

Original Paper

The Social Construction of Mistrust

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Abstract

I intend to contribute to the knowledge base about the nature of mistrust as a social construct. My inquiry includes an unpacking of the construct of mistrust from the construct of trust based in the current literature. Once situated, I undertook a semiotic study of empirical data about the construct of mistrust based on the experiences of stakeholders in a local nonprofit organization as events unfolded during a 9-month period from August 2018 until April 2019. Applying repeated iterations of the data I constructed a contextualized thick description of mistrust. The findings of the study impact the common sense and didactic interpretations of mistrust. Practitioners of social change can apply the results to expand available strategies to mitigate mistrust and reduce the stresses that compromise the resources available to their communities and organizations to fulfill their objectives.

Keywords

mistrust, organization, nonprofit, community, stakeholder, trust

1. Introduction

In a *New York Times* article of March 8, 2019, Austen and Porter reported that Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau admitted an environment of mistrust between the public and his government. Trudeau acknowledged that this erosion of trust had put his administration at risk unless and until it could be repaired. The reporters articulated the commonsense problem of mistrust in contemporary society.

Yet social scientists have been loath to address this problem from an academic perspective (Lanaj, Kim, Koopman, & Matta, 2018; Muhlfried, 2017). In 2019 the Graduate School of the Arts at Aarhus University in Denmark introduced the construct of mistrust into its curriculum. The faculty acknowledged in its syllabus that over the past two decades various disciplines have offered competing definitions of mistrust. To remedy this, they designed their new course to conceptualize mistrust as a scientifically acceptable approach to understanding in which contexts people could rely on the predictability of others.

There is an environment of uncertainty in the social sciences about whether mistrust, as a separate

construct, is a worthy and necessary construct for study and research (Carey, 2017). Muhlfrid (2017) expressed that although the notion of mistrust was overlooked as a social phenomenon, mistrust was an everyday occurrence in most organizations. Its repercussions were consequential because groups that perceived themselves as mistrusted allocated scarce organizational resources to understand why the mistrust happened thereby depleting the resources available for organizational capacity and survival.

1.1 Background

Menashy (2017) conducted a case study designed to understand the process of collective decision making within a multi-stakeholder partnership (MSP). She was interested in how multi-stakeholder discussions around decision-making related to the capacity of the organization to fulfill its goals. MSPs were designed to include diverse stakeholders at the governance level, including participants from local governments, community organizations, foundations, private companies and private citizens. Menashy uncovered among these stakeholders a lack of dialogue that she called *a form of avoidance* around the issue most central to the organization's mission. Lacking the information that could have been provided by open dialogue, stakeholders experienced mistrust that further inhibited their capacity to reach their stated goals.

Other recent studies have focused on perceptions of trust and mistrust among stakeholders in diverse contexts. A study by Chan (2018) in the People's Republic of China sought, through interviews and researcher observation, to tease out the causes of societal, institutional and interpersonal mistrust between patients and doctors. He observed that mistrust was manifest as tension among groups of stakeholders, and that the best opportunity for remediation was at the institutional level. The asymmetry in the information distribution between doctor and patient made it structurally impossible for patients to assume that the doctors were not taking advantage of their vulnerability. In metanalysis of 44 previous studies George, Duran and Norris (2013) located mistrust as a component of barriers to recruitment and retention of ethnic minority participants in medical research. They found two consistent barriers to participation across all ethnic groups, lack of access to information and mistrust.

Lanaj, Kim, Koopman and Matta (2018) started with the assumption that mistrust was an ordinary workplace occurrence. They also assumed that perceived mistrust was stressful and that dealing with the stress was exhausting. Finding no existing scale, the researchers had to create their own scale to measure mistrust in the workplace.

Their data provided evidence that skepticism, cynicism, wariness and vigilance were indicators of stress and exhaustion on the part of those who perceived themselves as being mistrusted. The results of their quantitative study strongly supported their proposed dynamic that perceived mistrust engendered exhaustion that resulted in the mistrusted worker withdrawing from ordinary workplace relations that resulted in resource depletion. Their study revealed that evidence of perceptions of mistrust implied nothing about perceptions of trust. They concluded that mistrust was a different construct from trust (Lanaj, Kim, Koopman, & Matta, 2018).

According to Carey (2017), Muhlfrid (2017), and the Social Sciences faculty of Aarhus University

mistrust was an independent social construct. A strategy of mistrust could be a basis for social interaction. Behaviors of mistrust, whether avoidance, withdrawal or conflict, compromised organizational capacity to reach its objectives. Together and individually these researchers laid the groundwork for a discussion of mistrust as an important and consequential construct in social life.

