EXPLORING TRUST AS AN INFLUENCING MECHANISM OF INTRAPRENEURSHIP

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ABSTRACT

Managers and employees in four diverse organization settings were interviewed with semi-structured methods to provide grounded insight about the potential role of trust as a contributor to intrapreneurial behavior. The data suggest that several different dimensions of trust influence intrapreneurial behavior. Transcription analysis identified dimensions of trust as "downward trust-in," "upward trust-of," and "upward trust-in." In addition, lateral trust, reciprocity and the cascading effects of managerial trust, are explored. Study results are examined within the theory of intrapreneurship in organizations and directions for future research are outlined.

JEL: M10

KEYWORDS: Intrapreneurship, trust.

INTRODUCTION

Modern for-profit and nonprofit organizations are moving into "new territories and exploring uncharted waters," (Dees & Anderson, 2003, p. 16) as they respond and adapt to diverse challenges, uncertainty, and environmental turbulence. Pressing problems such as competitive pressures (Thornberry, 2002), environmental hostility (Zahra, 1991), technological and marketplace changes (Miller & Friesen, 1985) and global competition (Kuratko & Hodgetts, 1998) force for-profit companies to reconsider their strategic approaches. Nonprofit organizations face an environment of decreased funding sources, rising demand for services, competition from the for-profit sector, increasing competition for philanthropic resources (Dees & Anderson, 2003; Salamon, 1997) and calls for more accountability (Alexander, 2000).

Practitioners and scholars in both sectors have called for new operating practices to meet these challenges. Morris and Kuratko (2002) propose that the implementation of entrepreneurial practices within organizations can help meet pressing challenges and transform firms into revolutionary companies. Observers in the nonprofit field have argued that organizations must address challenges facing the sector by identifying more effective and sustainable ways to address social problems, including the adoption of business-like methods (Dees & Anderson, 2003) and innovative, entrepreneurial approaches (Dees, 1998).

In light of these challenges and prescriptions from observers, many existing organizations are implementing internal entrepreneurial activity (Dess, Lumpkin & McGee 1999). Often described as corporate entrepreneurship (Burgelman, 1983; Guth & Ginsberg, 1990; Vesper, 1984) or internal corporate entrepreneurship, "intrapreneurship" (Pinchot, 1985) has been found to spur new corporate ventures, strategic renewal (Guth & Ginsberg, 1990; Kemelgor, 2002), innovation (Sharma & Chrisman, 1999), and overcome the staleness that affects many organizations (Thornberry, 2002). While definitions have varied, the broadest definition of intrapreneurship denotes that it encompasses entrepreneurship within existing organizations, whereby individuals inside the organization – typically managers and employees – behave in ways that result in the pursuit of new opportunities, the creation of new business ventures, and in the development of new products, services, administrative processes and innovation (Antoncic & Hisrich, 2001).

Yet while managers and employees play a critical role in the process of successful intrapreneurship (Kuratko, Ireland, Covin, & Hornsby, 2005; Vesper, 1984), relatively little is known about factors that trigger and sustain intrapreneurial behavior at the individual level (Geisler, 1993; Kuratko, et al., 2005). The current body of research on intrapreneurship has largely identified factors at the firm level such as reward and resource availability (Kuratko, Montagno, & Hornsby, 1990), environmental hostility (Covin & Zahra, 1995), organizational structure (Covin & Slevin, 1988, 1991; Kuratko, Hornsby, Naffziger, & Montagno, 1993; Kuratko, et al., 1990; Lumpkin & Dess, 1996; Miller, 1983), control systems (Antoncic & Hisrich, 2001; Kuratko, et al., 1993; Sathe, 1985) and situational factors (Greenberger & Sexton, 1988; Littunen, 2003). Unfortunately, this provides little insight into why some organization participants engage in intrapreneurial behaviors and others do not. As Mair (2002) observed, research that examines why some individuals pursue intrapreneurial activities and why others do not, despite exposure to the same objective organization context (e.g. structure, rewards, culture), is limited. From this, we conclude that individual factors are under-explained in the study of intrapreneurial behavior, representing a significant gap in the literature.

The present study aims to contribute new insight into factors influencing intrapreneurship in for-profit and nonprofit organizations. Although several mechanisms are plausible to investigate, we focus on exploring the role of interpersonal trust as a potential mechanism influencing individual intrapreneurship. While interpersonal trust is viewed a critical organizational mechanism (Nicholas, 1993) that often contributes to employees' willingness to take risks (McAllister, 1995), exhibit extra-role behaviors and demonstrate initiative (Whitener, Brodt, Korsgaard, & Werner, 1998), it has yet to be examined in the context of intrapreneurship. While separately intrapreneurship and trust within organizations have been widely studied, there is no empirical linkage between the two.

The following section presents a conceptual foundation for the study and the research questions exploring the potential role trust may play in the promotion of intrapreneurial behaviors within organizations. We discuss the sample and theory-building qualitative methods of the study and present research findings resulting from semi-structured interviews with a sample of managers and subordinates. We then explore the relevance and implications of the research findings and present limitations of the research and suggestions for future research.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Intrapreneurial Behavior within Organizations

Some authors have called for new organizational forms that emphasize intrapreneurial practices by managers and front line employees (Chakravarthy & Gargiulo, 1998) while others have advocated specific strategies that create a culture that encourages risk taking, innovation, and experimentation (Kuratko, et al., 1993). These studies accept that intrapreneurial behaviors among employees are important, regardless of their associated organizational forms or strategic processes. Reinforcing this line of thinking, Miller (1983) notes "there is continually a need for organizational renewal, innovation, constructive risk taking, and the conceptualization and pursuit of new opportunities, a pursuit that often goes beyond the efforts of one key manager" (p. 770).

Various studies (Covin & Slevin, 1991; Dess & Lumpkin, 2005; Lumpkin & Dess, 1996; Miller, 1983) define entrepreneurial orientation (EO) as a multidimensional concept comprised of at least three key dimensions: risk taking, innovativeness and proactiveness. Zahra (1991) perceives an apparent consensus in the field on these three aspects with regard to intrapreneurship. Lumpkin and Dess (1996) argue that these entrepreneurial behaviors constitute firm level phenomena, although they note that entrepreneurial orientation involves "the intentions and actions of key players" (p.136) and that new ventures and pursuit of opportunity for organizations often occur at lower-levels via individual entrepreneurship. This provides an indication that the construct of entrepreneurial orientation lends itself to study at the individual level of analysis as a representation of intrapreneurial behavior.

