DEVELOPMENT AND VALIDATION OF THE CORPORATE DISTRUST SCALE

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ABSTRACT

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Previous organizational research on trust and distrust has focused mainly on interpersonal relationships such as trust of managers or coworkers, however little is known about institutional-level attitudes, such as corporate trust/distrust. The purpose of the current study was to develop a measure to evaluate attitudes of distrust people have toward corporations. Evidence for the construct validity of the new measure was obtained sampling a broad cross-section of working adults. Psychometric properties of the measure suggested high internal consistency and a unidimensional factor structure. Nomological validity of the construct in relation to other measures provided further support for the construct validity of the measure. Future applications of the measure in behavioral research are discussed.
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INTRODUCTION

The trust construct has received a considerable amount of attention from organizational scholars (for a review see Kramer, 1999). Researchers have developed instruments to assess trust in one’s supervisor (e.g., Cook & Wall, 1980; Mayer & Davis, 1999), one’s peers (e.g., McAllister, 1995), one’s department (e.g., Cummings & Bromiley, 1996), and one’s organization as a whole (e.g., Robinson & Rousseau, 1994). Despite the interest in trust by researchers, the focus has been on individual organizations, workgroups, or managers. This focus on specific targets of trust reveals a gap in our current understanding of the construct. That is, there has been little attention given to trust (or distrust) in organizations in general. The neglect of this attitude is unfortunate because an instrument assessing corporate distrust could provide valuable information to researchers and organizations.

The measurement of corporate distrust is important for several reasons. First, it would allow researchers to track changes in beliefs about corporations over time, or after certain events. For example, it might be useful to know the impact of widely-publicized scandals such as Enron or WorldCom on people’s trust in corporations, or the impact that a layoff has on a individual’s faith in all companies. From a practical standpoint, it might be useful for a company to assess differences between different groups in their beliefs about corporations. For example, companies interested in recruiting women or minorities may need to combat some preexisting negative beliefs about corporations. Corporate distrust might also relate to things such as job choice and organizational commitment. A measure of this construct would be useful to researchers interested in assessing these relations.

The current proposal is focused on the development of an instrument that assesses attitudes people have about corporations in general. Specifically, I will discuss
scale development of an attitude measure focused on beliefs about the trustworthiness of companies. I will begin with a review of common definitions of trust, particularly applied to organizational contexts. I will then explain the importance of developing an instrument to assess trust in corporations and how it will be operationalized. Finally, I will discuss constructs that should and should not be related to trust in corporations and constructs that may predict attitudes of trust in corporations.
CHAPTER I. A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF TRUST

Definitions of Trust

A review of the literature on trust reveals a pronounced lack of consensus among scholars who try to define it. Manuscripts about trust typically include a potpourri of definitions from many disciplines, covering a variety of contexts and relationships. This lack of agreement concerns some scholars because of the resulting confusion and ambiguity of the construct (e.g., Barber, 1983; Hosmer, 1995; Lewicki & Bunker, 1995; Shapiro, 1987). Others argue that concern is premature because many definitions share elements and overlap quite a bit (Bigley & Pearce, 1998; Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt, & Camerer; 1998).

The Psychological Perspective

The classic psychological approach to trust defines it as an attitude that shapes expectations. For example, Rotter (1967) defined trust as “an expectancy held by an individual or a group that the word, promise, verbal or written statement of another individual or group could be relied upon” (p. 650). He suggested that our interactions with others over time and our observations of their behavior shapes how much people trust others in general. A similar theme is evident in Erikson’s (1968) definition of trust as a global attitude that people develop about themselves and others. These definitions treat trust as a general attitude people have about others that influences behavior when they engage in relationships (Robinson, 1996; Rotter, 1967; Whitener, Brodt, Korsgaard, & Werner, 1998). Consistent with Rotter’s (1967) definition, many approaches to trust make expectations explicit in their definitions. That is, trust involves an anticipation of intentions and/or future behavior. For example, Zucker (1986) defined trust in terms of expectations parties have of each other in an exchange relationship. Social scientists, economists, and organizational researchers have applied expectations to their definitions of trust.
as well (e.g. Barber, 1983; Bhattacharya, Devinney, & Pillutla, 1998; Deutsch, 1958; Rousseau et al., 1998: Zand, 1972).

*Economic Models of Trust*

Economic approaches to trust identify it as a behavior characterized by rational decision, or choice in an exchange relationship (e.g., Axelrod, 1984; Deutsch, 1958). This approach suggests individuals are motivated to trust based on a conscious calculation of expected outcomes, such as Deutsch’s (1958) view that trust is based on a ratio of anticipated positive to negative outcomes. Economic models often focus on dyadic relationships and use games such as the Prisoner’s Dilemma (e.g., Axelrod, 1984) to provide insight into cooperative behavior between strangers that require trust between the two.

The economic model differs from the psychological model in its emphasis on trust as a calculated decision rather than an attitude or disposition and its lack of interest in ambiguous targets such as people in general. Trust is evaluated on a case-by-case basis and global assessments are not taken into consideration. This *calculus-based trust* (Lewicki & Bunker, 1995) assumes that people act trustworthy because behavioral consistency is rewarded and inconsistency is punished (Shapiro, Sheppard, & Cheraskin, 1992). Trust also involves a rational, conscious calculation based on the expected value of building a relationship relative to the cost of maintaining or abandoning it (Lewicki & Bunker, 1995). The decision to trust or be trustworthy is motivated by calculated assessments of the expected gain versus loss in a transaction with each other. This requires a concrete target in order to make an assessment that a global attitude toward a group or category cannot provide, explaining the exclusion of ambiguous groups from these models of trust.
Additionally, individuals must make themselves vulnerable by investing personal resources in anticipation of rewards to display trust (e.g., Zucker, Darby, Brewer, & Pang, 1996). For example, a stock investor participating in a risky investment demonstrates trust not only by calculating the anticipated consequences of the exchange, but in transferring his or her financial resources to a stock trader in anticipation of future rewards. Allowing oneself to be vulnerable has often been a key ingredient in definitions of trust beyond economic models (Rousseau et al., 1998).