2. Method

2.1 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this study is that of social constructivism which posits that people build up, or socially construct, a shared version of human experience. In this way people approach but never completely converge upon understanding what makes up social interaction (Berger & Luckmann, 1967). It is from this perspective that I will add to the evidence that will help us understand the social construction of mistrust.

Organizations, as entities that functioned to maximize material and reputational capacity and survival, had the management of mistrust as an organizational requirement (Saunders & Thornhill, 2019). Researchers recognized situations in which mistrust was activated by looking for evidence of detachment, suspicion and doubt such as cynicism, wariness and vigilance, in relation to the organizational requirement of managing mistrust (Lanaj, Kim, Koopman, & Matta, 2018; Menashy, 2017; Muhlfried, 2017). Participants established the environment in which the organization operated with the purpose of maximizing its material and reputational capacity and survival.

Mistrust was built up as a strategy to reduce uncertainty in an uncertain environment (Carey, 2017; Muhlfried, 2017). Conceptualizing mistrust as a strategy, or technology, distinct from trust has several implications for research and analysis. The strategy of mistrust eliminated favorable expectations and allowed unfavorable expectations to be perceived as certain (Saunders & Thornhill, 2019). As separate constructs each had a dimensional component that could vary from high to low (Chan, 2018). Social actors in contexts of uncertainty selectively activated strategies of trust and/or mistrust to reduce uncertainty simultaneously, individually or not at all.

2.2 Significance to Contemporary Practice

From the perspective of social constructivism social meaning could only be understood in context (Luhmann, 1995). I specifically selected a local nonprofit organization as my study context because such organizations are at the forefront of social change in local communities (Walden University, 2011). I intended to increase the information available to organizational stakeholders that has the potential to empower them to be more effective contributors. When facing challenges to organizational capacity and reputation practitioners can activate strategies to mitigate mistrust that better position the organizational to fill the community gap between demands for their services and the resources to meet them.

2.3 Research Question

Carey (2017) said that it was incumbent upon social scientists to examine the impact of mistrust on

social practices, such as communication and cooperation. The research question with which he challenged social scientists was what were the social implications of mistrust? In the context of the theoretical background, significance to current investigations and contemporary practice of my study I posed two research questions. How do stakeholders in a contemporary local nonprofit organization manifest their experiences of mistrust? What are the implications of the stakeholders' experiences of mistrust for the organization's ability to manage its function of maximizing its material and reputational capacity and survival?

2.4 Methodology

The social constructivist perspective also informed and delimited the research method. The goal of construct-centered research was to formulate a description of the essence of a social experience (Creswell, 2007). I put the construct, mistrust, at the forefront of the investigation and required that meaning be derived from context (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

The evidence preceded the conclusion, rather than eliciting evidence to back up preconceived notions or hypotheses (Levy & Peart, 2010; Grubium & Holstein, 2011). Accordingly, I examined the empirical data by repeated iterations of analogous comparison, identifying unifying themes and patterns followed by refining by locating similarities and differences within the themes and including the results of these refinements in the next iterations, as described below (Bourdieu, 1990; Giddens, 1990).

Contemporary American local nonprofit organizations operate in an environment of uncertainty about how to garner the resources to fill the gap between demands for services and the organization's capacity to fulfill them (Nonprofit Research Collaborative, 2012; Barman, 2008). In this environment of uncertainty local nonprofits were established to maximize material and reputational capacity and survival in pursuit of their missions of community service. In this section I described the method that I used to derive a thick description of mistrust as a social strategy. I derived empirical data from a real-world situation of a local nonprofit as it unfolded over a 9-month period between August 2018 and April 2019.

A few articles about this organization appeared in local papers in late summer 2018. The coverage focused on controversy or conflict that arose between the organization and the local community. I tried to ascertain what had happened that challenged the organization's ability to manage its function of maximizing its material and reputational capacity and survival. In other words, I used this ongoing situation as an empirical instance providing evidence of stakeholders' experiences of mistrust and the implications of their experiences.

I conducted the investigation according to Eberle's (2010) assumptions of construct-centered research whereby the research had to be logically consistent, relevant, and related to understanding subjective human interaction. Both Eberle and Creswell (2007) determined that such research could be validated by ascertaining whether readers of the study results found them intelligible and accurate. I used QDA Miner Lite (2019) software to make my process of gathering, storing and managing data accessible to interested parties so they could determine the logical consistency, relevance, intelligibility and accuracy

of my process and findings.

