

# The Role of Cognitive and Affective Trust on Promoting Unethical Pro-Organizational Behavior

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## Abstract

Previous researches have largely focused on the benefit of trust; even though some of the trust may cause the risks from misattributed trust. This study attempts to understand and verify whether psychological aspects of trust play an important role in promoting unethical behaviors that intend to benefit the organization. The results show that a high degree of cognitive trust is positively and not significantly related to the intention of unethical pro-organizational behavior. Cognitive trust is a rational inference about the supervisors' behavior under ability and integrity. Therefore, disputing the trust confidence in supervisor's ability and integrity that is a rejection of unethical pro-organizational behavior. However, affective trust would promote more unethical pro-organization behavior. Our findings reveal that building affective trust would have great emotional attachment on supervisor/organization and a lack of defensiveness against on unethical pro-organizational behavior compared to cognitive trust. In other words, when trust lock-in in the relationships of employee-supervisor authority, the use of social exchanges and deep bonds of affective indebtedness may create the dark side of trust and then support unethical pro-organizational behavior.

## Keywords

Social Exchange Theory, Cognitive Trust, Affective Trust, Misattributed Trust Risk, Unethical Pro-Organization Behavior

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## 1. Introduction

Trust can reduce the uncertainty in an unfamiliar environment and enables many

positive outcomes including cooperation (e.g., Jones & George, 1998; McAllister, 1995; Chen, Waseen, Xia, Tran, Li, & Yao, 2021), effective leadership (e.g., Boies, Fiset, & Gill, 2015; Islam, Furuoka, & Idris, 2021), and coordinated organizational behavior (e.g., Thompson, 2018; McEvily, Perrone, & Zaheer, 2003). However, excessive trust might become the target of exploitation by people who either opportunistically or strategically take advantage of trust targets (Schoorman, Wood, & Breuer, 2015; Yip & Schweitaer, 2015). The substantial literature has not only documented the benefits of trust, but has also conceptualized that trust can enable exploitation and predation (Skinner, Dietz, & Weibel, 2014; Yip & Schweitaer, 2015). When trust rise up the dark side, the risks from misattributed trust may enable to cause exploitation (Cropanzano, Anthony, Daniels, & Hall, 2017; Skinner, et al., 2014) and amoral manipulation (Dahling et al., 2009; Greenbaum, Hill, & Mawritz, 2017).

The ethical decision making process within organizations is influenced both by individual and organizational factors. This is particularly true for the intentions behind decisions that produce ethical or unethical behavior (Dennerlein & Kirkman, 2022). In organizations, few individuals have the freedom to make ethical decisions independent of organizational pressures, because people must depend on other in various ways to accomplish their personal and organizational goals (Lee, Schwarz, Newman, & Legood, 2017). Umphress et al. (2010) found that highly identified employees who hold strong reciprocity belief may conduct unethical pro-organizational behavior. For examples, employees are asked to make knowingly selling an inferior product, deceiving a customer in order to make a sale for the company, or falsifying reports to make the organization appear to be more financially viable than it truly is. All of these behaviors are conducted by employees to disregard standards of morality and committed with the purpose of helping the organization achieve its goals (Lee et al., 2017; Thompson, 2018; Umphress & Bingham, 2011). Viewing from social exchange theory, if one party provides a benefit, the other party is motivated to reciprocate by providing a benefit in return (Blau, 1964). Therefore, extending trust engenders reciprocity, when employees trust supervisor/organization, they become more likely to behave in an unethical manner and to benefit supervisor/organization in return. Umphress et al. (2010) demonstrated that individuals or organizations seem to exploit positive reciprocal relationship and organizational identification to ask employees to cooperate to benefit their organization. Therefore, trust risk driven from strong reciprocity belief is getting bigger in the process of ethical judgment (Skinner et al., 2014). Previous research has thoroughly investigated how positive social exchange relationships motivate ethical acts such as job performance and extra-role behavior. To our knowledge, however, only a few conceptual models are presented in the organizational literature illustrating how social exchange relationships and trust motivate unethical behaviors intended to benefit the organization.

