakest component for explaining trust. The correlations showed moderately strong relationships, but as a regression coefficient it didn't show to be a strong or significant explanatory component for trust or its components. This could be due to the reverse relationship nature of the component. However, recoding the data to be scored on a positive scale did not improve secrecy coefficients in the regression models.

From this study, one could conclude that as organizations become more transparent they will also become more trusted. This study is limited to the perceptions of one stakeholder group, namely employees. Because this group has a unique relationship with the organization, the results of the study could be limited to employee perceptions of trust and transparency. A study

of shareholders, consumers, or members of the media, might yield different results. However, the statistical evidence of the relationship appears strong enough to suggest that the positive relationship exists, but that the components explaining the relationships may vary among different stakeholder groups. Further research should be conducted among different stakeholders to test these possible differences.

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Table 1
Survey Items Used to Measure Trust and Transparency

Statements using 7-point scale between Strongly Disagree and Strongly Agree.

Overall Trust.

1. I'm willing to let the organization make decisions for people like me.
2. I think it is important to watch this organization closely so that it does not take advantage of people like me.
3. I trust the organization to take care of people like me.

Organization shows competence

4. I feel very confident about the skills of this organization.
5. This organization has the ability to accomplish what it says it will do.
6. This organization is known to be successful at the things it tries to do.

Organization shows integrity.

7. The organization treats people like me fairly and justly.
8. The organization can be relied on to keep its promises.
9. Sound principles seem to guide the behavior of this organization.
10. This organization does not mislead people like me.

Organization shows goodwill

11. Whenever this organization makes a decision I know it will be concerned about people like me.
12. I believe this organization takes the opinions of people like me into account when making decisions.
13. This organization is interested in the well-being of people like me, not just itself.

Overall Transparency.

14. The organization wants to understand how its decisions affect people like me.
15. The organization provides information that is useful to people like me for making informed decisions.
16. The organization wants to be accountable to people like me for its actions.
17. The organization wants people like me to know what it is doing and why it is doing it.

Communication efforts are participative.

18. Asks for feedback from people like me about the quality of its information.
19. Involves people like me to help identify the information I need.
20. Provides detailed information to people like me.
21. Makes it easy to find the information people like me need.
22. Asks the opinions of people like me before making decisions.
23. Takes the time with people like me to understand who we are and what we need.

Communication efforts provide substantial information

24. Provides information in a timely fashion to people like me.
25. Provides information that is relevant to people like me.
26. Provides information that can be compared to previous performance.
27. Provides information that is complete.
28. Provides information that is easy for people like me to understand.
29. Provides accurate information to people like me.
30. Provides information that is reliable

Communication efforts provide accountability

31. Presents more than one side of controversial issues.
32. Is forthcoming with information that might be damaging to the organization.
33. Is open to criticism by people like me.
34. Freely admits when it has made mistakes.
35. Provides information that can be compared to industry standards.

Communication efforts are secretive (reverse item)

36. Provides only part of the story to people like me.
37. Often leaves out important details in the information it provides to people like me.
38. Provides information that is intentionally written in a way to make it difficult to understand.
39. Is slow to provide information to people like me.
40. Only discloses information when it is required.

Table 2
Reliability of Trust and Transparency Measures

	alpha	sd	Item Mean ^a
Overall Trust (3 items)	.79	4.15	4.61
Competence (3 items)	.87	3.12	5.72
Integrity (4 items)	.92	5.57	4.98
Goodwill (3 items)	.92	4.87	4.29
Overall Transparency (4 items)	.91	5.84	4.61
Participate (6 items)	.92	8.74	4.20
Substantial Information (7 items)	.93	8.15	4.94
Accountability (5 items)	.87	6.38	4.29
Secrecy (A reverse construct w/5 items)	.79	5.63	3.20

^a Mean score per item on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1=SD and 7=SA.

Table 3
Pearson Correlations of All Constructs^a

	TR	C	I	G	TY	P	SI	A	S
Overall Trust (TR)	—								
Competence (C)	.63	—							
Integrity (I)	.82	.76	—						
Goodwill (G)	.81	.62	.89	—					
Overall Transparency (TY)	.75	.65	.87	.88	—				
Participate (P)	.66	.55	.76	.80	.81	—			
Substantial Information (SI)	.67	.70	.81	.75	.80	.82	—		
Accountability (A)	.68	.56	.79	.77	.80	.74	.74	—	
Secrecy (S)	-.59	-.47	-.63	-.60	-.65	-.63	-.67	-.62	—

^a All correlations significant at .001 level

Table 4
Regressions

	UB	SEB	B	Sig.
Overall Trust ^a				
Competence	.08	.06	.06	.195
Integrity	.33	.06	.44	.000
Goodwill	.32	.05	.38	.000
Overall Transparency ^b				
Participate	.17	.03	.26	.000
Substantial Information	.19	.04	.27	.000
Accountable	.35	.04	.39	.000
Secrecy	-.06	.04	-.06	.109
Overall Trust ^c				
Participate	.06	.03	.13	.134
Substantial Information	.13	.04	.25	.001
Accountable	.20	.04	.31	.000
Secrecy	-.10	.04	-.14	.011
Competence ^d				
Participate	-.06	.03	-.16	.032
Substantial Information	.29	.03	.76	.000
Accountable	.07	.03	.16	.015
Secrecy	.02	.03	.04	.455
Integrity ^e				
Participate	.08	.04	.13	.019
Substantial Information	.28	.04	.41	.000
Accountable	.31	.04	.36	.000
Secrecy	-.04	.04	-.05	.243
Goodwill ^f				
Participate	.22	.03	.39	.000
Substantial Information	.09	.04	.15	.012
Accountable	.25	.04	.34	.000
Secrecy	-.04	.04	-.05	.253

^a Adjusted $R^2 = .70$, $F = 259.56$, $p < .001$

^b Adjusted $R^2 = .78$, $F = 267.88$, $p < .001$

^c Adjusted $R^2 = .55$, $F = 94.36$, $p < .001$

^d Adjusted $R^2 = .52$, $F = 82.43$, $p < .001$

^e Adjusted $R^2 = .75$, $F = 219.62$, $p < .001$

^f Adjusted $R^2 = .72$, $F = 189.83$, $p < .001$