I undertook to determine the strategies, practices and technologies of organizational stakeholders by studying manifestations of social interaction including words, texts and symbols (Bourdieu, 1990). I used repeated iterations of recording, classifying, categorizing and examining empirical evidence to identify themes and patterns around the central construct (Moustakas, Sigel, & Schlalock, 1956; Corbin & Strauss, 2008). I recorded and analyzed data from primary sources including community meetings, reports, press releases, and newspaper articles and editorials, a technique that Creswell (2009) described as triangulation. In other words, I examined numerous interpretations of the unfolding events in order retrieve the underlying or taken for granted meaning of mistrust.

I entered the content of the primary sources into the QDA Miner Lite (2019) software by two methods. The content of newspaper articles, journal articles and editorials I downloaded into the software directly from their internet sites. Meetings were open to interested parties for observation but not participation. Content of reports, meetings and contemporaneous researcher notes I entered manually by transcribing from the original written form into the software.

The structure of the software required the I upload or enter each site or source as an individual Document. Primary sources consisted of one journal article, seven newspaper articles, notes of three meetings, one newspaper editorial, and one report that summarized the results of the meetings of three working groups. Thus, I accumulated 13 Documents. I used the Memo function of QDA Miner Lite to bracket my researcher reflections from the other primary sources.

3. Results

I read through each Document to ascertain whether it was relevant to understanding the construct of mistrust as it was experienced by community members who were interested in the capacity and survival of a specific local nonprofit organization. To bulwark my initial impressions of relevancy I used the Text Retrieval function of the software to do a count within Documents. I used the term participants to include stakeholders who delivered and/or received services from the focal organization. I used the term Board to refer to the Board of Directors of the focal organization to distinguish them as the fiduciary agent responsible for organizational capacity as well as being stakeholders.

I performed the Text Retrieval function on six randomly selected Documents. I requested retrieval of the terms board, participant(s), community, organization, enrollment, and trust. The results are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Count of Key Terms by Document

| Keyword | Doc. 1 | Doc. 2 | Doc. 3 | Doc. 4 | Doc. 5 | Doc. 6 | Total |
|----------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|-------|
| Board | 14 | 1 | 12 | 39 | 0 | 4 | 70 |
| Community | 26 | 10 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 46 |
| Enrollment | 28 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 4 | 38 |
| Organization | 15 | 5 | 0 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 27 |
| Participant(s) | 27 | 20 | 3 | 15 | 9 | 7 | 80 |
| Trust | 0 | 2 | 0 | 7 | 2 | 5 | 16 |

From Table 1 I inferred that the content of the semiotic data that I accumulated was relevant to the research problem of understanding mistrust in the context of the experiences of participant stakeholders in the operations of a local nonprofit organization because at least four of the six elements of the research problem were the most frequent key terms across all Documents. In addition, the instances of the term trust in Documents 4 and 6 led me to perform an immediate second review of both Documents to determine how trust was integrated into the content.

All references to trust in both Documents were to instances of lack of trust or diminished trust. Each Document provided topics for the next data review of the 13 Documents. One revealed a general perception among non-Board stakeholders that benefits that would accrue to the organization would not accrue to them. They concluded from the information they received from organizational representatives that the organization was not putting their interests first.

The language of the other Document was more specific. It said that the organization faced turbulence; that the decisions of its Board garnered criticism from community stakeholders. It said that community members were unhappy about recent decisions and had formed a committee to present its case to the Board to rescind a recent decision. This fit well with the general inferences from the first Document because it implied that community stakeholders thought that the focal organization was not putting their interests first.

This new information led me to look for empirical evidence related to the social construction of mistrust in references to perceptions of surprise, shock, dismay, concern, challenge and opposition. I also looked for evidence related to information and communication, whether mentioned negatively positively or neutrally. By locating the contexts for these references, I developed the themes for subsequent coding of the data. I looked for the balance between items coded to similar codes and those that required a unique or unanticipated category. I recoded the data to see if there was a better fit when I added the new category as a code. I then also noted unique or unanticipated categories. I continued this pattern until the same codes and assignments of data started repeating.

3.1 Mistrust was Experienced as Surprise, Shock and Dismay

Following a seven-year continuous enrollment decline, the organization's Board decided that it would

sell an asset. The Board heard from its Executive Director that this decline was attributable to changes in audience interest, demographic shifts in its service community and increased competition in core service areas. In October 2018 the Board announced its decision to the public via a brief press release. In November 2018 the organization sent letters to support staff offering severance packages to avoid or reduce involuntary staff reduction.