Trust is essential for stable working relationships and organizational performance. We found previous researches have largely focused on the benefit of

trust; even though some of the trust may cause the risks from misattributed trust (Xu & Wang, 2020). We believe that the link between trust relationship and unethical pro-organizational behavior have largely neglected. Lewicki et al. (2006) suggest both cognitive and affective elements need to be considered together on trust development process. This study attempts to understand and verify whether psychological aspects of trust play important role on unethical pro-organizational behaviors. Using previous studies as the foundational proposition (Chen et al., 2021; Yip & Schweitaer, 2015), we propose both cognitive and affective elements need to be considered together on trust development lifecycle. It is important to note that many of the authors did not explicitly specify the dimensionality of trust or how trust promotes unethical pro-organizational behaviors over time. Therefore, this study attempts to examine whether cognitive and affective trust play important roles on promoting unethical pro-organizational behaviors.

## 2. Theory and Hypotheses Development

The social exchange theory argues that trust is vital to the development and deepening of exchange relationships, since it reduces uncertainty about a partner's reciprocation, while fostering a sense of obligation (Blau, 1964). Morgan and Hunt (1994) propose that trust comes from the reliability of exchange partners, with no opportunistic behavior present between the partners. Lewis and Weigert (1985) explained sociological perspective of trust as a property of collective units rather than of isolated individuals. This means that trust can be understood primarily in relation to a social relationship and not alone as a characteristic of an individual. From the psychological aspect, trust is the willingness to accept vulnerability and positive expectations regarding the intentions, motivations, and behavior of another party (Lewicki et al., 2006; Mayer et al., 1995; McAllister, 1995; Rousseau et al., 1998). Mayer et al. (1995) define trust 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". They presume that people place greater trust in those they assess to have high ability, benevolence, and integrity (Mayer et al., 1995). Summarized above, trust brings together two essential concepts: vulnerability and positive expectations. Trust may include various meaning, nevertheless, all the terms share the same idea that trust is a feeling of security based on the belief that one party's behavior is guide and motivated by the favorable and positive intention toward the other party (Lewicki et al., 2006).

There are at least three approaches to defining and conceptualizing trust in the extant literature: 1) trust as unidimensional confident, positive expectations (Blau, 1964); 2) trust as multidimensional confident, positive expectations (e.g., Lewicki & Bunker, 1996; Lewis & Weigert, 1985; McAllister, 1995); and 3) trust as the willingness to be vulnerable (e.g., Mayer et al., 1995; Rousseau et al., 1998).

According to McAllister (1995), there exist two dimensions of trust: the cognitive and the affective dimension. Lewicki and Bunker (1996) drew a similar distinction in their discussion of identification-based trust and knowledge-based trust. The affect-based trust reflects a confidence rooted in emotional investments, expressions of genuine care and concern, and an understanding of reciprocated sentiments, whereas cognition-based trust reflects a confidence rooted in someone's track record and reputation for dependability, reliability, and professionalism. Applying Mayer et al.'s (1995) definition of trust, we summarize trustworthiness of supervisor attribute into three factors: ability, integrity, and benevolence. Ability means that supervisors possess a group of skills, competencies, and characteristics in some specific domain. Integrity implies that an employee believes his/her supervisor will adhere to a set of principles that the employee finds acceptable. Benevolence is the extent to which an employee believes that his/her supervisor will do good to another party that is the perception of a positive orientation of the trustee toward the trustor. Cognitive trust captures the beliefs and expectations that a trustee will be competent and reliable (McAllister, 1995). Both ability and integrity belong to the cognitive dimension of trust. Benevolence, on the other hand, belongs to the affective dimension of trust. Affective trust reflects beliefs about the supervisor's care and concern for the employee (McAllister, 1995).