Numerous definitions of corporate entrepreneurship and intrapreneurship are present in the literature (Sharma & Chrisman, 1999), ranging from organizations entering new businesses by expanding operations in new markets (Zahra, 1996) to strategic renewal that creates new wealth through new combinations of resources (Guth & Ginsberg, 1990). For this study, we define intrapreneurship as specific action taken by managers and key employees that involve one or more of the following EO dimensions: risk taking, innovativeness and proactiveness. Risk taking is defined as venturing into unknown areas for the company, without knowledge of the outcome (Covin & Slevin, 1991). Innovativeness is activity resulting in new ideas, and experimentation which may result in new processes, products, or services (Lyon, Lumpkin, & Dess, 2000). Proactiveness is the process of acting in anticipation of future needs, changes, or challenges that may lead to new opportunities (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996). We take direction from Vesper (1984) and Sharma and Chrisman's (1999) focus on employee initiative and involvement that results in organization renewal, innovation, or new venture creation, where employee behavior is defined as intrapreneurial when it is perceived to be "creative, forward thinking, different from what the company normally does, and have a chance of not working out."

The terms entrepreneurship and intrapreneurship are used often in the context of organizational activity. Despite the obvious similarity between the two, their conceptual meaning needs to be distinguished. In the context of this study, we conceptualize entrepreneurship as the innovative, proactive and risk taking orientation of an organization. However, corresponding actions of managers, employees and teams who are constrained to operate within an organizational structure are referred to as intrapreneurship or intrapreneurial behavior. Individual level actions, characteristic of intrapreneurship, can be aggregated to represent an organization's entrepreneurial orientation, and entrepreneurial firms can be viewed as consisting of key managers and employees that exhibit risk taking, proactiveness and innovativeness in meeting organizational objectives.

Interpersonal Trust as a Mechanism Influencing Intrapreneurship

The construct of trust has been shown to impact organizational performance and a variety of important workplace outcomes (e.g. Barney & Hansen, 1994; Dirks & Ferrin, 2002). Since trust is an important interpersonal transaction for organizational activities, individuals often act on the trust of others (such as managers subordinates and coworkers) in the performance of their work (Bhattacharya, Devinney, & Pillutla, 1998) or because of their trust in others. Given this perspective and the increasing importance of trust in organizational research (Kramer, 1999), it is a potentially important, yet largely overlooked mechanism that may influence intrapreneurial behavior among individuals in an organization.

In this paper trust is defined as the "willingness of a party to be vulnerable to the actions of another party based on the expectation that the other will perform a particular action important to the trustor, irrespective of the ability to monitor or control that other party" (Mayer, Davis, & Schoorman, 1995: p. 712). This vulnerability implies that the trusting party is taking a risk based on expectations of the other party in a situation that is uncertain because of the inability to control completely the other party. Extending this view of trust, we place trust in the context of the workplace by viewing it as a multidimensional construct consisting of both vertical and lateral elements (McCauley & Kuhnert, 1992) that includes an individual's reliance on another party under conditions of dependence and risk (Currall & Judge, 1995). Vertical trust refers to the trust that employees place in their direct supervisors, subordinates, or between hierarchical organizational groups, while lateral trust refers to the trust between co-workers or between horizontal groups in an organization. In particular this study is interested in the role of vertical trust as a perception held by employees and their direct managers (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002) that can be measured at the individual level in an interpersonal relationship (Brower, Schoorman, & Tan, 2000). Employees engaged in intrapreneurial behavior often face uncertain outcomes and take significant risk on behalf of the organization. In this context, we believe that the trust employees perceive is placed in them by their immediate supervisor – the individual that most directly affects their current and future status in the organization – may play an important role in their intrapreneurial behavior. As noted by Lester and Brower (2003), an employee's perception of direct supervisors' trust in them has the ability to influence attitudes and behaviors of the subordinate, and is an often overlooked aspect of assessing a trust relationship. This is position echoes the work on organizational climate (Gregory, 1983; Schneider, 1987) where employee behaviors are affected more by perceptual processes, including sense-making and sense-giving to organizational rules and routines, rather than the values, beliefs and actions of supervisors who specify the rules and routines (Schneider, 1987; Schneider, Goldstein, & Smith, 1995).

Overall, we position our view of trust as a vertical orientation evidenced in the willingness of an employee to engage in specific behaviors because of the perception of trust placed in them by their immediate supervisor. According to their particular situation, employees may form this trust assessment in two distinct ways: 1) based on the belief that a managers actions will benefit them in calculable ways (Lewicki & Bunker, 1996); and 2) based on the deep interpersonal care and value congruence that assures a manager is looking out for their best interests (Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt, & Camerer, 1998; Sitkin & Roth, 1993).

<u>Initiation of Trust</u>

Prior research (Creed & Miles, 1996; Whitener, et al., 1998) proposes that leaders initiate trust in organizations. McAllister (1995) also observed that developing and maintaining trusting organizational relationships is important for managers. In addition, trust initiated by a manager may be reciprocated or unreciprocated by an employee. Pillutla, Malhotra, and Murnighan (2003) note, "trust and reciprocity are intimately related: a reciprocation of an initially trusting act can instigate a beneficial cycle of increasing trust and reciprocation. Unreciprocated trust, however, can seriously damage a relationship and weaken its prospects" (p. 448).

Overall, we infer from the literature that 1) intrapreneurial behavior is an often-desired characteristic within many organizations, and 2) higher levels of interpersonal trust between the manager and employee, as initiated by managers and as perceived by employees, may be a contributing factor in employee intrapreneurial behavior. On the other hand, intrapreneurial behavior by employees may be less likely where employees perceive a low level of interpersonal trust by managers. In this context, the following research questions provide a structure for the study:

1. What emphasis do employees and managers place on the concept of trust as an influence on intrapreneurial behavior?
2. What dimensions or components of trust do managers and employees report in their experiences with activities that influence intrapreneurial behavior?"
3. How is trust initiated in the organization with respect to individual intrapreneurial behavior?

DATA AND METHODOLOGY

This study utilized a qualitative approach to explore the provisional connection between interpersonal trust and intrapreneurial behavior and generate grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990) about how trust may influence individual intrapreneurship. With no prior investigation of trust and intrapreneurship and limited research examining what individual factors contribute to intrapreneurship, exploratory research is well suited to this aim. An inductive design employing techniques such as semi-structured interviews, allows understanding of the meaning of events, situations, and respondent experiences in their particular contexts (Kvale, 1996; Maxwell, 1996) where the objective is to derive rich description of the phenomena (Mintzberg, 1979).