These announcements caught participant stakeholders by surprise. Newspaper reporters described service recipients, service deliverers and donors as *dismayed* and *shocked*. Stakeholders told reporters that the Board did not understand the *depth of concern and opposition generated by these actions*. Staff members expressed mistrust of and alienation from the organization by reporting feelings of being undervalued and ignored by organization leadership.

3.2 Mistrust Had Impact: Participant Stakeholders Responded with Written Criticism and Community Action

Community stakeholders formed a committee to protest the Board's decision to sell the asset. The committee posted a petition on change.org asking for a change in the organization's leadership. The petition began, *In 2009 in the midst of [sic] the worst recession since the 1930's the organization's board committed millions of dollars (for a new building) thinking that expansion would increase student enrollment. Lo and behold enrollment did not increase. Instead this foolish decision saddled the organization with enormous debt and increased operating costs which led the leadership to increase prices which further reduced enrollment creating the death spiral the organization now confronts.*

3.3 Mistrusted Parties Experienced Surprise, Shock and Dismay at Participant Stakeholders' Communication

The organization's Board convened an ad hoc meeting to address the existential challenge articulated in the online petition. Board members described themselves as not addressing the issues effectively. They acknowledged the harm that resulted from withholding information about their process that participant stakeholders experienced as mistrust. The Board experienced surprise about the extent to which it had become isolated from the passionate attachment of these stakeholders to the organization's mission as they perceived and interpreted it. They were dismayed to learn that participant stakeholders felt scorned by the Board's lack of effort to understand their level of devotion.

Board members agreed as individuals and as a group to reflect upon who they were and what they were doing with the aim of regrouping around core organizational values. Their reflections forced them to recognize their failure to acknowledge the contributions of participant stakeholders to advancing organizational values. They agreed to start immediately to strengthen the organization from the inside out, beginning with their own commitment to match their behaviors to their values.

3.4 Implications of Stakeholders' Experiences of Mistrust for the Organization's Ability to Manage Its Material and Reputational Capacity and Survival

The organization's Board asked itself how it had come to be so far removed from what was going on outside its doors. In short, it experienced a mistrust of the information about its own material and

reputational capacity as it was presented to Board members at their various meetings. Was the decline in enrollment attributable to structural factors such as changes in audience interest and demographic shifts in its service community, the explanation that precipitated the decision to sell. Or, as suggested by the online petition, could organizational shifts and innovations such as digital marketing, matching enrollment drives to service utilization and involving service recipients and service providers in outreach fill the gap more efficiently?

This experience of mistrust, though shocking and dismaying to the Board, precipitated an accumulation of organizational data from other internal and external sources. The Board determined that demographic trends and changes in media consumption were not causing declining enrollment. The triangulated information led the Board to conclude that its assets were not just brick and mortar, but included service providers, service recipients, support staff and the community at large. They concluded that everyone owned enrollment and thus everyone could fix it.

Their experience of mistrust led to a qualitative change in how the Board addressed its responsibility to manage the organization's reputational and material capacity. Instead of remaining isolated and dependent upon a single stream of information, Board members called for volunteers across all stakeholders to populate three working groups focused on Enrollment, Proposed Asset Sale, and Communications. They tasked the working groups with developing data resources, open and constructive dialog and concrete, specific plans for improvement.

4. Discussion

4.1 Congruence with Contemporary Research

Carey (2017) stated that mistrust was not the absence of trust. Thus, as a social scientist interested in understanding mistrust, I was wary of starting from the assumption that if trust enhanced social interaction, mistrust destroyed it. Rather, mistrust was a strategy of its own that could be activated to minimize the inherent risk (to decrease uncertainty) in social interaction. The accumulated evidence of this study underscores this construction of mistrust.

In the context of the unfolding experiences of stakeholders in a local nonprofit organization mistrust was a strategy activated to reduce uncertainty under conditions of uncertainty. Declining enrollment meant reduced revenues that threatened the organizational capacity. The organization's response to reduced capacity, selling an asset, engendered mistrust manifest in swift threats from participant stakeholders to the organization's reputation.

Their experiences corresponded to both the theoretical framework of the study and the expectations of recent research studies. For participant stakeholders the strategy of mistrust eliminated favorable expectations and allowed unfavorable expectations to be perceived as certain (Saunders & Thornhill, 2019). For example, a founder of the committee said the Board's move was *shortsighted* and *the latest in a long series of actions by the (organization's) leadership that suggest they really don't know what they are doing*, clearly articulating cynicism and doubt.