### 2.1. Cognitive and Affective Trust

Lewis and Weigert (1985) explained cognitive trust as being based on cognitive process; this means that an individual cognitively chooses whom to trust based on rational assessment of how trustworthy the person or the institution is. Cognitive trust reflects a customer's confidence or willingness to rely on another party's competence and reliability (Moorman et al., 1992; Chen et al., 2021). Cognitive trust arises from an accumulated knowledge that allows an individual to make predictions with some level of confidence, which will live up to his/her expectations. When one party understands the other party's objectives and goals, these enable the two parties to accumulate knowledge of each other. This form of trust is performance-based in nature with rationality used as a basis for trusting the other party (Chen et al., 2021). As cognitive trust is objective in nature, it is based on a rational process that determines whether the other party in the relationship can be trusted (McAllister, 1995). In this study, we argue that cognitive trust is a confidence to rely on another party's ability and integrity.

Based on the sociological perspective of trust, affective trust is viewed as emotional attachment to all people involved in the relationship (Lewis & Weigert, 1985). Affective trust reflects the confidence one places on a partner on the basis of feelings generated by the level of care and concern the partner demonstrates (McAllister, 1995). This type of trust is emotionally based on and characterized by the perceived strength of relationship and the perception of security felt in the relationship (Lewis & Weigert, 1985; McAllister, 1995). The es-

sence of affective trust is reliance on a partner based on emotions. As emotional connections deepen, trust in a partner may venture beyond that which is justified by accumulated knowledge (Chen et al., 2014). This emotion-driven element of trust makes the relationship less transparent to objective risk assessments prescribed by economists. Lewicki et al. (2006) highlight the important of affective trust is in the mature phase and cognitive is in the early passed of the relationship lifecycle. Affective trust is present in all relationship but is more in close interpersonal relationship (Lewis & Weigert, 1985). In this study, we define affective trust as an emotion-driven element of trust that is closely related to psychological safety, emotional connections, and expressions of genuine care and concern.

## **2.2. Unethical Pro-Organizational Behavior**

Unethical behavior is both common and costly in work organizations (Jones & Kavanagh, 1996; Umphress & Bingham, 2011; Zhang, 2020). It has been well documented that organizational members at all levels steal company property, mislead customers, cheat the government, as well as violate psychological contracts (Vardi & Weiner, 2005), indicating that unethical behaviors include a wide range of minor to major violations. According to Kish-Gephart, Harrison, & Trevino (2010), the three most important precursors of unethical behavior are the individuals, the ethical issue itself, and the organizational environment. Ebrahimi (2017) further focuses on individual differences to discuss moral disengagement and then explain why employees do unethical organizational behavior. The findings concluded that individual's personality traits, reasoning skills, and emotional disposition should be considered to understand workplace behaviors that are undesirable. Furthermore, research has demonstrated a number of reasons for why employees might engage in unethical behaviors: to benefit themselves, to retaliate against the organization, or to harm coworkers (Umphress et al., 2010).

Vardi and Weitz (2005) developed a model of unethical behavior based on the intention of the deviant action, a class of behaviors they term organization misbehavior. They identify three facets of organizational misbehavior: 1) acts intended to benefit the self, 2) acts intended to be destructive to others or the organization, and 3) acts intended to benefit the organization. Their third form of organizational misbehavior is called as "unethical pro-organizational behavior" (Umphress et al., 2010). According to Hoyk and Hersey (2009), an organization ignores or accepts unethical behavior that means supporting the viewpoint of unethical pro-organizational behavior. Based on behavioral ethics (Brief et al., 2001; Vardi & Weitz, 2005), individuals may engage in unethical pro-organizational behavior to help the organization in some way. Viewing from new venture team trust, entrepreneurs' greed is more likely to be connected to unethical pro-organizational behavior (Tacke, Knockaert, Patzelt, & Breugst, 2022). Consistent with theoretical work, this study focuses on unethical pro-organizational behavior