Overall Design

A case study approach was utilized to understand the dynamics in individual organizational settings (Eisenhardt, 1989) with the aim not to uncover generalizable experiences of managers and employees entrepreneurial organizations but to understand the phenomenon in its real life context (Yin, 1981). This will help further our understanding of the constructs of interest in order to develop ideas and concepts for study using more predictive methods.

We collected the data using a semi-structured interview protocol. While this method has the potential to capture new and descriptive insights, researcher bias during the interview process and subsequent transcript analysis can introduce interpretations and classifications that do not accurately reflect the interviewee's experience. We employed two distinct approaches to minimize this potential bias and ensure the validity of the interview protocol: 1) the interview guide was developed to provide complete and consistent coverage of the concepts being studied and was designed to be used flexibly depending on the interview responses (Brenner, 1985); and 2) the interview guide was designed with specific non-directive questions and probes for each interview question which helped to reduce the tendency of the interviewer to resort to unplanned, non-neutral probes and responses during the interview (McCracken, 1988). In an effort to reduce bias in the protocol, we employed pre-testing to identify potential gaps and problem areas pertaining to the themes studied and the use of probes and non-neutral responses.

The semi-structured interviews (Kvale, 1996) were conducted in four organizations over an eight-week period in order to understand the role that trust plays in intrapreneurial behavior among managers and subordinates. The organizations, two for-profit (banking/finance and software development) and two nonprofit (social services and health services) ranged in size from 50 employees to 400 employees and were selected randomly from a pool of approximately 25 organizations in the local service area (southern California, USA) identified by the authors through prior personal interactions and references from industry observers.

The sample allowed exploration of trust across organizations in two sectors while achieving the minimum number of cases typically recommended for theory-building research (Eisenhardt, 1989). Respondents included lower-level employees as well as managers, allowing for the possibility that different dynamics may occur at different levels in the organization. Overall, the sample included four different categories of employees: front-line employee, first-level manager (typically a program director), second-level manager (typically a unit director), and top-level manager (typically a division manager). Table 1 summarizes the number of individuals interviewed per category in the sample:

Table 1: Number of Individuals Interviewed Per Job Category

Organization	Top-level Manager	Second-level Manager	First Level Manager	Front-line Employee
Community finance organization	4	1	1	_
Software development company	1	1	1	2
Family assistance center	1	3	1	1
Community treatment center	_	2	1	1

This table presents the number of individuals interviewed per category, per company.

An important sampling decision was to identify individuals in each organization that could provide information most pertinent to the research questions (Maxwell, 1996). In order to achieve this, nine individuals at different organizational levels were initially queried about two recent projects undertaken by organizational members that involved intrapreneurial behavior, and from this potential respondents were identified that could be interviewed to explore the potential factors that influence intrapreneurship. We then selected up to six members in each organization for further study based on their significant involvement in specific intrapreneurial projects, with 21 individuals subsequently participating in full interviews. The first author conducted tape-recorded interviews in sessions ranging from approximately one hour to over two hours. The interview consisted of both semi-structured questions that addressed the specific mechanism of trust as well as open-ended probes to allow participants to explore and define constructs that they felt best represented their intrapreneurial experiences. Prior to commencing the interviews, questions were tested and refined in a separate sample of both for-profit and nonprofit environments.

We recorded data collected from the interviews in field notes and tape recordings and employed analytic memos to capture significant thoughts, themes and observations relative to the interviewer's experience during the study. In addition, we also documented qualitative categorical data such as organizational type, job category and limited demographic information. Table 2 presents demographic data on the study participants.

Table 2: Demographic Profile of Interviewed Individuals

For-profit Organizations, N=11				**Nonprofit Organizations, N=10**			
	Age		**Employed in Organization**		**Age**		**Employed in Organization**
18-25	9	**Less than 2**	9	**18-25**	10	**Less than 2**	10
26-35	27	**2-5**	18	**26-35**	20	**2-5**	20
36-45	36	**6-10**	55	**36-45**	50	**6-10**	50
46-55	18	**11-15**	9	**46-55**	20	**11-15**	10
55+	9	**15+**	9	**55+**	0	**15+**	10
	Gender				**Gender**		
Male	64			**Male**	30		
Female	36			**Female**	70		
	Education Level				**Education Level**		
High School/ GED	9			**High School/ GED**	0		
Some College	9			**Some College**	10		
College Degree	36			**College Degree**	50		
Graduate Degree	45			**Graduate Degree**	40		

This table presents basic demographic data of the individuals interviewed. All numbers noted for the results are in percentages.

Interview Protocol

We asked respondents to describe their roles and activities with respect to the previously identified project that was "creative, forward thinking, different from what the organization normally does, and have a chance of not working out." We utilized these phrases to avoid priming the respondents and to allow them to relate aspects of their behavior without the influence of explicit terms such as innovation, risk-taking and proactiveness. Each person was asked a series of thirteen questions about this experience, probing for: a) a detailed description of the activity; and b) a description of the role the respondent played in the activity, and c) the type of interactions that took place with others in the organization in that context. Attempting to minimize success or self-serving bias, we also asked respondents to relate an instance when they had an opportunity to take an action that was different, creative, forward thinking, and chancy but did not undertake this action. We used a series of eight open-ended questions to inquire about factors that respondents felt influenced the cited activity. Respondents were asked what specific factors – either within the organization, among customers, or in the community – influenced their actions. We then directed each respondent to focus on individual, managerial, organizational or situational factors and describe the most influential factors among those categories in enabling them to engage in the intrapreneurial activity.

The interviewer then presented nine note cards containing single words or short phrases representing the following broad concepts as potential mechanisms influencing intrapreneurial activity that were derived from relevant literature: intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, reciprocity, rewards, organization support, situational factors, and trust. We asked each person to select a note card that represented a factor that may have been influential in the intrapreneurial activity. Upon selection of a card, participants described in detail what the concept meant to them and the level of importance it had with regard to these behaviors. After completion of the discussion surrounding the first card, we asked the participant to go through this process again, with the same line of questioning and exploration, until they discussed all nine cards or indicated that any remaining unselected cards were not influential factors in their experience. After this discussion and exploration, we gave the note cards back to each participant and they were asked to arrange the cards in order of importance to provide a rank ordering of the concepts and the strength of their influence in the participant's intrapreneurial behavior in the context being described.

