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# Factors of Institutional Trust: A Study of Students in Mindanao State University-Marawi City

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## Abstract

This study aims at investigating the impact of respondents' social trust, perceived institutional corruption, and performance on the respondents' level of institutional trust in Mindanao State University-Marawi City. Quantitative research design was utilized in the study. Questionnaire were given to 285 respondents which were interpreted using Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation (Pearson's  $r$ ), Independent Samples T-test, and One-Way ANOVA. Respondents' perceptions of the mechanisms to improve institutional trust were collected during interview and analyzed using thematic analysis. The study found that they have high level of social trust towards university officials, moderately low level of perceived institutional corruption, and good perceived institutional performance affect the high level of institutional trust. It was also suggested by most of the selected ten respondents that services, transparency, and accountability could improve institutional trust. Future researchers may conduct a similar study for possible changes in the respondents' perceptions during the new administration at Mindanao State University, Marawi Campus.

**Keywords:** Institutional Corruption, Institutional Performance, Institutional Trust, Social Trust

## 1. Introduction

Mindanao State University (MSU) is perceived to be one of the most prestigious universities in the Philippines. Many students from distant provinces sacrificed and went far from their places to enroll in MSU-Main Campus, Marawi City. The university has more than eleven thousand enrolled students. Indeed, MSU has diverse students who also have respective views and opinions. Thus, it is intriguing and significant to know their institutional trust towards the said institution depending, of course, on the factors that can influence their institutional trusts such as interpersonal trust towards university officials, perceived corruption, and university performance.

In previous studies, scholars have delved into various interpretations of trust (Maguire and Phillips, 2008). However, our focus lies specifically on trust within institutions, defined as the confidence respondents place in

these entities. Extensive research has examined both the determinants and degrees of institutional trust across different nations. Social trust, alternatively referred to as social capital or interpersonal trust (Sønderskov & Dinesen, 2015), is a critical aspect. Perceived corruption, on the other hand, reflects respondents' perceptions of institutional integrity. Meanwhile, institutional performance pertains to the quality of services provided, ranging from excellent to poor.

Chang and Chu (2006), along with Chang (2013), uncovered a pervasive lack of institutional trust among respondents from various democratic nations, largely attributed to widespread corruption. Additionally, Espinal et al. (2006), Boateng (2017), and Seabo and Molefe (2017) highlighted government performance as a significant determinant of institutional trust in their research. Other studies have also explored factors influencing institutional trust, particularly through the lens of undergraduate students' perceptions. In the Philippines, corruption stands out as a prominent social issue, as emphasized by Batalla (2020) and Quah (2010). Its rampant and unbridled nature significantly erodes institutional trust (Chang, 2013), underscoring the imperative of understanding citizens' trust in institutions. Recognizing that the youth represent the future leadership capable of effecting positive change (Sihombing, 2018), their perceptions become invaluable in this discourse.

Drawing upon the insights gleaned from the aforementioned studies, our research endeavors to probe into the factors influencing and the extent of institutional trust among 285 students from the MSU-College of Education in Marawi City, Philippines.

## **2. Method**

This study employed a quantitative research design, leveraging data collected from adapted and modified versions of the Asian Barometer Survey (Wave 4) and the World Values Survey (2017-2020 and 2010-2014).

Conducted at the College of Education, Mindanao State University, Main Campus in Marawi City, the research enlisted 285 respondents from this academic institution. Convenience sampling, relying on the availability of participants, was utilized for respondent selection, with enrolment in MSU-College of Education during the 2020-2021 academic year as a primary criterion.

Data collection occurred between June 25 and July 06, 2021. Analysis involved the use of frequency distributions, means, and standard deviations. Additionally, Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation (Pearson's  $r$ ) was employed to ascertain correlations between variables. To determine statistically significant differences in mean scores between two groups and dependent variables, Independent Samples T-tests were conducted. Furthermore, One-Way ANOVA was employed to explore significant relationships among more than two groups and dependent variables.