is not divorced from self-interested views of unethical behavior (Vardi & Weitz, 2005). As such, our conception of unethical pro-organizational behavior differs from work-related actions involving errors, mistakes, or unconscious negligence, as employees may engage in unethical behavior without a specific aim to benefit or harm. Tang, Yam and Koopman (2020) argue that UPB has a paradoxical nature that can lead to ambivalent emotional reactions, with implications for subsequent behavior. On the one hand, because it benefits one's organization, employee should trigger feelings of pride. However, given its unethical nature, also trigger feelings of guilt. Although employees may try to help organizations by engaging in unethical behaviors, the final result of their actions may deviate from their intentions. Unethical pro-organizational behaviors, in this study, include acts of deception (e.g., cooking numbers to boost analyst projections or promote sale, removing expired tags or rewrite expired date to reduce food cost), lying to customers (e.g., promoting pre-sell meal tickets before company finance crisis reveal) and omission (e.g., withholding information about the hazards of food and beverage product). Second, it is pro-organizational behavior neither specified in formal job descriptions nor ordered by superiors, yet is carried out to benefit or help the organization. This study is unique in its focus on how positive exchange expectation between employee and supervisor can encourage unethical behavior intended to benefit the organization (Umphress & Bingham, 2011; Umphress et al., 2010; Vardi & Weitz, 2005; Wang, Long, Zhang, & He, 2019).

According to Mayer et al.'s (1995) definition, employees place greater trust in their supervisors who have high ability, benevolence, and integrity. Employees are more likely to trust the supervisors who have the ability to execute an important project, exhibit benevolence, and have demonstrated integrity. It can be noted that the conditions leading to cognitive trust such as competence and reliability of an individual is similar to the ability and integrity component of trustworthiness as given by Mayer et al. (1995). Cognitive trust is a rational inference that employees make decision from information about the supervisors' behavior under ability and integrity. In interpersonal trust relationship, people are not seeking to be vulnerable especially in a state that behavior is purposeful and active intentional and reasoned. Vulnerability is the combination of the trustor's vulnerability with external threats that could lead to some level of adverse effects that gives rise to and comprises "risk" (Mayer et al., 1995; Haimes, 2006; Schoorman et al., 2015). However, the relationship between supervisor and employee is characterized by certain asymmetries: the supervisor has higher status, more power, information and the possibility to exercise control. As well as considering the risks from misattributed trust, McAllister (1997) found that supervisors use the susceptibility of trust relationships to manipulation and abuse employees. Employees with high cognitive trust choose to trust whom is based on knowledge assessment of how trustworthy the supervisor. Cognitive trust implies an endorsement of supervisor's ability and integrity, whether in general

terms or within a given social network (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). It is a psychological contract of reciprocal obligations between employee and supervisor in a relationship (Lee et al., 2017; Rousseau et al., 1998). A particularly surprising implication of considering unethical behavior in the context of social exchange, as we do here, is that employees may reciprocate positive exchange relationships with their employers by engaging in unethical pro-organizational behaviors (Umphress & Bingham, 2011; Umphress et al., 2010; Wang et al., 2019). Employees may view unethical pro-organizational behaviors, such as protecting the organization by lying to customers or clients, failing to issue refunds to customers and clients, or selling an unsafe product, as a way to reciprocate positive social exchange relationships with their employer. This leads us to predict

**H1:** Cognitive trust is positively related to unethical pro-organizational behavior.

Affective trust refers to trust from a bond that arises from one's own emotions and sense of the other's feelings and motives. With affective trust, supervisors express care and concern for the career and welfare of employees. It simply feels good to experience the reassurance and comfort from trusting someone (Lewicki et al., 1998). It can also be noted that the conditions leading to affective trust are based on one's sense of other's feelings and motives and can be related to the benevolence component of trust. If employees feel that supervisors sincerely care and concern for them, that benevolence may provide comfort that mitigates unrelated sources of uncertainty (Mayer et al., 1995). That is, if the employee has no goals in the situation, then there could be no risk of a negative outcome (Haimes, 2006). At the same time, trusting or being trusted can reduce feelings of anxiety, fear, embarrassment, even shame and humiliation (Lewicki et al., 1998). When the supervisor needed to make an action that was concerned with the collective good but contrary to employee intention such as unethical pro-organizational behavior (Ebrahimi, 2017; Shaw & Liao, 2021). Affective bond between employees and supervisors would reflect more of a lack of defensiveness against doing the action (Chen et al., 2014; Tacke et al., 2022; Xu & Wang, 2020). We therefore predicted

**H2:** Affective trust is positively related to unethical pro-organizational behavior.

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1. Data Collection and Sample