Disgruntled participants quickly used word-of-mouth and local news media to disseminate their experience of mistrust. Organizational representatives failed to manage inconsistency between information and explanation in this changing environment (Saunders & Thornhill, 2019). The Board acknowledged both its failure to control the timing and accuracy of information about its decision to sell its asset and its inability to accurately gauge the intensity of the attachment of participant stakeholders to the organization.

4.2 Intersection of Communication and Information in a Social Strategy of Mistrust

After reading the online petition of participant stakeholders, Board members immediately understood the level of mistrust expressed in the petition and local media coverage. They determined that their response would be to embrace the passion being expressed and to redirect participant stakeholders' passion into working in a unified way on the organization's behalf. The Board members recognized that their ineffective communication tactics had impeded their ability to get the word out.

The Board asserted publicly that while at a crossroads, the organization was not fundamentally broken, an important assumption because participant stakeholders had been reporting otherwise. Board members also called a meeting of interested parties with the goal of telling all concerned why they should care about the material and reputational capacity of the organization. They integrated clear, deliberate, consistent language into their communication.

Their old tactic of giving out information in dribs and drabs led to perceptions that the communications of organizational representatives were inadequate and to be discounted. Board members had to change their strategic approach to communication. Their revised tactic was to simultaneously increase positive word-of-mouth and reduce negative word-of-mouth.

The Board members made sure that their communications were based in fact and that explanation was directly supported by information. They made sure that their communications were clear enough to assure recipients that they were not being evasive. The intent of initiating these tactics was to provide information that would convince stakeholders that organizational representatives were taking their interests and concerns into consideration.

Board members emphasized that rather than being perceived as acting behind closed doors they wanted stakeholders to participate in solving the organizational challenges. They empowered these stakeholders by including them in working groups whose reports and recommendations would be integrated into organizational policy and decisions. The collective tactics undertaken by various participants in this instance served to mitigate but not eliminate mistrust.

4.3 Evidence that Mistrust is Dimensional

Carey (2017) asserted that although participants in social interaction assumed that others were unknowable, actors also assumed that some were less unknowable than others. Chan (2018) demonstrated that mistrust had a dimensional component that could vary from high to low. The evidence of this study confirmed the variability or dimensionality of mistrust.

All groups of stakeholders in the organization activated strategies of mistrust throughout the duration of

the study. The initial mistrust of participant stakeholders was precipitated by feelings of being essentially blindsided by the Board's decisions about how to turn around declining enrollment. A newspaper editorial described the organization's employees as feeling poorly treated, service recipients as feeling upset and everyone as feeling shocked. These stakeholders reacted with public criticism of organizational leadership, calling them short-sighted and foolish, which engendered mistrust on the part of leadership. This descriptive vocabulary indicated high mistrust.

Meanwhile the Board was doing its own assessment and self-evaluation which resulted in an attitude of mistrust about the basis of information it received about the causes of declining enrollment. Although precipitated by the vociferous reaction of community stakeholders, the skepticism that Board members developed was information-driven and lacked an emotional element. This finding may be of use to researchers looking to ascertain what are the indicators and/or parameters of high/medium/low mistrust.

4.4 Evidence that Mistrust Has a Positive Component

The medium/low mistrust of the sources of information experienced by Board members led them to accumulate additional information and data that led to a re-evaluation. The organizational leadership determined that the causes of declining enrollment were more situational than structural. Based on new information, the Board concluded that the enrollment challenge did not have to be met with structural changes. In this study medium/low mistrust, rather than depleting resources as implied by recent researchers, resulted in accumulating resources, in this case information. In other words, a strategy of mistrust was positive in nature.

The Board postponed its decision to sell. This decision mitigated the high mistrust of participant stakeholders. Meanwhile, these stakeholders organized a formal group to gather its own information about how the organization got into its state of continuously declining enrollment. The findings of this group led to several recommendations designed to increase enrollment without selling the asset.

At the meeting of organizational leaders with representatives of the participant stakeholders to discuss their respective findings, participants experienced bi-lateral motivation to act collectively within an environment of uncertainty about the organization's future. This was manifest by the formation of the working groups whose membership encompassed all stakeholders. Thus, although stakeholders brought varying levels of mistrust to the meeting, collective action, engendering a positive accumulation of resources, ensued.