## **3. Results and Discussion**

### *3.1 Demographic Profile of the Respondents*

The respondents were mostly 20-22 years (77.5%), female (93.3%), 3rd year (40.7%), paying students (80.4%), resided in Lanao del Sur (76.5%), took the course BEEd GEN ED (32.6%), and earning below 10,000 PHP family monthly income (76.5%). The results of running an Independent Samples T-Test showed that gender, academic status, age, year level, course, hometown, current address, and family income do not play any role in as far as the assessment of the perception of institutional trust.

### 3.2 Social Trust

Table 1: Respondents' Level of Social Trust

| INDICATORS                     | Mean  | SD   | Qualitative description | Level of Trust |
|--------------------------------|-------|------|-------------------------|----------------|
| MSU System President           | 5.93  | 1.63 | Trustworthy             | High           |
| Dean of your college           | 6.46  | 1.51 | Trustworthy             | High           |
| Chairperson in your department | 6.48  | 1.52 | Trustworthy             | High           |
| Faculty in your college        | 6.50  | 1.50 | Very trustworthy        | Very High      |
| Staff in your college          | 6.36  | 1.49 | Trustworthy             | High           |
| Peace Keeping Force employees  | 6.01  | 1.64 | Trustworthy             | High           |
| Housing/Dormitory Managers     | 5.53  | 1.75 | Trustworthy             | High           |
| OVERALL                        | 43.27 | 9.93 | Trustworthy             | High           |

Scaling (mean = qualitative description, level of trust):

7.5-8.4 =totally trustworthy, extremely high; 6.5-7.4 =very trustworthy, very high; 5.5-6.4 =trustworthy, high;

4.5-5.5 =somewhat trustworthy, moderately high; 3.5-4.4 =somewhat trustworthy, relatively low;

2.5-3.4 =not trustworthy, low; 1.5-2.4 =not very trustworthy, very low; 1.0-1.4 =totally not trustworthy, extremely low

The results revealed that students perceived the following to be trustworthy: the MSU System President, College Dean, Department Chairperson, College of Education Faculty, College Staff of the respondent, Peace Keeping Force employees, and Housing/Dormitory Managers. The College of Education was very trustworthy to them. Overall, it found that the social trust of the respondents in the university is high. This result also implies that education students have very high trust in the faculty of the College of Education. The faculty at the Elementary or Secondary Level might be kind, approachable, and fair to their students. On the other hand, the respondents described the MSU System President as trustworthy. Similar to the dean, the chairperson, the staff, the peacekeeping force employees, and Housing/Dormitory Managers in the university. It implies that they had high trust in the said officials. Respondents might believe that MSU officials deserved the trust because of their utmost effort in prioritizing the academic concerns of students. Thus, the respondents' level of trust in all officials in the university is high. However, these positive results might not be honest. The respondents might be afraid of getting low grades in evaluating the officials, the possibility of receiving hate, and unfair services from other officials, and the university might not allow them to graduate.

### 3.3 Institutional Corruption

Table 2: Respondents' Perceived Level of Institutional Corruption

| INDICATORS                                                                  | Mean | SD   | Qualitative description | Level of Trust  |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|------|-------------------------|-----------------|
| All officials in MSU Marawi campus understand the meaning of corruption.    | 5.33 | 2.02 | Somewhat agree          | Moderately Low  |
| Most of them can define corruption.                                         | 5.61 | 1.89 | Agree                   | Low             |
| There is no corruption happening in Mindanao State University-Main Campus.  | 4.06 | 1.98 | Somewhat disagree       | Relatively High |
| Most officials are not engaged in corrupt activities.                       | 4.48 | 1.81 | Somewhat disagree       | Relatively High |
| Every official in Mindanao State University-Main Campus is not corrupt.     | 4.36 | 1.80 | Somewhat disagree       | Relatively High |
| Officials are not accepting a bribe in order to get the services you need.  | 4.55 | 1.74 | Somewhat agree          | Moderately Low  |
| There is a wide transparency in the conduct of various transactions in MSU. | 4.72 | 1.70 | Somewhat agree          | Moderately Low  |
| OVERALL                                                                     | 33.1 | 10.7 | Somewhat agree          | Moderately Low  |
|                                                                             | 1    | 3    |                         |                 |