The present study employed a questionnaire survey to collect the necessary data for testing the validity of the model and research hypotheses. As our domain of interest was behavioral, we included a review of the organizational behavior literatures. Grounding our theoretical model in the literature allowed us to adapt existing scales to measure our constructs. Variables in the questionnaire included background information, cognitive trust, affective trust, and unethical pro-organizational behavior. All responses were scored on a seven-point Likert's



scale, ranging from “*strongly disagree*” to “*strongly agree*”. The sample was drawn from employees at 28 hotel or restaurants in Taiwan. Respondents were asked to fill out the questionnaires in a self-administered manner and return them directly to the research team. A total of 398 questionnaires were returned, out of which 65 were incomplete. The remaining 333 valid questionnaires were collected, representing 83.7% response rate. The survey was originally prepared in English and then translated into Chinese.

### 3.2. Measurement

*Unethical pro-organizational behavior*: was assessed with six-item measures developed by Umphress et al. (2010), with small adjustment made to indicate hotel and restaurant as the target organization. Items assessed respondents’ agreement of their willingness to perform unethical pro-organizational behaviors. These measures demonstrate the acceptable levels of reliability (refer **Table 1**).

*Cognitive and affective trusts*: were borrowed from McAllister (1995) scale items into restaurant industry to measure cognitive and affective trust. Five items were used to measure cognitive trust. Five items were used to measure affective trust, including one reversed item. The measures of cognitive and affective trust demonstrate acceptable levels of reliability, with alphas of 0.901 and 0.865, respectively.

*Control variable*: Although many variables may help explain unethical pro-organizational behavior, it is not possible to include them all. This study includes six control variables of demographic that relate to unethical pro-organizational behaviors at the organizational level in the model. Based on the literature, gender (1 = male, 2 = female), age (1 = up to 25 years; 2 = more than 25 and up to 40; 3 = more than 40 and up to 55; 4 = more than 55 and up to 70; 5 = 70 and older), tenure (1 = up to 1 year; 2 = more than 1 and up to 3 years; 3 = more than 3 and up to 5 years; 4 = more than 5 and up to 10 years; 5 = 10 years and above) and social characteristics (e.g., income class, job position, education) could covary with our dependent variables (Buccioli et al., 2013; Kish-Gephart et al., 2010).

### 3.3. Validity and Reliability of Measures

We analyzed the data using a two-step approach (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). First, we conducted a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to determine whether the measured variables reliably reflected the hypothesized latent variables. Second, we performed path analyses to determine the overall model fit, significance of the path coefficients, and explanatory power ( $R^2$ ). Following Anderson and Gerbing’s (1988) work, this study assesses the usefulness of its measures by assessing their reliability and validity. Reliability was evaluated using Cronbach’s alpha; an inspection of the alpha coefficients revealed that all items are greater than 0.70 (see **Table 1**). CFA was used to verify the validity of the measures.



**Table 1.** Measurement model from confirmatory factor analysis<sup>a</sup>.

Construct and variables	Items	
<i>SLd</i>	<i>SMCe</i>	
<b>Unethical Pro-organizational behavior (CCR<sup>b</sup> = 0.816, AVE<sup>c</sup> = 0.773)</b>		
If it would help my organization, I would misrepresent the truth to make my organization look good.	0.886	0.685
If it would help my organization, I would exaggerate the truth about my company's products or services to customers and clients.	0.877	0.570
If it would benefit my organization, I would withhold negative information about my company or its products from customers and clients.	0.898	0.606
If needed, I would conceal information from the public that could be damaging to my organization.	0.855	0.731
I would do whatever it takes to help my organization.	0.747	0.532
<b>Cognitive trust (CCR<sup>b</sup> = 0.901, AVE<sup>c</sup> = 0.797)</b>		
My supervisor approaches his/her job with professionalism and dedication.	0.849	0.645
Given my supervisor track record, I see no reason to doubt his/her competence and preparation for the job.	0.900	0.563
I can rely on my supervisor not to make my job more difficult by careless work.	0.904	0.509
Most people, even those who aren't close friends of my supervisor, trust and respect him/her as a coworker.*	0.888	0.726
Other work associates of mine who must interact with my supervisor consider him/her to be trustworthy.	0.887	0.743
<b>Affective trust (CCR<sup>b</sup> = 0.865, AVE<sup>c</sup> = 0.794)</b>		
We have a sharing relationship. We can both freely share our ideas, feelings, and hopes.	0.887	0.747
I can talk freely to my supervisor about difficulties I am having at work and know that (s)he will want to listen.	0.889	0.722
We would both feel a sense of loss if one of us was transferred and we could no longer work together.	0.709	0.420
If I shared my problems with my supervisor, I know (s)he would respond constructively and caringly.	0.883	0.765
I would have to say that we have both made considerable emotional investments in our working relationship.	0.886	0.697

