Self-trust, trust/distrust to other people in volunteers

Abstract

The article considers the level of self-trust as a system forming factor of the prosocial activity of volunteers. It is shown that volunteers with a high level of self-trust are characterized by less psychological distance in the relationship of trust to others, which is based on identity, while volunteers with an average level of self-trust relate to others on knowledge. Volunteers with a low level of self-trust in prosocial behavior in the course of interaction replace their trust with other interchange taking into account their own interests.

Keywords: self-trust, trust and distrust to other people, criteria of trust, altruism, egoism, social responsibility, volunteering, prosocial activity

Introduction

An interest in prosocial activity research is established since mid 19th century, some works that have influenced its development are those of Jean Piaget, Lawrence Kohlberg, Leonard Berkowitz, John M. Darley, Bibb Latané, Carl Rogers. Volunteer activity is a type of prosocial activity that is being intensely studied currently. Most of the researchers distinguish following characteristics of the volunteer personality: orientation on work with people and for people, overall positive world perception, altruism, responsibility, ability to cooperate with other people and to organize their activities. Generally, the specific aspects of volunteer activity are necessity to cooperate with various types of people who the helping activity is directed at and to act contextualy, lack of time and resources, uncertain and extreme conditions. Successful fulfillment of a taken social responsibility relies on volunteer trust in himself, his abilities, and his partners in that activity and in people who the helping activity is directed at. A number of researchers consider trust to be a phenomenon turning interpersonal interaction in a constructive direction as self-trust and to other people facilitates personal fulfillment thus supporting cooperation on all levels of social and business communication. Trust to others as a psychological relationship manifests itself as an interest and respect to an object or a partner, readiness to express goodwill and to take actions encouraging successful cooperation. In general trust phenomenon facilitates development of harmonic relationships and suppresses asocial behavior. Formally, the dynamic properties of the trust manifested: the measure in the level of credibility as the basic properties; selectivity the ability to select more or less trust to another; and the partial is expressed in a variety of behavioral strategies used in the behavior acts, the more the level of credibility, the more various forms of behavior. The paper considers form a dynamic properties of self-trust: measure and selectivity. Presented in the current work is the study of interrelation of personal prosocial activity index and levels of trust/distrust to others in groups of volunteers with various levels of self-trust. Individual psychological characteristics (altruism/egoism, social responsibility levels) are considered as the prosocial activity indices. Based on that assumption the following hypotheses were formulated:

1. The level of self-trust is a systemic factor of volunteer prosocial activity and it determines the person orientation on altruism and social responsibility.

2. Self-trust is one of the major determinants of interpersonal interaction; it determines the structure of trust/distrust in other people.

Methods

Research participants

Current study presents the results of an internet research with 138 respondents in total. To determine the likelihood of formulated hypotheses statistical data fitting was carried out. On the basis of that fitting groups with low (n=24), intermediary (n=24) and high (n=24) level of self-trust were detected. Respondents’ age varied from 16 to 59 years, gender distribution was 81% women, 19% men.

Research methods and procedure

Level of self-trust was determined in accordance with “Method for Studying Trust to Own Self”. Initially this method was intended to study self-trust in teenagers, later it was proved to be efficient in adult respondent research. Basic criteria for trust/distrust to others were defined according to “Individual trust/distrust to others estimation method”. Study of altruism/egoism motivation was based on “Social-psychological resolution in the field of motivation and demand diagnostic method”. Ability of a person to follow social rules and take responsibility was determined as specified in “Social responsibility scale”. Questionnaire was offered to VK social network users who were involved in volunteer activity. Participants of that internet-based research read the instruction and filled in their forms on a special website. Statistical (correlation, dispersion and cluster) analysis of research results was carried out in STATISTICA 10 package. Additionally, for results of “Individual trust/distrust to others estimation method” frequency analysis was carried out.

Results

Research results have shown that in the high self-trust level group
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Based on a ‘distant neighbors’. Cluster analysis revealed three biggest groups. The hypotheses of the research were used a tree like cluster analysis group are characterized by orientation on themselves in interaction. First group are open to interaction and they see their partner as a person others on an emotional component – reliability. Volunteers from the third group include “Orientation on egoism” and “Downtsides P” indices which explain attitude of person with low self-trust level in interaction with other people. This orientation expresses as ambivalence of attitude to partners in interaction where trust to others is substituted by estimation of partner weak sides and awareness of their manifestations. Unification of this cluster with the first two supports A. Kuprencenkov suggestion that “Downtsides” index allows to differentiate various people and social groups and that does not contradict functional dynamic approach that justifies self-trust division into levels.