*Trust Based on Experience*

One criticism of the economic approach to trust is the lack of attention it pays to historical interactions between parties (Granovetter, 1985). These interactional approaches to trust take relationships and their histories into account, particularly the extent to which trust develops and evolves as a function of interactions between parties. This approach is sometimes referred to as *history-based trust* (Kramer, 1999). In this context, longitudinal information becomes the critical element that defines and shapes a relationship between parties (Deutsch, 1958; Rotter, 1971). Specifically, as parties engage in transactions, they are able to make inferences about the behavior of the other party over time. This results in a perception of predictability that results in trust or distrust depending on the quality and agreeableness of the interactions (Lewicki & Bunker, 1995; Shapiro et al., 1992). For example, in a relationship between a stock investor and broker, a series of successful recommendations by the broker can lead to an increased sense of trust by the investor, leading to greater agreeableness on the part of the investor. Conversely, trust can decline as a result of a series of unsuccessful recommendations. History-based approaches share the psychological notions that trust is a malleable attitude, shaped by interactions in an ongoing relationship between parties (Rousseau, et al., 1998).
Another approach, integrity-based trust, assumes that people are sometimes trusted because we assume that they will be morally directed, and behave in a way reflecting this (e.g., Barber, 1983; Butler, 1991; Butler & Cantrell, 1984; Hosmer, 1995). Trust includes accommodating the other party’s expectations (Hosmer, 1995; Wicks, Berman, & Jones, 1999) and the need for people to experience a social or moral order in their interactions with others (Barber, 1983). When an individual engages in a relationship requiring trust with another, trust is based on the expectation that the each individual’s actions will capture the best interest of the other and be consistent with established social norms. Hosmer (1995) captures this idea when he defined trust as an expectation that a person or group will act in a morally responsible way when interacting with another person or group in a venture or exchange. This definition is important because it illustrates underlying forces driving our expectations not evident in other definitions of trust. Specifically, not only is trust based on the expectation that a party will uphold the conditions of an agreement, but a parallel set of implicit social expectations (i.e., moral/ethical decision-making) can also drive it. For example, shareholders of an organization require executives making decisions for their company to maintain profitability. Underlying this job requirement is the implicit expectation that these actions must be executed in a way that is consistent with legal and ethical principles of the business community. If executives produce a profit and it is accomplished through illegal or unethical means, trust is violated despite satisfying the terms of the explicit agreement with their employer.

Institutional Models of Trust

Finally, models of institutional trust shift away from decisional, interpersonal models and focus on mechanisms put in place to enforce trust (Granovetter, 1985). Institutional models of
trust characterize people as self-interested and assume the actors are strangers. This model argues that mechanisms are necessary to deter untrustworthy behavior because the respective parties cannot oversee each other (e.g., Granovetter, 1985; McKnight, Cumings, & Chervany, 1998; Shapiro, 1987; Zucker, 1986). Institutional trust models assume that legal and procedural mechanisms are necessary in place of trust because financial relationships lack the history, intimacy, and first-hand knowledge present in interpersonal relationships (Granovetter, 1985; Zucker, 1986). For example, if a waiter fails to give us our change back or a company does not deliver paid-for services, legal actions can be taken to collect these debts. Trust is then the expectation that a party will fulfill an agreement with another party because procedures are in place to penalize parties for failing to adhere to agreed-upon norms and contracts. Institutional mechanisms can also be informal in the case of group norms or social pressure (e.g., Creed & Miles, 1996; Lewis & Weigert, 1985; Zucker, 1986). For example, corporations are legally entitled to make staffing changes in order to cut costs, even if this involves massive lay-offs. However, many organizations may decide to cut costs using alternative methods because of the implicit assumption that putting people out of jobs is not well-received by the general public. Thus, trust is reinforced through implicit social norms and not explicit mechanisms in the public’s trust that the corporations will not violate these norms. A critical point is that the individual does not necessarily have direct knowledge of any particular corporations, so there is no interactional history to base trust on in this context. Therefore our trust is based on the assumption that people, groups, or organizations will adhere to the social norms and not behave inappropriately, rather than basing it on unique information we have about a particular group.

The Importance of Trust in Corporations
Organizational Commitment

The construct of corporate distrust is important to understand because it may provide information about other job attitudes, including demographic differences in these attitudes, and job choice. A job attitude that corporate distrust may be related to is organizational commitment. When people believe their employer is committed to the same goals or values they are, they become more invested, involved, and committed to the organization (Allen & Meyer, 1990; O’Reilly & Chatman, 1986). A person that distrusts corporations might do so because he or she believes companies do not share his or her same values. Therefore, corporate distrust may prove an antecedent to organizational commitment.

An important predictor of organizational commitment is the quality of the psychological contract shared between an organization and their employees (Meyer, Allen, & Topolnytsky, 1998). Distrust is often characterized as an outcome of a violated psychological contract (Robinson & Rouseau, 1994). A person who experiences or witnesses a psychological contract broken by a company may generalize that behavior to other companies. This could result in a decreased motivation to become invested in a company if the individual does not suspect that companies will reciprocate that investment. For example, an individual who experiences or witnesses frequent lay-offs or downsizing may learn to distrust companies and this might influence his or her motivation to commit to any organization. Thus, a specific experience or example of a company violating a psychological contract may shape future encounters with other corporations (Smith & Zarate, 1992). This can be particularly useful for understanding how commitment develops in entry-level workers. New employees may lack specific information about the organization they are joining and may rely on more general information, like attitudes (e.g., corporate distrust), to inform future beliefs and behavior (e.g., organizational commitment).
**Organizational Choice**

An individual’s trust in corporations may influence the type of organization he or she selects to work for or is attracted to as an employer. Organizational scholars suggest that people invest part of their identity in work, and that working for employers who share similar values is important for shaping this identity (Ashforth & Mael, 1998). Even though this applies to individual organizations, a global attitude toward corporations may motivate a person to seek occupations consistent with that attitude. A person high in corporate distrust, for example, might choose a non-profit organization to work for rather than a conventional for-profit company. Additionally, a person who distrusts corporations may screen out companies who fail to emphasize trustworthiness and moral direction in their mission statement or recruitment materials. Understanding this attitude is important for corporate recruiters because research suggests that when one is suspicious or distrusts a source, he or she is more skeptical about the information received from that source and tend to evaluate the information more critically (Hilton, Fein, & Miller, 1993; Schul, Mayo, & Burnstein, 2004). A recruiter pursuing potential employees may have a difficult time selling the organization they represent to a candidate who distrusts corporations. Thus, understanding these attitudes can help organizations by providing them with information they can use to help develop more effective recruiting strategies for people who foster these attitudes.

**Group Differences**

Understanding trust in corporations is also important for understanding demographic differences in attitudes toward organizations. Assessing group differences in beliefs can provide useful information to organizations interested in recruiting efforts aimed at certain demographic groups. Job applicant attraction research has shown that minorities and women value different
characteristics in potential employers than do White males (Freeman, 2003; Thomas & Wise, 1999). For example, women exhibit greater preferences for job attributes that stressed interpersonal relationships, while men report a greater preference for working under solitary conditions (Konrad, Ritchie, Lieb, & Corrigall, 2000). Minorities also report lower levels of attraction to organizations than Whites (Turban, 2001). Socioeconomic groups may also report differences in their beliefs about corporations. We might expect that people coming from lower income families who work low-skill, low-pay, blue-collar jobs for companies may have different attitudes toward corporations than white-collar workers that benefit from higher-pay jobs with greater advancement opportunities within a corporate system. Differences in these beliefs can inform organizations that these attitudes need to be changed or addressed for current and incoming employees of specific group membership.