a.  $\chi^2 = 286.04$ ,  $df = 116$ ,  $\chi^2/df = 2.44$  ( $p < 0.001$ ),  $GFI = 0.91$ ,  $CFI = 0.95$ , and  $RMSEA = 0.08$ ; b. composite construct reliability; c. average variance extracted; d. standardized loading; e. squared multiple correlations ( $R^2$ ); f. \* the items were reverse scored. (*Table footnote is dispensable*).

Convergent validity concerns whether multiple measures of the same construct are in agreement. In CFA, convergent validity is evaluated by the significance of each standardized coefficient loading and squared multiple correlations (SMC). According to Anderson and Gerbing's (1988) study, CFA revealed that all standardized factor loadings passed the significance test; however, those that had standardized factor loadings less than 0.5 were eliminated from the measurement model. Consequently, no scale item needed to be deleted in order to improve the model fit. The convergent validity of the scales was supported because the standardized factor loadings and SMC were significant ( $t > 7.348$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). To assess discriminant validity, the square root of the average variance extracted (AVE) in each construct is compared to the correlation coefficients between two constructs. The AVE estimates for all scales were between 0.773 and 0.797, indicating adequate discriminant validity (see Table 1).

## 4. Results

Respondents were asked to use the scale to rate the extent to which they agreed with each item on the questionnaire. The demographic profile showed that 48.3% of respondents were males and 51.7% were females. Approximately 75.2% were aged between 20 and 40 years. The majority of the respondents (73.4%) were highly educated, holding at least a college degree. The average monthly income per person was \$30,000 NT (approximately \$1000 US). In terms of job position, the largest group in the distribution (51.7%) was service job, 7.5% manager, 9.4% bar tender and 10.0% were chefs. The average tenure was more than 1 year and up to 3 years (31.7%) and 15.4% were over 5 years.

### 4.1. The Structural Model

The  $\chi^2$  fit was 286.04, with 116 degrees of freedom ( $p < 0.000$ ). The goodness-of-fit index (GFI) was 0.91 ( $>0.9$ ), the root mean square residual (RMSR) was 0.08 ( $<0.08$ ), and the comparative fit index (CFI) was 0.95 ( $>0.9$ ). Given the sample size and the number of indicators, all of these statistics confirm the overall measurement quality (Hair et al., 2006). All structural path estimates were significant at the 0.01 level, where the signs of all structural paths were consistent with the hypothesized relationships among the latent constructs (see Table 1).

### 4.2. Hypotheses Testing

To consistently test the presented hypotheses, a confirmatory forced entry multiple regression analysis approach was used to identify statistically significant models at the 0.05 level of significance. We tested two regression models. The first included the unethical behavior for direct effects and then entered control variables, followed by cognitive and affective trust in the second model. Table 2 presents means, standard deviations, and zero-order correlations. Variance inflation factors (VIFs) were used to examine the effect of multicollinearity. The lowest observed VIF equaled 1.07 and the highest equaled 2.08, both of which

fall within acceptable limits (Hair et al., 2006). The correlations suggest that multicollinearity is not a serious concern, and thus permit the use of multiple regression analysis to test the hypotheses.

