One of the journals listed below that relates to a topic of interest in organizat…

One of the journals listed below* that relates to a topic of interest in organizational theory

Trust within organizations plays a definably essential role in contributing to the ultimate success, or failure, of the enterprise. Salamon and Robinson (2008) is a detailed, longitudinal study of trust relationships between employees and management. The authors measured the perception of trust on the part of employees, not the actual levels of trust as reported by management within the organization. By analyzing perception of trust, the authors were able to tie that variable to differential success in the retail industry. Ultimately, increased levels of perceived trust on the part of employees led to higher customer service performance, sales performance, and responsibility norms. As a result, individual employees were empowered to seek the success of the organization, in addition to their own personal success as members of the group. In terms of organizational behavior, employees are more productive when they perceive their management to be more trusting (p. 594). Statement of the Research Problem Salamon and Robinson (2008) addresses the role of trust in the workplace and the organization. The literature on this topic in the field of organization behavior contained what the authors called a " gap" in our knowledge about whether employees' perceptions of being trusted is related to organizational performance. This study thus contributes to the general field of trust research, as well as the ongoing debate over management styles. If, as the study concludes, there is a positive correlation between perception of being trusted and organizational performance, newer management education might emphasize creating the actual trust relationship with employees, or

increasing the perception of trust with employees. As such, the study not only claims to add to this existing knowledge of trust in the workplace, but also our knowledge of the best management principles. Description of the Research Procedure The researchers convinced a large retail chain of 88 separate locations to participate in the study. From within this organization, they took data from employee annual surveys and the organization's archival records (p. 594). The surveys contained trust-related items, given as hard copies during work hours and were anonymously collected and scored. Overall, nearly 8, 000 employees took part in the survey, which was a nearly 68% response rate. The tests were administered over the course of two years. The researchers analyzed the data to quantify organizational performance, which was defined in terms of sales performance and customer service performance. Sales performance was derived from the organization's adjusted sales measure, and the customer service performance was taken from a quarterly survey of customers at each location. Flaws in the Research Design From the perspective of a reviewer of this research, there are some methodological questions regarding the collection and analysis of data. Firstly, it might be the case that customers who are most likely to respond to the customer service surveys are those who are the most satisfied customers, which could bias the results toward showing a significant effect of trust perceptions. Likewise, from a 68% employee response rate, it might be the case that employees who were more satisfied with their work in general were more likely to respond to the survey. Analysis of Data In terms of mediating variables, the organization's success could have led to higher trust of the organization, rather than a higher trust of the organization leading to higher organizational performance. That bi-directionality of cause-

and-effect, which the authors address in their section regarding " limitations" of the results (p. 599). Limited and Justifiable Conclusions Readers should take the results of this survey with a grain of salt, given the limited sample size and therefore limited external validity. The idea that this kind of research should change management principles in favor of building trust relationships is a limited conclusion because (1) the idea that trust is important is already a well-known management practice, and (2) there are significant limitations to this study that should be addressed in subsequent research. Works Cited Salamon, S., & Robinson, S. (2008). Trust that binds: The impact of collective felt trust on organizational performance. Journal of Applied Psychology, 93, 593-601.