*Trust and Important Life Events*

Assessing corporate distrust is useful because it can be used to track changes in beliefs over time and after significant life or world events. It would be interesting to explore if these beliefs are sensitive to important economic, political, and legal events that occur. Researchers investigating employee attitudes pre- and post-9/11 found little evidence of attitude change (Ryan, West, & Carr, 2003). However, the authors pointed out that we still know little about how external events affect employee attitudes. Furthermore, the antagonists in this historic event were affiliated with a political cause. An event involving an organization as the antagonist might be more salient for organizationally relevant attitudes. For example, assessing the extent that these beliefs changed after a person heard about the Enron accounting scandal might reveal a negative reaction to all companies.
Finally, tracking attitudes of people who experience important life events such as involuntary termination of employment can be very informative. Assessing attitudinal change in a individual’s trust of companies can be useful in understanding approaches to pre-employment tasks such as job search. Also, we know little about how employee attitudes change when new employment is found (Pugh, Skarlicki, & Passell, 2005). For example, a person who experienced a lay-off may generalize these negative feelings associated with being jobless to his or her trust in corporations in general. This information could help organizations target potential problems that incoming workers may face. This can provide guidance to organizations that want to educate and/or change the attitudes of incoming employees who may have had bad experiences in previous jobs. A measure of distrust in corporations can be a valuable tool for exploring these issues.

Defining Corporate Distrust

I define the construct of general distrust in corporations as the degree to which a person expects that corporations will engage in moral, ethical, or legal misconduct in the interest of forwarding their business objectives. This definition borrows from many of the different approaches to trust discussed previously. First, it suggests an expectation or anticipation of future behavior. This is consistent with many definitions of trust (e.g., Rotter, 1967), however it does not require specific experiences with companies to shape this belief. Consistent with an institutional approach, this belief is not always shaped by experiences with corporations (although it can be). Instead, outside information such as current events, media coverage, and word-of-mouth about corporations is more likely to inform an opinion in this regard. Also, distrust implies an expectation that institutional mechanisms, such as procedural or social norms are likely to be disregarded by corporations if these mechanisms interfere with business
objectives. Behavioral expectations can include companies breaking laws or having priorities inconsistent with the public such as unfair (but legal) labor practices.

In the current context, trust implies that people expect corporations to act in a manner that can be justified on ethical grounds and that this behavior will satisfy the best interests of the public. This reflects Hosmer’s (1995) conception that trusting another is not just a matter of expecting that person to abide by rules, it is also an expectation that he or she will adhere to ethical principles in their actions, and that these actions will take the other party’s interests into account. That is, corporations are expected to protect the rights and interests of other people, or society. This is also consistent with the argument that people need social and moral order in their interactions with others (Barber, 1983). Conversely, distrust should entail an expectation that corporations will not act in the best interests of individuals and society, and will disregard important ethical considerations in the process.

Nomological Net

Developing a theoretical model of corporate distrust requires that it be distinguished from other, related constructs. At face value, corporate distrust appears similar to cynicism because both constructs are anticipations one has about the credibility of a target’s behavior. That is, an individual who is highly cynical or distrustful will regard the actions of others as insincere or highly skeptical (Kanter & Mirvis, 1989). Both constructs reflect disappointments in the actions of others when one reports high levels in each, however, the constructs differ in their targets of reference. Cynicism is an attitude that a person has about the world in general (i.e., people, oneself, organizations, and institutions) and corporate distrust is an attitude a person has about a single referent group (i.e., corporations). An individual who is cynical in general will most likely direct that attitude to corporations, people, and organizations. Whereas an individual who
distrusts corporations might only distrust that institution but have a generally trusting disposition toward other people or organizations. Additionally, cynicism is characterized by unrealistically high expectations that result in disillusionment or disappointment in others (Kanter & Mirvis, 1989). The disappointment that causes distrust can occur because of a violation of reasonable expectations (e.g., a company breaking a law). Therefore I expect a moderate relationship between the two, but not one that is redundant.

Hypothesis 1: Responses to a measure of corporate distrust will share a moderate, positive correlation with responses to a measure of generalized cynicism.

Hypothesis 2: Responses to a measure of corporate distrust will share a moderate, positive correlation with responses to a measure of organizational cynicism.

The political orientation an individual holds may be an important predictor of attitudes toward corporations. Traditional political orientations such as liberalism and conservatism, for example, typically reflect different attitudes about economic models, capitalism, and government regulation of industry (Conover & Feldman, 1981; Jost, 2006). Liberal attitudes are associated with pro-social policy, regulating business, and tolerance, while conservative attitudes are associated with aiding business, social order, and maintaining the status quo (McClosky & Zaller, 1984). Because of the pro-social nature of liberal attitudes and their emphasis on regulating business (McClosky & Zaller, 1984), I would expect a positive relationship between liberal attitudes and distrust in corporations. Specifically, people reporting greater degrees of liberalism should also report greater distrust in corporations than those reporting conservative attitudes. However, I do not expect redundancy because political orientations are polarizing ideologies that are fairly stable over time (Evans, Heath, & Lalljee, 1996; Feldman, 1988) and I do not expect distrust in corporations to share the same attitude strength or persistence.
Hypothesis 3: Responses to a measure of corporate distrust will share a moderate, positive correlation with responses to a measure of liberal political orientation.

A person who reports high levels of corporate distrust will probably endorse the idea that corporations commit misconduct, but are rarely held accountable. In contrast, an individual who believes that the world is just typically adheres to the idea that people get what they deserve (Lerner & Miller, 1978). Research on the just world belief (JWB) suggests that a person endorsing a high JWB is likely to argue that merit and outcome are directly related (Furnham, 2003). A person high in JWB would endorse the idea that corporations have earned every merit they have received. An individual high on distrust in corporations is not likely to share this belief given that he or she would more likely endorse the idea that corporations receive some merits through manipulation, or even cheating of the economic system. Even though this suggests divergence of attitudes in people who endorse both scales, a negative correlation is likely to occur between the two.