Scaling (mean = qualitative description, level of trust):

7.5-8.4 =totally agree, extremely low; 6.5-7.4 =strongly agree, very low; 5.5-6.4 =agree, low;

4.5-5.5 =somewhat agree, moderately low; 3.5-4.4 =somewhat disagree, relatively high;

2.5-3.4 =disagree, high; 1.5-2.4 =strongly disagree, very high; 1.0-1.4 =totally not disagree, extremely high

Table 2 unveils the respondents' perceived corruption at Mindanao State University. Accordingly, they somewhat agree that all officials in the MSU Marawi campus understand the meaning of corruption, are not accepting bribes to get the services needed, and are transparent in various transactions. This result implies a moderately low level of corruption at Mindanao State University. This could also imply that MSU officials' prior knowledge of the meaning and impact of corruption could have also inhibited them from accepting bribery and other illegal acts, thus the transparency in their conduct of the various transactions.

### 3.4 Institutional Performance

Table 3: Respondents' Perceived Level of Institutional Performance

| INDICATORS                                                 | Mean         | SD           | Qualitative description | Level of Trust |
|------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|-------------------------|----------------|
| Office of the President (OP)                               | 5.42         | 1.85         | Good                    | Good           |
| Office of the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs (OVCAA) | 5.46         | 1.80         | Good                    | Good           |
| Division of Student Affairs (DSA)                          | 5.43         | 1.75         | Good                    | Good           |
| Office of Admissions (Scholarships)                        | 5.11         | 1.92         | Good                    | Good           |
| Office of the University Registrar                         | 5.20         | 1.84         | Good                    | Good           |
| University Cashier Division                                | 5.19         | 1.82         | Good                    | Good           |
| University Business Office                                 | 5.27         | 1.81         | Good                    | Good           |
| Supreme Student Government                                 | 5.23         | 1.81         | Good                    | Good           |
| College of Information and Technology                      | 5.51         | 1.71         | Very Good               | Very Good      |
| College of Education                                       | 5.91         | 1.73         | Very Good               | Very Good      |
| Main Library                                               | 5.80         | 1.76         | Very Good               | Very Good      |
| Housing/Dormitory                                          | 4.88         | 1.95         | Good                    | Good           |
| <b>OVERALL</b>                                             | <b>64.40</b> | <b>19.39</b> | <b>Good</b>             | <b>Good</b>    |

Scaling (mean = qualitative description, level of trust):

7.5-8.4 =exceptional, exceptional; 6.5-7.4 =excellent, excellent; 5.5-6.4 =very good, very good;

4.5-5.5 =good, good; 3.5-4.4 =very satisfactory; very satisfactory

2.5-3.4 = satisfactory, satisfactory; 1.5-2.4 =poor, poor; 1.0-1.4 =very poor, very poor

The respondents described the performance of the following offices in Mindanao State University, Marawi City, Philippines as very good: College of Information and Technology, College of Education, and Main Library. They confirmed the very good performance of the said offices. This result shows that they were more satisfied with the performance of the College of Education, MSU-Main Library, and College of Information and Technology. However, it further implies that they might not be brave to express their opinions since they often visit the said offices.

On the other hand, the respondents perceived that the following offices perform well: Office of the President, Office of the Vice-Chancellor for Academic Affairs, Division of Student Affairs, Office of Admissions, Office of the University Registrar, University Cashier Division, University Business Office, Supreme Student Government, and Housing/Dormitory, similar to the performances of the University Registrar, Supreme Student Government, and Housing Dormitory. The respondents also described the performance of the offices to be good. Their experiences at the above offices might be enough to describe their satisfaction with the performance of these offices. Generally, the respondents perceived that all offices in Mindanao State University were performing well because they have witnessed the efforts of all concerned in performing their responsibilities in the University.