Coding Procedures/Analysis

Guided by grounded theory analysis techniques (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990) coding was performed in two phases, with each phase containing a singular focus. First, as a confirmatory step, the first author identified respondents' statements of their behavior in situations in which they had undertaken that were *"creative, forward thinking, different from what the company normally does, and have a chance of not working out*." We analyzed these statements thematically to verify that these respondents' experiences of entrepreneurial orientation were consistent with prior studies.

Second, transcript and field note data pertaining to trust were analyzed and coded through a process drawn from Kvale's (1996) "dialogical intersubjectivity" which seeks "agreement through a rational discourse and reciprocal critique among those identifying and interpreting a phenomenon" (p. 65). In this step, the second author read the interview transcripts, extracting statements pertaining to any aspect of trust. The first author then reviewed the selected statements and compared them with his own reading of the transcripts; the first author then identified additional extracts, and the second author accepted these. Then, the second author proposed a series of interpretive classifications for the extracts. The first author proposed a modification of these categories for organizing the extracts. Dialogue about the categories and the placement of extracts proceeded through three rounds of analysis between the two authors until both accepted the data as displayed in this paper. This procedure minimized the potential interpretive and classification bias and led to the development of inductively derived themes emerging from the research (Emerson, et al., 1995). The final thematic analysis serves as the basis for the following discussion; we present relevant data excerpts to illustrate the role that trust and emergent mechanisms play in regard to intrapreneurship among organization members.

EMPIRICAL RESULTS

Interview comments suggest that trust plays a role in promoting intrapreneurship; nearly all study respondents reported interpersonal trust as a contributing factor in their intrapreneurial behavior. For example, concerning her ability to engage in intrapreneurial behaviors a mid-level manager at the family assistance center, noted, "I would not have the freedom that I have … because he [her manager] has a sense of trust." In a comment that is not atypical for these interviews, a senior-level manager in this organization also stated that trust is a necessary component that provides employees freedom to engage in these activities and to feel safe doing it:

The trust actually, for me, is more the freedom and the security of knowing if you make a mistake it is OK. For me that really is what that trust is all about, it is the trust that you can do these things, but for me that's really the sense that you're free to do them and you're OK if you fail doing them...

We asked respondents to rank order nine concepts in terms of their influence on activities that were "creative, forward thinking, different from what the company normally does, and have a chance of not working out." Ranking of the note cards is on a scale from one to nine, strongest to weakest in terms of influence. Results from the note card ranking of potential influencing factors, as shown in Table 3, indicate that respondents viewed trust as the most important factor (N=21, mean=2.37) in influencing these behaviors. Both open-ended and rank order information from respondents indicated that trust was highly important in influencing the activities characterized as entrepreneurial orientation. Additional analysis indicated that employees across all levels view trust as a significant factor in their intrapreneurial actions.

Table 3: Mean Rank Order Scores of Trust and Other Factors Relative to Strength of Influence

Influencing Factors									
Mean Score	**Trust**	**Organization support**	**Situation**	**Activity is interesting**	**Activity is enjoyable**	**Activity is rewarded**	**Self-interest**	**Behavior is expected**	**Reciprocity**
All Respondents N=21	2.37	3.93	4.13	4.20	4.60	4.87	5.300	5.50	6.30
For-profit N=11	2.69	3.00	4.63	4.12	4.38	5.13	5.875	5.38	6.44
Nonprofit N=10	2.00	5.00	3.57	4.29	4.86	4.57	4.643	5.64	6.14

This table shows the results from the note card ranking of potential intrapreneurial behavior influencing factors. The breakdown of respondents: The community finance organization- 6; the community treatment center – 4; the family assistance center – 6; the software development company – 5.

<u>Dimensions of Trust</u>

In this section, we present the various dimensions of trust as evidenced in the statements of interviewed individuals. Table 4 displays the frequency of trust dimension statements by organization type.

Downward "Trust-In." Interview coding identified several distinct dimensions of perceived trust between persons in organizations in the context of intrapreneurial behavior. One prevalent type of trust refers to the trust that subordinates perceive their direct managers place in them. This form of trust, which we term "downward oriented trust-in," refers to the trust subordinates experience coming from their supervisors. This trust appears to provide subordinates with a level of confidence or support that is necessary to undertake intrapreneurial activities. For example, one respondent commented:

> *I believe that my manager places a high level of trust in me and so that is why I am able to do it like this. I think that if he did not, then I would not be able to do it, as simple as that.*

Table 5 presents evidence of managerial "trust-in" subordinates as perceived by the subordinate. These statements (key phrases have been bolded) indicate respondents feel that their managers demonstrate trust in them through specific actions, such as trusting decision making, providing freedom to pursue intrapreneurial activities and allowing mistakes. As a senior-level manager at the community finance organization noted, “I would say I know that he [supervisor] trusts me because of the repetitive allowance for me to go forward, yes. If he didn’t trust me, he’d have stopped me after the first branch (office)…”

Table 4: Frequency of Trust Dimension Statements among Interviewed Individuals

	Downward Oriented “Trust-In”	Upward Oriented “Trust-Of”	Upward “Trust-In”	Managers as Initiators of Trust	Lateral Trust	Reciprocity of Trust
For-profit Organizations N=11	63.63%	63.63%	45.45%	63.63%	36.36%	27.27%
Nonprofit Organizations N=10	60.00%	60.00%	50.00%	60.00%	20.00%	10.00%

This table presents the percentage of interviewed individuals who provided statements that led to classification of the various dimensions of trust.

Upward “Trust-Of.” A second dimension of trust refers to subordinates’ perceptions of their own behaviors that would justify their managers’ trust. These are behaviors subordinates believe gain and retain managers’ trust. We categorize these behaviors as “upward oriented” actions designed to ensure the “trust of” one’s manager. We present interview excerpts indicating these behaviors (as perceived by subordinates) in Table 6. They include qualities such as decision-making skills, doing one’s homework before launching intrapreneurial projects, having a reputation for reliable performance, and the competence to engage in intrapreneurial behaviors. A mid-level manager at the software development company described the characteristics he exhibited in order to secure the trust of his manager:

I try to, you know, weigh as many factors and constraints as possible in order to make decisions and he's seen that happen and so I think he trusts my decisions and the way I go forward. He saw that prior to being a manager and sees that now more and we interact more day-to-day as a manager…he’s seen I have made the right choices or they were the best choices I could with the information at that time…

Upward “trust-of” involves an employee taking the supervisor’s view and articulating reasons why the supervisor should trust the employee. From another perspective, this dimension reflects the employee’s own sense of trustworthiness in relation to the supervisor.