The two constructs further diverge because JWB refers to situational outcomes unrelated to any particular person or party, but corporate distrust refers to the behavioral intentions and expected outcomes of a specific party, namely corporations. Stated another way, corporate distrust is an attribution one makes about the actions or intentions of a specific group, whereas JWB is a general philosophy about how the world works, regardless of any particular party. Another point of distinction between the constructs is that just world beliefs are thought to be an adaptive coping mechanism for dealing with the world (Dzuka & Dalbert, 2000; Lerner & Miller, 1978). People use JWB to reinforce their sense of harmony and fairness with the world, enabling them to cope with and explain positive and negative outcomes in their lives (Furnham, 2003). Corporate distrust, however, is not expected to help a person cope with the world, but
merely reflects an attitude about an institution that is shaped by experience and second-hand information. Therefore, I expect corporate distrust and JWB to correlate negatively with each other, but they will not be redundant.

*Hypothesis 4:* Responses to a measure of corporate distrust will share a small, negative correlation with responses to a measure of just world beliefs.

In order to properly distinguish corporate distrust from interpersonal trust the constructs should be compared. One may argue that corporate distrust may just represent a negative attitude of interpersonal trust. Both constructs assess trust, and each conceptualizes trust as an expectation that a party will adhere to certain guidelines or agreements (e.g., Rotter, 1967). Additionally, interpersonal trust and corporate distrust both share the distinction of being generalized attitudes of trust (e.g., Rotter, 1971). However, the constructs diverge in a couple of ways. Corporate distrust is aimed at an ambiguous, institutional entity, but interpersonal trust is an attitude directed at people. The construct of corporate distrust also distinguishes itself by using non-interpersonal definitions of trust such as institutional trust (Granovetter, 1985) and also morally directed definitions of trust (Hosmer, 1995) in its definition. Even though both constructs represent aspects of trust, these aspects are more distinct than similar. Therefore, I do not expect the constructs to correlate highly with each other.

*Hypothesis 5:* Responses to a measure of corporate distrust will share a small, negative correlation with responses to a measure of interpersonal trust.

A person’s attitudes about human nature are inferences we make about the interpersonal qualities of others (Wrightsman, 1964, 1992). One might argue that these same inferences are made when one harbors a distrustful attitude toward corporations, but this is not the case. Specifically, attitudes about human nature tend to be directed at innate qualities people exhibit
(Wrightsman, 1992), but corporate distrust is directed at intentional, directed behavior. That is, when a person distrusts corporation, he or she is harboring expectations that companies will commit misconduct because there are benefits to such action. Theoretical approaches to human nature, however, focus on innate qualities and lack an emphasis on intentions, rather bad behavior is a result of bad nature and not necessarily what outcomes may be motivating that behavior. Another key difference between the two is the use of different referents. Attitudes about human nature are directed at people in general and corporate distrust is directed at the corporate institution. This distinction is crucial in separating the constructs because corporations are an ambiguous and somewhat abstract category whereas people in general represent a broader, but more accessible group to distinguish from. Despite this distinction, a person lacking faith in human nature may make similar attributions to corporations because other people run corporations. Therefore, both constructs tap attributions we make toward certain groups, but they lack conceptual overlap and may only exhibit a slight relationship.

**Hypothesis 6:** Responses to a measure of corporate distrust will share a small, negative correlation with responses to a measure of beliefs that people are good in nature.

Because trust is considered an attitude, it is argued to operate under the influence of both cognitive and affective mechanisms (McAllister 1995). The influence of affect on trust behavior is present in brief states, such as an emotional response, or in states with longer durations such as moods (Dunn & Schweitzer, 2005). Even though interactional histories are believed to build affective trust between parties (McAllister, 1995), Dunn and Schweitzer (2005) found that affect is more likely to influence distrust when the source is unfamiliar. Therefore, people in negative affective states may be less likely to trust corporate sources because corporations are unfamiliar to the trustor. Research also suggests people who experience interpersonal problems such as
hostility and distress will demonstrate lower levels of trust (Gurtman, 1992). In both cases, one might argue that individuals demonstrating higher levels of negative affectivity may also exhibit lower levels of trust in corporations. Even though corporate distrust and negative affect may be related, the cognitive nature of distrust makes it distinct from negative affectivity. That is, the affective component of trust produces a relationship between distrust and affect, however because trust also has a cognitive component, it will allow distrust to remain distinct from negative affectivity. This may be especially true because corporations are a distant, and fairly ambiguous entity to a lot of people, leading them to rely more heavily on their cognitive evaluations.

**Hypothesis 7:** Responses to a measure of corporate distrust will share a small, positive correlation with responses to a measure of negative affect.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, the purpose of the current study is to develop an instrument to assess attitudes of distrust people have about corporations. Specifically, the measure will assess the expectations an individual has that corporations will engage in moral, ethical, or legal misconduct in the interest of forwarding their business interests. I will develop this measure using the classical test theory approach to construct validation. First, I will describe scale development, including initial pilot data collected for the measure and item-reduction procedures used. Second, I will propose a study to examine the factor structure of the measure and test the nomological validity of the construct. Table 1 summarizes the hypotheses that emerge from the nomological net. Results in favor of the predicted hypotheses will provide initial support for the construct validity of the corporate distrust measure.
CHAPTER II. PREVIOUS SCALE DEVELOPMENT AND PILOT STUDY

Method and Results

*Initial Item Development*

Initial item development was conducted by writing a pool of items that tap the construct domain of corporate distrust. Items were brief, one-sentence statements, written at a 6th grade reading level. The items were written for a likert-response format tapping agreement with statements about the trustworthiness of corporations. Respondents were expected to indicate the extent of their agreement with the statements. Agreement was measured using a 5-point scale, ranging from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (5). The initial item writing process resulted in a pool of 13 items.

*Item Reduction*

Seven graduate students and one faculty member evaluated the initial item pool according to each item’s correspondence with the construct definition. The group discussed the initial items and a consensus was reached about items that did not appear content valid. The pool of items was reduced to ten items using this process. The final items are presented in Appendix A.

*Pilot Study*

The CDS items were piloted using a sample of 32 undergraduate students in return for course credit. Internal consistency analysis resulted in coefficient alpha of .92 with item-total correlations ranging from .55 to .86. No items were removed because their deletion would have a negligible change on internal consistency. The scale was evaluated for themes within the corporate distrust construct that may have not received adequate coverage, such as “employee treatment.” An additional three items were created to be included in the follow-up study (See Appendix A).
CHAPTER III. CURRENT STUDY: SCALE VALIDATION

The purpose of this study was to provide support for the construct validity of inferences from scores on the CDS. Because the pilot study had an inadequate sample size to provide evidence of a factor structure, principal axis extraction was conducted on the new data to evaluate the factor structure of the instrument (Hinkin, 1995). Four items were added to the previous scale to increase the breadth of the construct. Additionally, construct validity evidence was obtained by testing the convergent and discriminant validity of the nomological net. That is, the extent to which the CDS is related to measures of similar constructs, and is un-related to measures of constructs that have been hypothesized to be un-related.