**Table 3** presents the results of the multiple regression analysis. To assess the hypothesized relationships, we tested two models. In Model 1, we employed

**Table 2.** Descriptive statistics and correlations.

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Gender	-	-	1							
2. Age	-	-	0.07	1						
3. Tenure	-	-	0.01	0.35	1					
4. Income	-	-	-0.22	0.50	0.38	1				
5. Education	-	-	0.04	0.11	0.18	0.15	1			
6. Job position	-	-	0.08	0.15	0.11	0.22	0.06	1		
7. UPB	4.66	1.59	0.15	-0.06	-0.05	-0.15	0.08	-0.07	1	
8. Cognitive trust	4.82	1.18	0.05	-0.15	-0.10	-0.28	-0.24	-0.06	0.16	1
9. Affective trust	5.11	1.15	-0.03	-0.02	0.04	-0.13	0.05	0.00	0.25	0.72

$N = 333$ . Correlations with absolute values above 0.10 are significant at  $p < 0.05$ .

**Table 3.** Results of multiple regression analysis.

Variables	UPB			
	Model 1		Model 2	
	b	t	b	t
<b>Control Variables</b>				
Gender	0.158***	4.505	0.144***	4.139
Age	0.068	1.073	0.023	0.400
Tenure	0.188**	3.158	0.079	1.426
Income	-0.337***	-5.432	-0.232***	-3.965
Education	-0.097	1.236	-0.116	1.378
Job position	-0.078	-1.276	-0.073	-1.153
<b>Independent Variable</b>				
Cognitive trust			0.166	1.956
Affective trust			0.257**	3.046
$R^2$	0.235		0.379	
$R^2$ (adjusted)	0.216		0.361	
$F$	2.147*		21.504***	
$\Delta R^2$			0.144***	
$N$	333		333	

\* $p < 0.05$ ; \*\* $p < 0.01$ ; \*\*\* $p < 0.001$ .

gender, age, tenure, income, education and job position as control variables. Although the gender effect was weakly significant ( $b = 0.144$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), age, tenure, income ( $b = -0.232$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), education, and job position did not affect unethical behavior. Model 2, in **Table 3**, examined the effect of cognitive and affective trust on unethical pro-organizational behavior. The coefficient for cognitive trust was positive and significant ( $b = 0.166$ ,  $t = 1.956$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ), indicating that cognitive trust has a positively but non-significantly impact on unethical pro-organizational behavior. This result indicates that the hypothesis 1 linking cognitive trust to unethical pro-organizational behavior is not supported. Model 2 also presents the effects of affective trust on unethical pro-organizational behavior. This model is significant ( $b = 0.257$ ,  $t = 3.046$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and yields an  $R^2$  of 0.38. The positive and significant coefficient of affective trust indicates that supervisors are able to pay sincerely care and concern on employees, which in turn gain supporting on unethical pro-organizational behaviors. Accordingly, this result strongly supports hypothesis 2.

## 5. Discussions and Managerial Implications

### 5.1. Discussions

Using a survey approach, we empirically explored whether employees' cognitive and affective trusts were related to unethical pro-organizational behavior. Concerning cognitive trust, the results of the regression analysis indicate that a high degree of cognitive is positively and not significantly related to the intention of unethical pro-organizational behavior. Inconsistent to our expectations, hypothesis 1 was not supported. Our studies suggest that strong cognitive trust alone didn't drive employees to support the organizational unethical ways. Cognitive trust is a rational inference about the supervisors' behavior under ability and integrity. Therefore, disputing the trust confidence in supervisor's ability and integrity that is a rejection of unethical pro-organizational behavior. Although both cognitive and affective trust can enhance the level of unethical pro-organizational behavior through reciprocity (Umpress et al., 2010), cognitive trust would help employees to be more conscious of ethical consideration within a rational decision. People with high ethical standards are perceived to have integrity that is a critical determinant of cognitive trust (Mayer et al., 1995). When supervisors encourage unethical pro-organizational behavior that violating integrity, employees with high cognitive trust may face an exchange dilemma and increase intrinsically oriented sense of defenses to protecting themselves from the psychological risk that may arise from relying on supervisors (McAllister, 1995).