Upward “Trust-In.” Interview coding indicated that respondents also experience “trust in” their managers, e.g., that managers do particular things to create a trust in them on the part of subordinates. This form of trust is also a significant influence in subordinates’ willingness to engage in intrapreneurial behaviors. A mid-level manager at the family assistance center noted,

Trust means safety, and if you feel safe to develop or explore other parts of yourself, whether it is creativity, forward thinking, risk taking or maybe going outside of the norm, any of those, if you do not trust that your manager is going to provide safety for you to explore those you are not going to do it. No matter how enjoyable, no matter what the reward it, self interest, the situation, interesting, or even if it is expected, if you do not believe it is safe, if you think you are going to be put down or sanctioned in any way for an effort, you are going to stop doing it. You will stop doing it.

The content of the trust that subordinates place in their managers, which we term an “upward oriented trust in,” represents a wide range of specific behaviors or actions that subordinates trust their manager to do or not to do. As shown in Table 7 and illustrated in the excerpt above, subordinates have trust in their managers to: provide freedom and safety to explore intrapreneurial activities, make good decisions, see the bigger picture of the organization, offer timely performance feedback, and provide guidance and support to the subordinate.

Table 5: Downward Oriented "Trust-In" Subordinates as Perceived by Subordinates

Factor	Evidence	Respondent
Downward oriented "trust in" – the content of the manager's trust in the subordinate. "My manager demonstrates trust in me by…."	"I would say I know that he [supervisor] trusts me because of the **repetitive allowance for me to go forward**, yes. If he did not trust me, he would have stopped me after the first branch…"	Senior-level manager, The community finance organization
	"Well, if I look at it in a sense that if he didn't trust me **he wouldn't have kept me in the position that I am in**."	Mid-level manager, The community treatment center
	"The trust actually, for me, is more the freedom and the security of knowing if you make a mistake it is OK. For me that really is what that trust is all about, **it is the trust that you can do these things, but for me that is really the sense that you are free to do them and you are OK if you fail doing them**."	Senior-level manager, The family assistance center
	"Because **if he did not trust me, he would not be sending me into places and having me work on stuff that I am still working on** and involved in things."	Mid-level manager, The community treatment center
	"I would not have **the freedom that I have** and the beautiful thing is that - because he [her manager] has a sense of trust."	Mid-level manager, The family assistance center
	"If my manager was not **trusting my decision** or micromanaging me or constantly hounding me about things, the situation, if the situation occurred I would be less likely to be making a decision on my own, I would not make those at all, I would maybe basically bounce all, all the even partially controversial decisions to him."	Mid-level manager, The software development company
	Sometimes, I mean sometimes he could be **as simple as just giving me the project itself**…"	Employee, The software development company
	"I mean he [the CEO] **knows and trusts his senior management team. So you can make mistakes**."	Senior-level manager, The community finance organization
	"Like I said, he allows you, **he allows you to and he encourages it and it is OK, to make a mistake**."	Senior-level manager, The community finance organization

This table presents evidence from the transcripts of managerial "trust-in" subordinates as perceived by the subordinate. Key phrases illustrating the concept have been bolded.

In the same way upward 'trust-of" reflects a subordinates' sense of their own trustworthiness, this dimension of interpersonal trust reflects subordinates' perceptions of their supervisors' trustworthiness.

<u>The Initiation of Trust</u>

Initiation. The third research question guiding the study inquires about how trust between managers and subordinates in organizations is initiated. The interviews provide ample evidence to suggest that managers initiate trust in the relationship with subordinates, not vice-versa. Often trust is perceived by employees based on their managers giving them responsibilities. As a mid-level manager at the family assistance center observed, she views trust as present in the relationship based on her manager's actions: "I mean I think that you feel trusted as you are given responsibilities..." As shown in Table 8, respondents see managers initiating trust by giving support to subordinates, setting a supportive organizational culture and providing freedom to engage in entrepreneurial activity. The trust placed in subordinates by managers appears to have a direct effect on subordinates' willingness to engage in intrapreneurial behaviors. A senior-level manager at the community finance organization noted, "My boss, without a doubt it is him [that enables her to engage in intrapreneurial activities]…"

Table 6: Upward Oriented "Trust–Of" Subordinates as Perceived by Subordinates

Factor	Evidence	Respondent
Upward oriented "trust of" – subordinate describes the behavior needed to gain/retain the manager's trust. "I have the trust of my manager because I …."	"My manager and the CEO, they know you have to take risk if you're going to play marbles. And they, they also know that, and believe in you, that **you will do your due diligence and you will do your homework before you flip the switch**…"	Mid-level manager, The community finance organization
	"And I would like to think though that he also trusts me because of the **[my] reputation**."	Senior-level manager, The community finance organization
	"I try to, you know, **weigh as many factors and constraints as possible in order to make decisions** and he has seen that happen and so I think he trusts my decisions and the way I go forward. He saw that prior to being a manager and sees that now more and we interact more day-to-day as a manager. So I think I, that is my opinion, I think that he will, he has seen that happening, he has seen **I have made the right choices or they were the best choices I could with the information at that time**…"	Mid-level manager, The software development company
	"Now, trust, that he knows that, you know, he knows that when I decide on a project and when I have told him I'm committed to the project, he knows that **I will do my very best to see that it would go through and that it is successful**."	Mid-level manager, The family assistance center
	"Oh, because I would not be doing what I do. I mean, like, I have a lot of information about the agency, I know a lot of things and I think that **my experience of making good decisions** for the most part allows him to have that trust."	Mid-level manager, The community treatment center
	"They can trust me, that **I will make the very best decision**." "So, it is like more of the trusting you to take up on this task, which could be chancy and, but, you know, in turn that you actually feel that I guess the manager values and trusts that you **have the ability**…"	Mid-level manager, The community treatment center
	"But I would hope, and I know that my manager definitely trusts me. They know that when I am out there I am doing work, I am not… I am not mismanaging time, I am coming up with these ideas and sometimes it is almost like stop, you know, it is like ah, too much. But I think that they trust me with, and because **I have done this for so many years, I have kind of proven that so to speak**.	Employee, The software development company

This table presents evidence from the transcripts of upward "trust-of" subordinates as perceived by the subordinate. Key phrases illustrating the concept have been bolded.

Influence of Manager's Trust on Lower Organization Levels

There is some limited evidence with regard to what we categorize as the impact of a manager's trust on lower organization levels, as illustrated in Table 8. Two respondents described the cascading effect that their managers' "trust in" had with regard to perpetuating trust at lower-levels of the organization. As a mid-level manager at the software development company commented, "Oh, yes, right, that [trust dynamic] goes all the way from, you know, from my superiors to myself as well from me to my developers [subordinates]."