Method

Sample

Eight hundred people were recruited via email to participate in the current study. A total of 183 (22.8%) participants responded, of which 161 total participant scores were retained after data cleaning. Data cleaning guidelines were followed to reduce error in the results (Smith, Budzeika, Edwards, Johnson, & Bearse, 1986). Data were inspected for unusually homogenous responses and large blocks of missing scores. If participants reported the same response scores across measures or if they were missing large amounts of responses, their scores were removed from the analysis.

The sample was recruited from a pool of individuals provided by the Study Response Project (SRP; Stanton & Weiss, 2002). The SRP is a non-profit service that recruits individuals by email that have volunteered to participate in web-based research. The most recent update of the SRP database shows 95,574 individuals have registered to participate in the service (August 10, 2005). The SRP sent emails to potential participants with links to the study survey. The
potential recruits were informed that the study was voluntary and that we were conducting research to “understand people’s attitudes about organizations and people.” The identity of the participants remained anonymous, as they only entered their StudyResponse ID as an identifier. This ID only provided demographic information and in no way allowed personal identification of the participants. All participants in the study were entered into lotteries for gift certificates from online retailers as incentives for participation.

The mean participant age was 41.37 years (SD = 13.46), nearly half were male (47.8%), and most were Caucasian (87.4%). Participants who obtained 4-year degrees or higher represented 39.1% of the sample, while 35.4% obtained a high school or GED equivalent degree. Finally, more than half of the respondents reported being employed (53.6%), while 24.6% were unemployed, 8.7% were students, and 13% reported being retired. The average job tenure reported was 8.1 years for the sample (those not currently employed used their last job as a referent). All participants were U.S. residents and English speaking. Table 2 provides a comprehensive summary of the relevant demographic information.

**Procedure**

A questionnaire containing all of the instruments was constructed and posted as an online survey. Prior to completing the survey, participants were asked to read and agree to informed consent. Participants were then asked to complete the online survey materials. In addition, participants were asked to include demographic information such as age, sex, race, education level, and job tenure.

**Measures**

**Cynicism.** General cynicism toward others was measured using the Cynicism subscale of the Measures of Life Attitudes scale (Kanter & Mirvis, 1989; See Appendix B). The
participants were asked to respond to each item on the 7-item measure. The response format was a five-point scale ranging from *Strongly Disagree* (1) to *Strongly Agree* (5). A higher score on this measure means a person was not generally cynical about the values of others.

*Interpersonal trust.* Perceived trustworthiness of people in general was assessed using the *Interpersonal Trust Scale* (Rotter, 1967; See Appendix C). The participants were asked to respond to each item on the 15-item measure. The response format was a five-point scale ranging from *Strongly Disagree* (1) to *Strongly Agree* (5). A higher score on this measure means a person perceived others as generally trustworthy.

*Human nature.* Beliefs about how good people are in general was assessed using the *Beliefs That People Are Conventionally Good* revised subscale of the *Philosophy of Human Nature Scale* (Wrightsman, 1992; See Appendix D). The participants were asked to respond to each item on this 12-item subscale. The response format was a five-point scale ranging from *Strongly Disagree* (1) to *Strongly Agree* (5). A high score on this measure indicated a belief that people are good in nature.

*Political attitudes.* Assessing the degree to which a person endorses a liberal or conservative attitude was assessed using the *Conservatism-Liberalism Scale* (Mehrabian, 1996; See Appendix E). The participants were asked to respond to each item on the 7-item measure. The response format was a five-point scale ranging from *Strongly Disagree* (1) to *Strongly Agree* (5). A higher score on this measure means a person demonstrated a more politically conservative orientation.

*Just world beliefs.* General perceptions that the world is a just place was assessed using the *General Belief in a Just World* scale (Dalbert, 1999; See Appendix F). The participants were asked to respond to each item on the six-item measure. The response format was a five-
point scale ranging from *Strongly Disagree* (1) to *Strongly Agree* (5). A higher score on this measure means a person believed the world is generally just and people tend to get what they deserve.

*Organizational cynicism.* Cynicism toward the organization for whom one works for was assessed using the Organizational Cynicism Scale (Pugh, Skarlicki, & Passell, 2003; See Appendix G). The participants were asked to respond to each item on the five-item measure. The response format was a five-point scale ranging from *Strongly Disagree* (1) to *Strongly Agree* (5). A higher score on this measure indicated that a person had increased feelings of cynicism towards their employer.

*Affective disposition.* Dispositional affect was assessed using the *Positive and Negative Affect Schedule* (Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988; See Appendix H). The PANAS is a two-factor measure that has ten items representing a negative affect factor and ten items representing a positive affect factor. The participants were asked to respond to each item on the twenty-item measure that lists single emotions. The response format was a five-point scale ranging from *Very Slightly or Not At All* (1) to *Extremely* (5) and participants were asked to indicate the strength to which they feel that particular emotion in general. A higher score on negative affect items means a person exhibited negative emotions in general, while a higher score on positive affect items means a person exhibited positive emotions in general.

**Results**

*Factor Analysis*

The corporate distrust scores were entered into an exploratory factor analysis using a principal axis extraction. Examination of the scree plot suggested a single factor model is appropriate for the corporate distrust measure. Additionally, factor analysis revealed only one
factor with an eigenvalue greater than one. This factor accounted for 64.32% of the variance among the scores.

Many researchers argue that using eigenvalues and the scree test in factor retention decisions are not optimal heuristics because their use results in overestimations of the number of factors to retain (see Hayton, Allen, & Scarpello, 2004, for a review). On the other hand, parallel analysis (Horn, 1965) is widely considered among the most accurate methods to aid in factor retention decisions (e.g., Costello & Osborne, 2005; Reise, Waller, & Comrey, 2000; Silverstein, 1987; Zwick & Velicer, 1986). Parallel analysis is conducted by generating random sample data using the same number of respondents and same number of variables as the real data to produce eigenvalues that correspond to factors. Factors that possess eigenvalues exceeding those of the randomly generated data are retained. A parallel analysis was conducted on the current data to confirm and supplement the use of the scree test and eigenvalue criterion. A comparison of the randomly created eigenvalues to the sample eigenvalues resulted in the retention of a single factor as well, providing further evidence for a unidimensional scale.