4.5 Evidence of Components of Mistrust

Local newspapers reported that postponing the asset sale showed that the Board was listening to its stakeholder participants whose joint effort contributed to the postponement decision. Stakeholders asked one another to engage the community to work on their behalf, while perceiving themselves as organizational ambassadors. This reflected the revised organizational tactic, generated by mistrust, of increasing positive, informed communication by word of mouth. The evidence of this study suggests that an important component of mistrust is communication.

Information sharing was an agreed-upon condition among all stakeholders who volunteered to be members of the working groups. This explicit assumption of the responsibility to report fairly, timely and accurately within and between working groups was expected to facilitate putting the groups' recommendations into policy and action. Group members worked to set clear written guidelines in plain language. The evidence of this study suggests that an important component of mistrust is information.

Both Chan's (2018) study of mistrust in the practice of medicine in the People's Republic of China and in George, Duran and Norris's (2014) metaanalysis of minority mistrust of researchers in the United States found that information asymmetry was the dominant explanatory component of why one group mistrusted the other. Consonant with this result, but in an entirely different context, the results of this study implied that for holders of the balance of information, it was incumbent to explain the reasons for a decision in accessible language. The evidence of this study suggests that information asymmetry may be an identifier of mistrust.

I ascertained perceptions of mistrust by stakeholders in a local nonprofit organization by looking for expressions of suspicion, doubt, wariness and cynicism. The effects of such behaviors were not necessarily observable or enunciated exhaustion, withdrawal and conflict. Although expressing mistrust, study stakeholders exhibited curiosity, evidenced by accumulating data, evaluation and assessment, evidenced by the Board's reaction to the outpouring of opposition to its decision, and collective action, evidenced by forming working groups. The evidence of this study suggests that certain components of mistrust may be positive in nature.

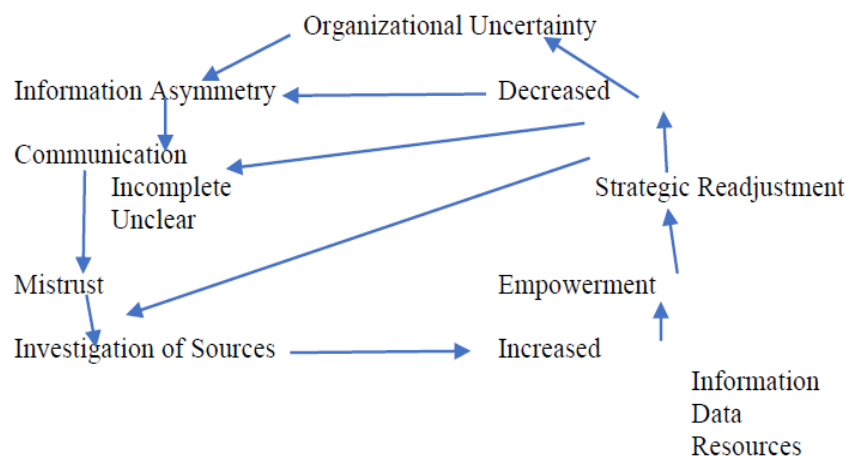


Figure 1. Conceptualization of the Positive Component of the Social Construction of Mistrust

Figure 1 shows the elements of mistrust as suggested by the research results. In an environment of organizational uncertainty, in this case declining enrollment, control of information led to communication deficiencies that engendered mistrust that led to investigation of the bases of information that accumulated more data and resources that empowered organizational stakeholders to

undertake strategic readjustment that mitigated, but not eliminated, uncertainty, information asymmetry, communication deficiency and mistrust.

Research into the nature of mistrust as a social construct is in its early stages. The evidence derived from this study underscores the importance of understanding mistrust as a distinct, influential social construct. It suggests several components and concomitants of mistrust as worthy of subsequent investigation.

Analysis and interpretation of research results showed that when mistrust was activated all organizational stakeholders ascertained and communicated relevant information that empowered them to become flexible in adapting organizational practices in a changing, uncertain environment. This flexibility contributed to broader exchange of data and resources across stakeholders. Improved communication and information sharing decreased mistrust that made for more empowered stakeholders who developed more flexible policies that better positioned the organization to survive in conditions of uncertainty.

Social change practitioners can develop awareness and understanding of the nature of mistrust among organizational stakeholders. Agents for protecting organizational capacity and reputation are not just the fiduciary agents or Board members. The organization in this study included all stakeholders in developing multiple data sources, open and constructive dialog and concrete, specific plans for improvement. Other organizational stakeholders can adapt these tactics to improve their capacities.

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