

An examination of the role of emotions in trust and control

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Abstract

Since the 1980s, new forms of organising have developed which address the needs of organisations to make adaptive changes to their structures and processes and to rapidly respond to customer and market demands. Where previously the dominant form of organisation in western countries was bureaucracy, it is now being replaced by more organic forms of organisation (McSweeney, 2006). Where bureaucratic organisations have clear boundaries and control structures, standard operating procedures, and hierarchical chains of command, the post-bureaucratic organisation is characterised by normative forms of control that are sustained by socialisation and teamwork (Styhre, 2008). One prominent characteristic of these new structures is trust. Although trust has always been required in organisations, the object of trust has moved from organisation and systems trust to trust in individuals (Lowe and Locke, 2008). Similarly, control has moved from hierarchical and structural forms to trust-based control (Maravelias, 2003). While forms of organising and control are being reconsidered in the workplace, the role of emotions in organisational life is also a growing area of investigation (Ashkanasy, Härtel, and Zerbe, 2000). Emotions are integral to the relationship between control and trust, given that trust has both cognitive and emotional dimensions (Lewis and Weigert, 1985).