**Reliability Analysis**

Internal consistency of the scores of the corporate distrust measure was estimated using coefficient alpha. Results suggest a high internal consistency among the item scores of the scale ($\alpha = .95$; See Table 3). Further assessment revealed that the internal consistency of the scores would not increase if any of the corporate distrust items were removed from the analysis. Corrected item-total correlations of the item scores were high and ranged from .70 to .82 (see Table 3). Internal consistency of scores on the other scales used in this study ranged from .76 to .95 (see Table 4).
Validity Analysis

The relationship between the corporate distrust measure and the other measures was evaluated in order to further assess the nomological validity evidence for the corporate distrust scores. Table 4 displays the direction and magnitudes of the relationships among the corporate distrust scores and the scores from the other measures. The traditional rules of thumb about correlational magnitudes were used as criteria for hypothesis testing (Cohen, 1988). Specifically, correlations of .50 and above are considered large in magnitude, correlations of .30 to .49 are considered moderate in magnitude, and correlations below .29 are considered small in magnitude. Table 1 provides a summary of the predictions and findings of the hypotheses tested.

Consistent with Hypothesis 1, individuals reporting distrust in corporations also tended to report a cynical attitude about people in general \((r = .45, p < .01)\). Results also support Hypothesis 2, suggesting that individuals who distrust corporations were also cynical toward the actions and intentions of their own organizations \((r = .41, p < .01)\). Similarly, Hypothesis 7 was fully supported, as participants who reported an increased tendency to experience negative moods tended to distrust corporations as well \((r = .23, p < .01)\).

Hypotheses three through six all received partial support when all of the relationships fell within the expected direction but failed to reach the magnitudes hypothesized. Consistent with Hypothesis 3, corporate distrust correlated positively with liberal attitudes, however the magnitude of this relationship was lower than expected \((r = .25; p < .01)\). The magnitude of the relationship in Hypothesis 4 was higher than expected when respondents who endorsed just world beliefs were less likely to report distrust of corporations \((r = -.37, p < .01)\). The magnitude of the relationship in Hypothesis 5 was also stronger than expected when individuals reporting distrust of corporations also reported distrust of people in general \((r = -.51, p < .01)\). This
relationship was the highest magnitude of any other construct and corporate distrust, with the scores on one measure accounting for 25% of the variance in the other. Finally, the magnitude of the relationship in Hypothesis 6 was stronger than hypothesized when individuals who reported greater distrust in corporations also were also more likely to endorse negative views about the good intentions of others in general ($r = -.36, p < .01$).

**Demographic Analysis**

An exploratory analysis of the sample demographics was conducted to detect group differences among scores on the corporate distrust measure and to assess the predictive ability of the sample characteristics. No differences were discovered between the demographic groups and none of the sample characteristics correlated with scores on the corporate distrust measure. Males and females did not differ significantly on their responses to the corporate distrust measure ($t(159) = 1.27, p = .21, d = .20$). Because of the small number of minority respondents, minorities were collapsed into a single group and compared to Caucasians. Ethnic minorities and Caucasians did not differ significantly on their responses to the corporate distrust measure ($t(141) = .88, p = .38, d = .23$). Respondent age did not correlate significantly with scores on the corporate distrust measure ($r = .05, p = .56$). A respondent’s tenure at current job did not correlate significantly with his or her scores on the corporate distrust measure ($r = -.03, p = .76$). Finally, there were no significant differences detected among different levels of employment status, educational background, and occupational type on responses to the corporate distrust measure.

**Discussion**

**Notable Findings**
The purpose of this study was to develop a measure of corporate distrust and provide reliability and validity evidence for its application as an attitude measure. An analysis of the psychometric properties of the data provided initial support toward this purpose. As expected, exploratory factor analysis suggested that a single factor solution was appropriate for the data. Reliability analysis of responses to the corporate distrust measure yielded high internal consistency among the scores. Standard deviation scores were consistent with the other constructs being measured at the scale level.

Evidence for the nomological validity of the corporate distrust scale was mostly supportive of the research hypotheses. Interpersonal trust demonstrated a strong, negative correlation with corporate distrust. The magnitude of the relationship was higher than expected, but not high enough to imply redundancy. Rather, it suggests that the components of trust used in the construct definition were appropriately defined. Both cynicism measures demonstrated positive, moderate correlations with the corporate distrust measure. Moderate correlations between the measures of cynicism and corporate distrust were expected because definitions of cynicism and trust tend to overlap. Definitions of distrust and cynicism often include negative evaluations of and expectations of the future actions of others and often share similar antecedents (Stanley, Meyer, & Topolnytsky, 2005).

The negative correlation between just world beliefs, philosophies of human nature, and corporate distrust were in the expected direction (i.e., negative), however the magnitude of the relationships were larger than anticipated (i.e., moderate). These constructs share pessimistic attitudes about the intentions of others and the resulting outcomes of their behavior. The corporate distrust construct is similar because individuals distrust corporations to act in the
interest of others and assume that corporations will not receive the appropriate justice for their actions.

Liberalism had a smaller correlation with corporate distrust than expected, however it was in the predicted direction. The pro-social, pro-regulation attitudes that are normally associated with liberalism probably play a role in the relationship with corporate distrust but may not be as strongly related as suspected. Negative affect demonstrated a small correlation with corporate distrust in the direction hypothesized, suggesting that emotional elements of negative disposition are somewhat related to emotional elements of corporate distrust. Despite the unexpected differences in magnitude between the variables, the direction of the relationships and the lack of exceedingly high correlations among the constructs supports the nomological validity of the corporate distrust construct.

The corporate distrust measure received support when group and demographic differences were not detected among the corporate distrust scores. The absence of systematic differences in scores between these groups lends support to the generalizability and lack of bias of the measure. Differences in corporate distrust scores were not found between ethnic minorities and Whites. I did not find significant differences between racial groups, although minorities were underrepresented in the sample. A reason minorities were underrepresented is that they might be more reluctant to participate in web-based surveys. A recent study by Cranford and colleagues (2008) suggested that minorities tend to demonstrate a lower response rate to web-based surveys compared to Caucasians. Future scale development should focus on testing the measure using a more representative minority sample.

The evidence that male and female attitudes did not significantly differ is also encouraging. The near-even ratio of males to females and the lack of systematic differences
between the two groups provided further support for the generalizability of the measure. Despite the lack of evidence for gender as a main effect, the measure may help detect gender effects when interacting with other variables. Gender may act as a moderator with other variables to explain group differences such as occupation type or education level. For example, women working at a corporate office where they may face inequity in terms of income and promotional opportunities may have a different attitude toward corporations than men. However, this difference may disappear with people who are unemployed because the situation is more equitable.

Finally, the analysis of the data failed to produce any significant background differences among scores on the corporate distrust measure. Personal characteristics such as educational background and employment status were not predictive of scores on the corporate distrust measure. This gives further support for the strength of the corporate distrust measure. Future research should investigate if other background differences explain differences on scores of the measure. For example, a stratified group of white-collar and blue-collar workers might demonstrate differences in their expression of corporate distrust because of their differing distances from the corporate power structure.