Emergent Results

Several minor themes emerged from the interview coding that identified issues that were not articulated in the study's research questions. We briefly discuss these themes below.

Reciprocity of Trust. Four respondents noted that they reciprocated the trusting actions of their managers by trusting the manager. As a senior-level manager at the community finance organization noted, "Because they trust me; I … trust them, and because of that I am able to go do those things." Speaking about building a new business unit within the organization, a mid-level manager summarized reciprocity of the trust placed in him to accomplish the project: Interviewer: they trust your judgment to do what is needed to build your business? Respondent: "(yes). And I trust (their judgment to do what is needed), and this is why that support just goes back both ways, yes…I feel it is very strong, very strong, yes, and this [reciprocity] probably, you know, goes in there someplace."

Table 7: Upward "Trust-In" Managers as Perceived by Subordinates

Factor	Evidence	Respondent
Upward "trust in" – things subordinate trusts the manager to do or not do.	"Oh, yes, oh, well I mean, truly I mean if he told me to walk through that glass because you will not get cut, it is like OK, I would. I just think that it has, you have to do that…you know [he] is so**, if he tells you one thing, he is going to do it."**	Senior-level manager, The community finance organization
	"Trust. I do not… well, I do not know about his, but on my part, it is I do not trust, I am not trusting him anymore. I used to trust him with everything, I used to just value and what is the word? Respect, you know the, the water he walked on, pretty much**. I felt like he was making good decisions and I felt like he was seeing the bigger picture** and I felt like, you know."	Mid-level manager, The community treatment center
	"Well, one is honesty… my manager is a very honest person, he will not lie to you, and he is honest to the staff, you know, and the Board. If there are things that are good, if it is good news or bad news, **he is going to tell it like it is and he is going to inform you in a timely manner as well. So I trust that if there were problems with my performance, I have trust that he would let me know before I was going off in the wrong direction** or moving too fast or too slow, I trust he would tell me so."	Senior-level manager, The community finance organization
	"If you do not trust that your manager is going to **provide safety for you to explore** those you are not going to do it. No matter how enjoyable, no matter what the reward it, self interest, the situation, interesting, or even if it is expected, if you do not believe it is safe, if you think you are going to be put down or sanctioned in any way for an effort, you are going to stop doing it. You will stop doing it."	Mid-level manager, The family assistance center
	"I trust in the fact that **he is going to guide us in the right direction**…"	Mid-level manager, Community Treatment
	"So now he is pulling the reigns in somewhat and is not as liberal, and I think that and I am looking at **the decisions that he is making and I think that they are not, I personally do not think that they are good decisions**."	Lower-level manager, The community treatment center

This table presents evidence from the transcripts of upward "trust-in" in direct manager as reported by the subordinate. Key phrases illustrating the concept have been bolded.

Lateral Trust. Trust also appears to exhibit a lateral dimension within the organizations studied. In describing this lateral trust, a senior-level manager at the community finance organization noted, "It [trust] trickles down and it trickles across …"

Another senior manager at the organization noted,

And so we work together as a team and we are not, we are not a confrontational team at all but we are a communicative team, and so we trust one another that we can say things at a professional level and we can understand and learn from each other. There is a great deal of sharing.

Table 8: Managers as Initiators of Trust

Factor	Evidence	Respondent
Cause and effect relations in the trust cycle – causal action is manager giving responsibilities or support (supports the notion that trust behavior starts at the top of the organization)	"I mean I think that **you feel trusted as you are given responsibilities**..."	Mid-level manager, The family assistance center
	"Sometimes, I mean sometimes he could be **as simple as just giving me the project itself**…"	Employee, The software development company
	So now, **he is pulling the reigns in somewhat and is not as liberal**…	Senior-level manager, The community finance organization
	"He is honest, he is forthright, he is incredibly trusting, I mean, but wow, you do not want to like ever lose that trust... **He will pretty much support you as long as you are not going to embarrass him** or embarrass the institution…"	Senior-level manager, The community finance organization
	"I think **what enables me is my manager**, and I am sure everyone you talk to you he is going to say that. He is a wonderful leader."	Mid-level manager, The family assistance center
	"You know, if this is a, I am not sure how to explain it but, to me, I guess my manager seems to, you know, start out as now, **I will trust you initially and if you do something that causes me not to trust you**, so that has not really been an issue."	Senior-level manager, The community finance organization
	"My boss, **without a doubt it is him [that enables her to do these entrepreneurial activities]**…	Senior-level manager, The community finance organization
Impact on lower organizational levels of trust between manager and subordinate	"It [trust] trickles down and it trickles across, and I think that is very important because not only do I know **I have the trust and confidence from the Board and from the CEO and to myself and then to Suzie, who reports to me, and then down there…**"	Senior-level manager, The community finance organization
	"Again, **because of the way the CEO has set it up [in terms of trusting her to engage in entrepreneurial activities]**, just like I would interact with one of my staff here, my interaction with administration, my direct supervisor who is the VP of programs, my interaction with her is very similar."	Lower-level manager, The community treatment center

This table presents evidence from the transcripts of managers initiating a trust dynamic with subordinates as perceived by the subordinate. Key phrases illustrating the concept have been bolded.

This lateral dimension represents the trust between an employee and various co-workers or peers at multiple levels of the organization that has an influence on the intrapreneurial behaviors of the employee. As one senior manager at the community finance organization commented, "… if I cannot trust the CEO to lead this organization, I cannot trust my peers to move forward, they cannot trust me, then none of this [intrapreneurial activity] can happen."

DISCUSSION

This exploratory study examined the role of trust in the promotion of intrapreneurial behavior, defined as risk taking, innovativeness and proactiveness, among managers and employees within both for-profit and nonprofit organizations. Given that organizations are increasingly seeking to promote intrapreneurial behavior, this insight has important practical implications for managers as it shifts the discussion away from simple prescriptions such as providing resources or rewards to facilitate intrapreneurship, and suggests that managers must also focus on interpersonal interactions. Focusing on trust as one way to promote a more intrapreneurial workforce may yield significant results and is a facet of administration that managers clearly control. In many organizations, the ability to provide rewards and resources or change established organizational structure and culture to encourage intrapreneurial activity is often highly constrained, suggesting that managers must by necessity focus on more immediate and controllable factors if they are to influence an employee's orientation toward and performance of intrapreneurial activity.