Discussion

Qualitative analysis of trust/distrust scale values shows that with increase in respondents’ self-trust role of reliability in their estimation of most trusted other gradually increases and role of downsides and rationale gradually decreases. When treating an interaction partner who did not meet trust expectations with increase in self-trust estimations based on sympathy and unity scales gradually decrease. Analysis of test scale deltas has shown that for all three groups the most important scales to base their trust on are emotional criteria – reliability and sympathy. It is worth noting that volunteers with high self-trust level are oriented on unity and knowledge criteria, that suggestion is supported by high estimations of a person who is the most trusted for them. Groups with various levels of self-trust are distinctly differentiated by levels of altruism and egoism. Data acquired in this research demonstrate that volunteers’ level of self-trust is not only linked with degree of orientation on altruism or egoism and social responsibility but also with manner of expressing trust/distrust to others. In general, it is worth noting that volunteer activity is linked with prosocial activity but helping behavior may be realized out of the altruism bounds. This could be acts of help that are realized as traditional and stereotypical manifestations (cultural habits, rules of etiquette), help as a rule of mutuality (quid pro quo).

Many researchers suggest that egotistical motives may also encourage volunteer activity and that suggestion was proven in the current research as group of volunteers with low self-trust level which is oriented on egoism in interactions is able to realistically estimate downsides of others to mitigate uncertainty risks. Results of current research demonstrate connection between volunteers’ orientation on altruism and social responsibility, i.e. personal aptitude to conform in their behavior to social norms generally accepted in society, to fulfill their role responsibilities and readiness to be held responsible for their actions. According to A. Zhuravlev, social responsibility acts as one of the signs of sociopsychological maturity. It means that responsibility for another begins with self-trust and irresponsibility roots in person inability to self-trust and to others. Frequency analysis has shown that group of volunteers with high self-trust level uses bigger spectrum of criteria to trust others. According to Tsabbarova research as closure with interaction partner (prosocial activity) intensifies number of used trust criteria increases. That fact means that for group of volunteers...
with high self-trust level psychological distance in relationships with other people is shorter. Thus, studies have shown that self-trust level is one of the most important determinants of interpersonal interaction that defines structure of trust/distrust to others. Results obtained in current research correspond to the model of trust to others created by Levicky et al. That model differentiates three types of trust: trust based on rationale (“That man does what he has promised”; “I heard about his good reputation from other people”), trust based on knowledge (“I have enough experience of interacting with this person”; “I feel like I know him well”), trust based on identity (“We have common interests”; “We have common values in life”). It was established that for group of volunteers with high self-trust level one of the most important criteria to trust others is unity, i.e. that group is characterized by trust based on identity. In Kupreichenko typology that type is called “maximalist”, he is oriented on others, for him the most important values are common goals, spiritual closure and tolerance to do insides of other people. In general people with higher self-trust level are oriented on others, are able to form trusted relationships based on common goal and partner reliability. Volunteers in group with intermediary self-trust level base their trust on knowledge. Representatives of that group are characterized by readiness to take responsibility for their actions and orientation on cognitive component (“Rationale” and “Knowledge”) in behavior estimation of a person who did once break the trust. Volunteers with low self-trust level are characterized by manifestation of ambivalent personal qualities (altruism/egoism) in prosocial activity. They tend to substitute real trust by rationale. It is shown that this group demonstrates maximum number of interrelation between the criteria of trust/distrust to others with personal qualities. In this group increase in self-trust level is one of the major determinants of interpersonal interaction defining the structure of trust to other people and orientation on altruism, egoism and social responsibility in prosocial activity.

Conclusion

1. Self-trust is a systemic factor of volunteer prosocial activity. Self-trust level determines person orientation on altruism, egoism and social responsibility.

2. Self-trust level is one of the major determinants of interpersonal interactions defining structure of trust/distrust to other people.

3. Group of volunteers with high level of self-trust are characterized by shorter psychological distance in trust relationships. For this group, the most important type of trust is the one based on identity: they rely on common goals and partner reliability criteria when forming trusting relationships.

4. For group of volunteers with intermediary level of self-trust the most important type of trust is knowledge based and taking responsibility links with rationale. Both of these qualities demonstrate orientation on cognitive component in behavior estimation of a man who broke their trust once.

5. Volunteers with low self-trust level in prosocial activity orient themselves on expectation of benefit that could show conditional trust to others. Attitude to rationalization lessens situation uncertainty and substitute’s real self-trust.

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Conflicts of interest

The authors declare that there is no conflicts of interest.

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