Limitations

A shortcoming of this study is that it relies only on cross-sectional, self-report data. The use of distinct methods of data collection is usually recommended to help reduce common method variance in the data (Campbell & Fiske, 1959). Unique variance related to the method may artificially inflate the results of the data. The higher than expected magnitudes among the scores on the different scales could be explained by the homogenous response set of the questionnaires. When there is a shared bias among the variables, such as social desirability, it is
possible to add systematic variance to the correlations, thus leading to artificially inflated relationships. If common method variance explained these scores, however then we would expect to see all the scale scores correlate with each other (Spector, 2006). There are a number of non-significant, near-zero correlations between the scores on some of the scales, so the argument for common-method variance might be overstated (see Table 4).

The response rate for this study (i.e., 22.8%) fell within the typical range that StudyResponse reports for its users (i.e., 10-30%), however this does fall short of some previous research on response rates for internet-based surveys (Cook, Heath, & Thompson, 2000). Generalizations about the data should be made with caution because respondents to web-based surveys may have unique characteristics or interests that distinguish them from the general population. My sample, however, was diverse in terms of age, gender, occupation, and education level suggesting applicability of the scale to the general population. Future research on the construct should include non-internet samples to allow greater generalizability of the data.

**Future Research Directions**

Future research should investigate how attitudes about this construct change over time. The use of longitudinal measures can answer these questions while also reducing common method variance. The corporate distrust measure is potentially useful to track changes in beliefs resulting from life changes. Changes in world events such as reports of corporate fraud or life events such as involuntary termination can be very informative to organizations. Organizations that understand the attitudes of layoff victims can make more effective strategic decisions about the image they wish to convey to prospective employees who had similar experiences.

Identifying possible interventions for people demonstrating high corporate distrust can be useful in restoring the trust between an individual and the corporate community. For example, a
number or organizations or industries involved in mass layoffs may be forced to deal with trust-related problems resulting from their actions or the actions of others. It will be important for organizations to identify these problems and develop solutions for restoring public trust. A number of recent studies have investigated different strategies companies can use to help restore violated trust (Nakayach & Watabe, 2005; Schweitzer, Hershey, & Bradlow, 2006; Van Hoye & Lievens, 2005). Understanding how these strategies influence general perceptions of corporate trustworthiness can help guide intervention efforts for companies or industries experiencing morale and/or public relations problems.

Even though the psychometric properties of the corporate measure appear sound, the true value of a psychological tool is its ability to predict important psychological outcomes. Future research on the criterion-related and incremental validity of the scores of this scale needs to be addressed. Studies on criterion-related validity should be conducted so we can understand what attitudes and behaviors this scale predicts. These variables could include work outcomes such as counterproductive work behaviors, or attitudes toward organizations such as organizational commitment and attraction. Understanding how a low score on this measure can relate to an attitude like organizational commitment could provide valuable information to an organization interested in effecting attitude change among its employees. The incremental validity of the scores on the corporate distrust measure should also be assessed in order to secure evidence that the measure can offer unique predictive utility beyond that of related measures. The ability of the corporate distrust measure to provide predictive utility beyond that of measures of organizational trust or organization cynicism, for example, is necessary for it to be a unique, and useful psychological tool.
References


Dalbert, C. (1999). The world is more just for me than generally; About the Personal Belief in a Just World scale’s validity. *Social Justice Research, 12*, 79-98.


Table 1

*Proposed relationships between corporate distrust and other constructs*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Predictions</th>
<th>Findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Cynicism</td>
<td>positive</td>
<td>moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal Trust</td>
<td>negative</td>
<td>small</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Nature</td>
<td>negative</td>
<td>small</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberalism</td>
<td>positive</td>
<td>moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belief in a Just World</td>
<td>negative</td>
<td>small</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Cynicism</td>
<td>positive</td>
<td>moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative Affect</td>
<td>positive</td>
<td>small</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. *Small = r < .30; Moderate = r > .29 < .50; Large = r > .50.*

Predictions about directionality were all supported; only magnitude differed.
### Table 2

**Summary of participant demographics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sex (n = 161)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>47.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>52.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Race (n = 143)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>87.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African-American</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age (n = 160)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-29</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>22.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>26.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-59</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 or older</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>11.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Educational Level (n = 161)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School/GED</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>35.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate's or 2-year degree</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>25.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor's or 4-year degree</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>27.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master's/Professional degree or higher</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>11.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employment Status (n = 138)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>53.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed/Disabled</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>24.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3

*Item-level descriptive statistics, communalities, and factor loadings of the Corporate Distrust Scale*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>r</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Communalities</th>
<th>Factor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corporations are not respectful of laws.</td>
<td>.70</td>
<td>3.28</td>
<td>0.99</td>
<td>.52</td>
<td>.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporations do not accept accountability for their actions.</td>
<td>.74</td>
<td>3.51</td>
<td>0.99</td>
<td>.57</td>
<td>.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People who run corporations will lie if doing so will increase company profits.</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td>3.81</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporations do not care about acting ethically.</td>
<td>.76</td>
<td>3.37</td>
<td>0.90</td>
<td>.61</td>
<td>.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporations will break laws if they can make more money from it.</td>
<td>.81</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>.69</td>
<td>.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporations put their own interests above the publicís interests.</td>
<td>.73</td>
<td>3.84</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>.57</td>
<td>.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporations are driven by greed.</td>
<td>.80</td>
<td>3.71</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporations care only about money.</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td>3.62</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporations want power at any cost.</td>
<td>.82</td>
<td>3.47</td>
<td>0.99</td>
<td>.71</td>
<td>.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporations take a lot more than they give.</td>
<td>.72</td>
<td>3.59</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td>.54</td>
<td>.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporations intentionally deceive the public.</td>
<td>.74</td>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td>.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporations do not consider the needs of their employees when making business decisions.</td>
<td>.73</td>
<td>3.45</td>
<td>0.97</td>
<td>.57</td>
<td>.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporations exploit their workers.</td>
<td>.78</td>
<td>3.37</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>.64</td>
<td>.80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Alpha = .95*
Table 4  
**Descriptive Statistics and Zero-Order Correlations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. CDS</td>
<td>3.54</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>.95</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. GCS</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>.45**</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. ITS</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>0.41</td>
<td>-.51**</td>
<td>-.43**</td>
<td>.76</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. HNS</td>
<td>3.02</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>-.36**</td>
<td>-.23**</td>
<td>.51**</td>
<td>.91</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. CLS</td>
<td>2.91</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>.25**</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>.84</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. BJW</td>
<td>3.01</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>-.37**</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>.38**</td>
<td>.55**</td>
<td>-.21**</td>
<td>.81</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. OCS</td>
<td>2.95</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td>.41**</td>
<td>.30**</td>
<td>.21**</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>.88</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. NAS</td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td>0.66</td>
<td>.23**</td>
<td>.26**</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>.38**</td>
<td>.95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.** **p < .01  
CDS = Corporate Distrust Scale; GCS = General Cynicism Scale; ITS = Interpersonal Trust Scale; HNS = Human Nature Scale; CLS = Conservatism-Liberalism Scale; BJW = Belief in a Just World Scale; OCS = Organizational Cynicism Scale; NAS = Negative Affect Schedule
Appendix A