Trust has previously been shown to influence a variety of workplace behaviors and attitudes, such as individual and organizational performance, collaboration, organizational citizenship, and commitment (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002). This study lends additional weight to the role of trust in organizations, specifically that trust is a factor influencing intrapreneurial behavior among employees. Based on the interview data and note card ranking results, employees' perceived trust placed in them by their direct managers appears to be a key factor in promoting their risk taking, innovativeness and proactiveness. Trust is largely overlooked in the study of intrapreneurship, and the study suggests that future research needs to be cognizant of the role that interpersonal trust may play in promoting risk taking, innovativeness and proactiveness behaviors within organizations.

Of course, trust may be a mechanism to influence any desired organizational behavior and as mentioned earlier, this construct is specified in a range of organizational processes and outcomes. At the same time, its effect cannot be assumed and the power of this construct alone or in combination with other variables and in different contexts needs to be empirically evaluated.

Dimensions of Trust

We categorized respondents' descriptions of trust directionally – as upward, downward and lateral. These distinctions are consistent with the view that trust within organizations has both vertical and lateral facets (McCauley & Kuhnert, 1992). The majority of trust data presented in this study was vertical in nature and represented a deep dependence relationship between managers and subordinates. As Sheppard and Sherman (1998) note, deep dependence is a relational form that is typically found between a superior and subordinate where each party has significant interaction and dependence on the other and one party can unilaterally determine the fate of the other party. In deep-dependence relationships trust matters a great deal, as was evidenced by the important outcomes resulting from trust relationships between managers and employees in this study.

Downward Trust-In. Respondents indicated that they perceive their direct managers place trust in them, and they discussed this trust as a factor having significant influence on their willingness to engage in intrapreneurial behavior. Perception of "downward trust-in" is consistent with the view that managers play key roles as initiators of trust in organizations (Creed & Miles, 1996; Whitener, et al., 1998) and that employee perceptions of trust placed in them by managers will impact performance (Brower, et al., 2000). The concept of downward trust-in suggests that perceived managerial trust creates feelings of empowerment in employees – several respondents cited the "freedom" or autonomy to engage in innovative or risk activities in relation to trust, citing one of the key dimensions of empowerment (Spreitzer, 1995). This is reinforced by recent findings demonstrating a significant and positive relationship between trust and empowerment in the intrapreneurial context (Stull & Singh, 2005). In addition, in some instances it appears managers' trust in subordinates impacts trust in lower-levels of the organization; the trust placed in some respondents by their managers influences the trust they subsequently place in both peers and subordinates. The potential for trust to have a cascading effect throughout an organization shows how interpersonal trust, emanating from higher organizational levels, may become an organization-level phenomenon.

Upward Trust-Of. Descriptions of respondents' views of the "upward trust-of" refer to self-perceptions of employees that may influence their behaviors. Respondents reported reasons, such as ability, reliability, reputation, performance, decision-making and not letting the manager down, as to why their managers trust them. In particular, in deep dependence relationships trustworthiness is important and requires that a manager's subordinate possess qualities that mitigate the possibility of negative behavior (Sheppard & Sherman, 1998). Given that employees were often engaged in risk taking and innovative behavior, trustworthiness attributes give confidence to managers that negative outcomes will be minimized and less intensive oversight is needed. The aforementioned trustworthiness attributes represent a cognitive trust based on trustworthy employee behaviors, such as perceived behavioral integrity (Whitener, et al., 1998) and ability, benevolence, and reliability (Mayer, et al., 1995). This observation reinforces the view that trustworthiness is a key component of trust in organizations; as Hardin (1996) noted, the best way to establish trust is to be trustworthy.

Upward Trust-In. Respondents' descriptions of their experiences indicated that subordinates frequently trust their managers. This "upward trust-in" indicates that employees often feel a sense of trust in their managers to do or not do certain things, such as providing safety to explore, timely feedback and support. This aspect of trust and security in a deep dependence relationship is critical as it allows one party to take risks knowing they will be supported ("If you don't trust that your manager is going to provide safety for you to explore those you're not going to do it"). This dynamic may also play a key role in allowing employees to engage in intrapreneurial behavior. Subordinates' trust in their managers suggests components of managerial trustworthiness, an attribute of cognitive-based trust, influences intrapreneurship.

Reciprocity. Reciprocity between managers and subordinates was evident in the experiences of study participants. That is, "downward trust-in," i.e., subordinates' sense of having their managers' trust in them, influences and is influenced by both their sense of their own trustworthiness (upward trust-of) and the managers' trustworthiness (upward trust-in). The study reported some direct evidence about respondents' experience of reciprocity among these relationships.

The trust a manager places in employees may result in an employee reciprocating that level of trust by engaging in the behaviors desired by the manager, in this case, intrapreneurial behavior. As Dirks and Ferrin (2002) argue, individuals "who feel that their leader has, or will, demonstrate care and consideration, will reciprocate this sentiment in the form of desired behaviors" (p. 613).

Brower, et al. (2000) argue that an employee's perception of the manager's trust affects the employee's performance, and Whitener, et al. (1998) empirically found that employee motivation, risk taking, assertiveness and personal initiative result from affect-based vertical and lateral trust. Employees who perceive that their managers trust them to be intrapreneurial are likely to reciprocate by engaging in desired behaviors. Conversely, an employee who perceives low trust from a manager to be intrapreneurial will likely not reciprocate and engage in these behaviors (in the absence of external prods or rewards).

Lateral Trust. Trust among peers, or lateral trust, also appears to influence the process of engaging in intrapreneurial behavior. Two respondents noted that the level of trust among peers and co-workers had an influence on their willingness to be intrapreneurial. Research on lateral trust has demonstrated that employee risk taking behavior was positively related to trust among co-workers (Costigan, Ilter, & Berman, 1998).

<u>Other Constructs Influencing Intrapreneurial Behavior</u>

This study focused on the influence of interpersonal trust on intrapreneurial behavior within organizations. At the same time, both respondent interviews and the note card rankings help to identify other possible mechanisms at work independently or interacting with trust in the promotion of intrapreneurship among managers and employees.

The strongest factors arising in this study were individual motivation, organizational climate and situational conditions. Sixty-six percent of the respondents described intrapreneurial activities to be inherently interesting and enjoyable, and felt intrinsic motivation is a central factor leading to intrapreneurship. Three respondents noted that enjoyment of engaging in intrapreneurial behavior was sufficiently strong that they would leave their organizations if they could no longer engage in such activity. Autonomy provided by managers to engage in intrapreneurial behavior (an indication of their trust in employees) appeared to influence positively those employees' intrinsic motivation.