The affective trust was significantly related to unethical pro-organizational behavior in this study. The results suggest emotional attachment provides a strong social context in which individuals who endorse positive reciprocity principles feel motivated to help their organization through unethical behavior. Taken together, these findings of this research reveal that building affective trust would have great emotional attachment on supervisor/organization and a lack of de-

fensiveness against on unethical pro-organizational behavior compared to cognitive trust (McAllister, 1995; Umphress & Bingham, 2011). Our findings suggest that affection based trust may help unlock the potential of unethical behavior by giving employees more confidence in supervisor's benevolence and sincerely care. In other words, when trust lock-in in the relationships of authority, the use of social exchanges and deep bonds of affective indebtedness may create the dark side of trust and then support unethical pro-organizational behavior (Skinner et al., 2014; Tacke et al., 2022).

This research makes some contributions. Much of the literature on unethical behavior conceptualized unethical behavior as primarily self-benefiting (Kish-Gephart et al., 2010; Tacke et al., 2022). However, employees sometimes engage in unethical behavior to benefit their organization (Umphress & Bingham, 2011; Umphress et al., 2010). We show that the trust relationship between the employee and supervisor serves as a powerful motivator of pro-organization unethical behavior. In contrast to past work, most research on trust in unethical pro-organization behavior has focused on simple one-dimensional construct (Graham et al., 2015; Umphress & Bingham, 2011), the quantitative testing of both cognitive and affective measures of trust is relatively unique. While the literature recommends consideration of both affective trust and cognitive trust, few studies have indicated cognitive trust would help employees to be more conscious of ethical consideration within a rational decision.

## 5.2. Managerial Implications

In this article, we conceptualize trust as not only for creating performance through cooperation, but also as a critical antecedent for unethical behavior. The current paper has adapted McAllister's (1995) distinction of trust into cognitive and affective based. Drawing on social exchange theory, this study defined that the development of trust is based on the benefit and reciprocative behavior triggered by social exchange relationship (Blau, 1964). Our results suggest that trust relationship impacts employee's decision intention of unethical behavior, especially when trust between employees and their supervisor promotes social exchange benefit and reciprocation. However, activities that support unethical behavior involve risk, uncertainty and even failure along the way to success. Most people are risk averse and do not want to engage in unethical behavior (Kish-Gephart et al., 2010; Xu, Wang, & Zhu, 2019). This study demonstrates that supervisor's sincerely care and benevolence for employees can make it very difficult to reject such a claim of unethical pro-organizational behavior. Therefore, the potential problem for trust relationship among employees and supervisors may benefit to the organization in the short term, they may very dangerous to the development of competitive advantage in long term.

It is worthy to discuss, affective trust is more important in determining the nature and strength of a high-quality guanxi (Chen et al., 2009). The guanxi between Chinese supervisor and subordinate is reflecting the characteristic of authority inherent in a relationship that involves power difference (Chen et al.,

2009). Therefore, affective trust plays an important role in guanxi inclusion and risk of guanxi exclusion in Chinese work place. In Taiwanese context, the findings from our studies imply the development of affective trust may avoid employee to involve the risk of exclusion and seek organizational identification (Umphress & Bingham, 2011). Thau et al. (2015) proposed that the risk of exclusion from one's group motivates group members to engage in unethical behaviors that secure better outcomes for interpersonal relationship and social exchange. This effect occurs because those at risk of exclusion seek to improve their inclusionary status by engaging in unethical behaviors that benefit the organizational identification (Thau et al., 2015).

This study also notes that the weak effect of cognitive trust on unethical behavior implies that if employees are wary of supervisor's ability and integrity, and feel that to trust him might be contrary to his own interests, sensing that placing trust in supervisors may be unwise. This finding suggests that instilling sense of defenses by asking employees to indicate their suspicions prior to making a decision was critical to helping them notice unethical behavior and act on that information. It is possible that organizational decision makers give little attention to monitoring such acts or addressing them and their possibility. Consequently, understanding what motivates employees to engage in unethical acts is important for reducing and eliminating them. As noted above, managers should form a culture that may avoid employee doing bad things for good reasons (Umphress & Bingham, 2011) and encourages ethical behavior by ensuring that their own behavior corresponds to ethical standards.

### Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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