Corporate Distrust Scale

*Please choose the answer that best describes your present agreement or disagreement with each statement using the following scale:*

**Strongly disagree = 1**

**Disagree = 2**

**Neither agree or disagree = 3**

**Agree = 4**

**Strongly agree = 5**

1. Corporations are not respectful of laws.
2. Corporations do not accept accountability for their actions.
3. People who run corporations will lie if doing so will increase company profits.
5. Corporations will break laws if they can make more money from it.
6. Corporations put their own interests above the public’s interests.
7. Corporations are driven by greed.
8. Corporations care only about money.
9. Corporations want power at any cost.
10. Corporations *take* a lot more than they *give*.
11. Corporations intentionally deceive the public.*
12. Corporations do not consider the needs of their employees when making business decisions.*
13. Corporations exploit their workers.*

*Note.* * = Items added after initial pilot data. All items are scored in the same direction.
Appendix B

Measures of Life Attitudes Scale

Cynicism Subscale

*Please choose the answer that best describes your present agreement or disagreement with each statement using the following scale:*

**Strongly disagree = 1**

**Disagree = 2**

**Neither agree or disagree = 3**

**Agree = 4**

**Strongly agree = 5**

1. People pretend to care more than they do
2. Most people will tell lies if they gain by it
3. An unselfish person is taken advantage of
4. Most people are not honest by nature
5. No ethical standards if money is at stake
6. Most people dislike putting themselves out for others
7. Most people are just out for themselves
Appendix C

Interpersonal Trust Scale

*Please choose the answer that best describes your present agreement or disagreement with each statement using the following scale:*

**Strongly disagree = 1**

**Disagree = 2**

**Neither agree or disagree = 3**

**Agree = 4**

**Strongly agree = 5**

1. Hypocrisy is on the increase in our society
2. In dealing with strangers one is better off to be cautious until they have provided evidence that they are trustworthy
3. Fear of social disgrace or punishment rather than conscience prevents most people from breaking the law
4. Parents can usually be relied upon to keep their promises
5. Using the Honor System of *not* having a teacher present during exams would probably result in increased cheating
6. Most people can be counted on to do what they say they will
7. It is safe to believe that in spite of what people say, most people are primarily interested in their own welfare
8. Most people would be horrified if they knew how much news the public hears and sees is distorted
9. Most elected officials are really sincere in their campaign promises
10. Most experts can be relied upon to tell the truth about the limits of their knowledge

11. In these competitive times one has to be alert or someone is likely to take advantage of you

12. Most salesmen are honest in describing their products

13. Most students in school would not cheat even if they were sure of getting away with it

14. Most repairmen will not overcharge even if they think you are ignorant of their specialty

15. If we really knew what was going on in international politics, the public would have more reason to be frightened than they now seem to be
Appendix D

Philosophy of Human Nature Scale

Beliefs that People are Conventionally Good Subscale

*Indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement by checking the appropriate number:*

**Strongly disagree = 1**

**Disagree = 2**

**Neither agree or disagree = 3**

**Agree = 4**

**Strongly agree = 5**

1. Most people try to apply the Golden Rule, even in today’s complex society.

2. Most people do not hesitate to go out of their way to help someone in trouble.

3. Most people will act as “Good Samaritans” if given the opportunity.

4. “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you” is a motto that most people follow.

5. Most people would stop and help a person whose car was disabled.

6. In a local or national election, most people select a candidate rationally and logically.

7. People usually tell the truth, even when they know they would be better off by lying.

8. The average person will stick to his opinion if he thinks he’s right, even if others disagree.

9. It is achievement, rather than popularity with others, that gets you ahead nowadays.

10. The typical person is sincerely concerned about the problems of others.

11. Most people will speak out for what they believe in.

12. Most people have the courage of their convictions.
Appendix E

Conservatism – Liberalism Scale

*Please choose the answer that best describes your present agreement or disagreement with each statement using the following scale:*

**Strongly disagree = 1**

**Disagree = 2**

**Neither agree or disagree = 3**

**Agree = 4**

**Strongly agree = 5**

1. I am politically more liberal than conservative
2. In any election, given a choice between a Republican and a Democratic candidate, I will select the Republican over the Democrat.
3. Communism has been proven to be a failed political ideology.
4. I cannot see myself ever voting to elect conservative candidates.
5. The major national media are too left-wing for my taste.
6. Socialism has many advantages over capitalism.
7. On balance, I lean politically more to the left than to the right.
Appendix F

General Belief in a Just World Scale

*Please choose the answer that best describes your present agreement or disagreement with each statement using the following scale:*

**Strongly disagree = 1**

**Disagree = 2**

**Neither agree or disagree = 3**

**Agree = 4**

**Strongly agree = 5**

1. I think basically the world is a just place.
2. I believe that, by and large, people get what they deserve.
3. I am confident that justice always prevails over injustice.
4. I am convinced that in the long run people will be compensated for injustices.
5. I firmly believe that injustices in all areas of life (e.g., professional, family, politics) are the exception rather than the rule.
6. I think people try to be fair when making important decisions.
Appendix G

Organizational Cynicism Scale

Please choose the answer that best describes your present agreement or disagreement with each statement using the following scale:

Strongly disagree = 1
Disagree = 2
Neither agree or disagree = 3
Agree = 4
Strongly agree = 5

1. I believe that my company says one thing and does another.
2. My company’s policies, goals, and practices seem to have little in common.
3. When my company says it’s going to do something, I wonder if it will really happen.
4. My company expects one thing of its employees, but rewards another.
5. I see little similarity between what my company says it will do and what it actually does.
Appendix H

Positive and Negative Affect Schedule

This scale consists of a number of words that describe different feelings and emotions. Read each item and then mark the appropriate answer in the space next to the word. Indicate to what extent you generally feel this way, that is, how you feel on average. Use the following scale to record your answers.

Very slightly or not at all = 1

A little = 2

Moderately = 3

Quite a bit = 4

Extremely = 5

___interested               ___irritable
___distressed              ___alert
___excited                 ___ashamed
___upset                   ___inspired
___strong                  ___nervous
___guilty                  ___determined
___scared                  ___attentive
___hostile                 ___jittery
___enthusiastic            ___active
___proud                   ___afraid