Relationships between trust, intrinsic motivation and intrapreneurial behavior merit close examination. Intrinsic motivation may mediate the effect of trust on behavior, as suggested above (Costigan, et al., 1998). Alternatively, trust and motivation may be independent factors affecting behavior, in which case stressing intrinsic motivation may be a substitute for interpersonal trust. These important theoretical considerations rest on the use of more systematic empirical investigation.

Organizational climate represents the values, norms and expectations that influence individual behavior. It is defined as a quality of the organization's internal environment that influences organizational members (Taguiri & Litwin, 1968), and it captures the essence of how a particular work environment "feels." Interviews contained specific references to perceived "atmosphere" and overall support that reflects a component of organizational climate. Respondents noted this as an important influence on openness to change and innovation, freedom to behave intrapreneurially, and the safety and allowance to make mistakes. Interpersonal norms of trust and trustworthiness may become aggregated and expressed as aspects of organizational climate – an organization-level phenomenon.

Situations facing managers and employees, such as the presence of a significant opportunity for the organization or a compelling internal or external need, may influence members' intrapreneurial behavior independent of the level of interpersonal trust experienced by the participants involved. Situational factors may be a competing mechanism: it is possible that particular situations rather than a manager's trust catalyze risk taking, innovativeness and proactiveness; individuals may pursue attractive opportunities regardless of the level of trust between managers and subordinates or the presence of other influential factors.

Comments of respondents in this study indicate other factors may work jointly with trust or they may work independently of trust to affect these outcomes. Organization theory (e.g. Burns & Stalker, 1961; Lawrence & Lorsch, 1967) suggest flat and organic structures promote intrapreneurial behavior to a greater extent than hierarchical and mechanistic structures, and there may be a number of other individual variables, such as one's purpose, values, or calling, that were not studied here (and may be particularly compelling in the nonprofit context). In addition, a more complex understanding of trust would show how it works differently in relation to intrapreneurial "uncertain and risky environments" (Bhattacharya, et al., 1998: p. 311) than in relation to other environments. While the study sought to probe the nature and role of trust in relationship to intrapreneurship, trust undoubtedly is only one player in the larger script of intrapreneurial behavior in organizations.

CONCLUSIONS

This study's goal was to gain new insight into factors influencing intrapreneurship in for-profit and nonprofit organizations. Specifically, our focus was to explore the potential role of interpersonal trust as mechanism influencing individual intrapreneurship and examine what dimensions or components of trust, if any, managers and employees report in their experiences relative to intrapreneurial behavior. Given the lack of research examining the influence of interpersonal trust on intrapreneurial behavior, we felt it appropriate to employ a qualitative, exploratory study to accomplish this goal. The inductive design allowed us to explore whether trust is present in the context of intrapreneurial behavior, what dimensions of trust are important in the process and how trust starts in the relationship between managers and subordinates.

We analyzed data compiled from 21 semi-structured interviews of manager and employees in two nonprofit and two for-profit organizations. Working through a process of dialogical intersubjectivity, we interpreted, coded and categorized the data thematically to arrive at the findings presented. Overall, study results suggest that trust may be a direct and powerful influence on intrapreneurial behaviors. Respondents noted several significant dimensions of interpersonal trust, including:

Downward Trust-In – subordinates report they perceive their direct manager places trust in them, and this trust is a significant factor influencing their willingness to engage in intrapreneurial behavior.

Upward Trust-Of – subordinates refer to their self-perceptions of reasons why they believe their direct managers trusts them to engage in intrapreneurial behavior, citing examples such as their reliability, reputation, past performance, and competence.

Upward Trust-In – in the context of intrapreneurial behavior, subordinates indicate they often feel a sense of trust in their managers to do or not do certain things, such as providing safety to explore, timely feedback and support.

These different aspects of trust from subordinates' perspectives – "downward trust-in," "upward trust-of," and "upward trust-in" – outline different dimensions of a process of trusting and trustworthy behaviors between managers and subordinates. Overall, the study suggests a pervasive role for vertical interpersonal trust, particularly downward trust-in as perceived by employees, as a causal factor leading to intrapreneurial behavior. In addition, trust initiated by higher-level managers (from the perspective of the subordinate) appears to have both a downward cascading, as well as a lateral, effect.

An exploratory, qualitative study allows for generation of fresh concepts and new insights into intrapreneurial behavior within organizations. However, only four organizations were included in the study and 21 managers and employees participated in the full interviews, factors seriously limiting the generality of the study. In addition, the study is suggestive, at best, in generating theory with respect to the nature and role of trust in intrapreneurial behavior in organizations. Evaluation of this nascent theory across a wider range and number of organizations and respondents using more predictive methods of study is advisable. Future research should consider selecting organizations that place low importance on intrapreneurship and/or are low trusting environments. While these observations highlight the limits of qualitative data and the transferability of our findings, we believe this is also the strength of our approach: the development of rich data that could not be achieved through a quantitative hypothesis testing method.

Lastly, organizational research that relies on self-report data is prone to response bias. For example, only 20% of respondents referred to failed projects as their primary point of reference. In addition, despite our use of recently completed projects and activities as the interviewee's reference point, it is difficult for us to determine if the managers and employees retrospective account of their experience accurately represents the event or is more indicative of how they view activities across different and varying instances. However, as Schmitt (1994) noted, when the constructs of interest involve perceptual measures or the research is exploratory in nature, self-report methods are often appropriate, in spite of the potential for response bias. This study also suggests that trust alone is unlikely to influence intrapreneurial behavior within organizations. While concentrating on the nature and role of trust, other factors may work in conjunction or independently of trust. This study suggests that factors such as employee intrinsic motivation, organizational climate, and situational factors may need to be taken into account for a full rendering of intrapreneurial behavior.

While highlighting a potentially potent role for trust in intrapreneurship, the study serves, at best, as a useful starting point for future research. It points to the value of exploring dimensions of trust more precisely through hypothesis testing as well as to examining ways that trust may interact with other causal factors in influencing intrapreneurial behavior. As an example, while trust may play a potent role, other mechanisms such as organizational control systems may also directly affect intrapreneurship. The management and innovation literature has a rich tradition of studying formal control mechanisms that ensure attainment of organizational goals and minimize negative outcomes, especially for autonomous or entrepreneurially oriented units, teams and groups. Given the potential for a complementary or conflicting relationship between interpersonal trust and organizational control systems, examining the combined effects of the two may yield new insights into what influences intrapreneurial behavior. As research in this area unfolds, we hope that a sound understanding of the role of trust in intrapreneurship becomes available to both academics and practitioners.

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