

The Dynamics of Public Trust in a Business Organisation

Perspective from a Focus Group of
Business Consultants

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Objectives

- Identify factors that drive public trust in a business organisation
- Examines the causal structure of the factors
- ... from the perspective of a group of business consultants

Data collection

- Focus group of 8 business consultants
 - Clients (Banking, Financial Serv., Retail & Media)
 - Grades (Associate, Manager, Senior Mgr, Director)
- Three segments in two hours
 - Elicit and debate the trustworthiness dimensions
 - Identify factors that drove public trust in business
 - Discuss and debate the causal relations of the factors

Finding 1 Trustworthiness Dimensions

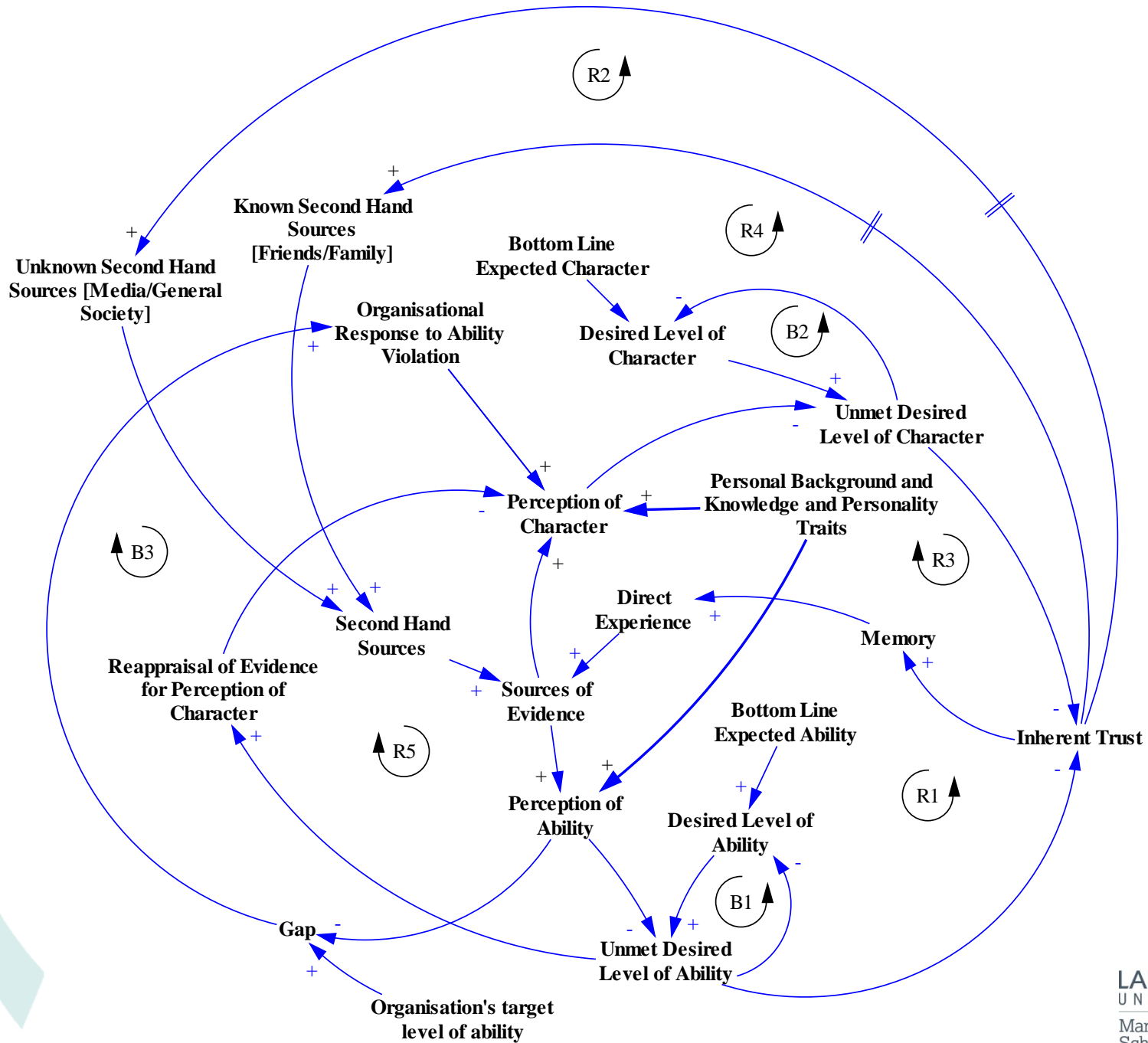
- Common trustworthiness from literature
 - ability, benevolence, integrity, identification/value congruence, openness/transparency and reliability
- Insights from focus group
 - ‘ability’ was the primary criterion
 - a compromise in ability would not automatically result in a reduction of trust but instead in a ‘deeper evaluation of trustworthiness’

Finding 2 Trust Drivers

- Drivers
 - direct experience, personal background & knowledge (PB&K), personality traits (PT), media-portrayal, friends/family opinions, organisational response
- The group argued that
 - Direct experience and second-hand sources directly influence trustworthiness assessment
 - PB&K and PT mediate direct experience and use of second-hand sources

Finding 3 Effect of Trust Drivers

- Direct experience is more dominant than second-hand sources
- Transfer of trust (word-of-mouth effect)
- Same factors are used to assess ability and deeper character dimensions



Conclusion

- The perception of business consultants the public trust in a business organisation
 - Insights
 - Causal loop diagram
- Limitations
 - Small sample size
- Future work
 - Focus on specific case of public-business trust
 - More empirical data collection (different actors)
 - **Comment or feedback?**