### 3.5 Institutional Trust

Table 4: Respondents' Institutional Trust

| INDICATORS                                                 | Mean         | SD           | Qualitative description | Level of Trust  |
|------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|-------------------------|-----------------|
| Office of the President (OP)                               | 5.92         | 1.95         | trustful                | High            |
| Office of the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs (OVCAA) | 5.91         | 1.90         | trustful                | High            |
| Division of Student Affairs (DSA)                          | 5.93         | 1.87         | trustful                | High            |
| Office of Admissions (Scholarships)                        | 5.65         | 1.92         | trustful                | High            |
| Office of the University Registrar                         | 5.87         | 1.93         | trustful                | High            |
| University Cashier Division                                | 5.73         | 1.93         | trustful                | High            |
| University Business Office                                 | 5.83         | 1.87         | trustful                | High            |
| Supreme Student Government                                 | 5.76         | 1.80         | trustful                | High            |
| College of Information and Technology                      | 5.99         | 1.86         | trustful                | High            |
| College of Education                                       | 6.34         | 1.96         | trustful                | High            |
| Library                                                    | 6.23         | 1.89         | trustful                | High            |
| Housing (Dormitory)                                        | 5.42         | 1.90         | Somewhat trustful       | Moderately High |
| Security                                                   | 5.20         | 1.93         | Somewhat trustful       | Moderately High |
| <b>OVERALL</b>                                             | <b>75.79</b> | <b>22.80</b> | <b>trustful</b>         | <b>High</b>     |

Scaling (mean =qualitative description, level of trust):

7.5-8.4 =totally trustful, extremely high; 6.5-7.4 =very trustful, very high; 5.5-6.4 = trustful, high;

4.5-5.5 =somewhat trustful, moderately high; 3.5-4.4 =somewhat distrustful, relatively low;

2.5-3.4 =distrustful, low; 1.5-2.4 =very distrustful, very low; 1.0-1.4 =totally distrustful, extremely low

This study shows the institutional trust of students from the College of Education. It found that respondents perceived the following offices to be trustworthy: Office of the President, Office of the Vice-Chancellor for Academic Affairs, Division of Student Affairs, Office of Admissions, Office of the University Registrar, University Cashier Division, University Business Office, Supreme Student Government, College of Information and Technology, College of Education, and Library. This result expresses that the respondents' institutional trust in the above offices is high. This could be attributed to the following effects: good performance of the offices, institutional trust towards the officials is high, and institutional corruption is moderately low.

Additionally, the Housing and Security Offices were perceived to be somewhat trustworthy. It implies a moderately high trust in the said offices. Also, the respondents perceived the Housing Managers to be trustworthy and confirmed their good performance. They also perceived Peace Keeping Forces employees as trustworthy, so they entrust their safety and security. Overall, the respondents' level of trust in the offices at MSU-Marawi is high. Therefore, the results rejected the hypothesis: There is a low level of institutional trust among the respondents.

In a study by Baniamin (2021), he found that institutional trust among respondents in 32 African countries studied is high despite some factors which might affect their institutional trust. It contradicts the study of Kaasa and Andriani (2021), which found a low institutional trust in some European countries, and Seabo and Molefe (2017) also found a low institutional trust in Botswana. Additionally, the study of Chang and Chu (2006), Quah (2010), Chang (2013), and Sihombing (2018) emphasized the concern with decreasing the level of institutional trust in Asian democracies like the Philippines. Along with these results is the study of Song and Lee (2015) which mentioned that officials in public sectors have been concerned with the decrease in institutional trust over the last several decades. In reiteration, the results of this study found that the factors affecting institutional trust were: social trust, institutional performance, and institutional corruption. The following results show the correlation of several factors that affect institutional trust according to the perceptions of MSU students.

### 3.6 Relationship of the Variables

Table 5: The Correlation between Institutional Corruption, Social trust, and Institutional Performance to the Institutional trust

|                           | N   | Mean    | Std. Deviation | Pearson Correlation | p    |
|---------------------------|-----|---------|----------------|---------------------|------|
| Institutional Corruption  | 285 | 33.1193 | 10.73463       | .522                | .000 |
| Social Trust              | 285 | 43.2737 | 9.92519        | .584                | .000 |
| Institutional Performance | 285 | 64.4000 | 19.39475       | .672                | .000 |

The results of running Pearson's Product Moment Correlation test show that a statistically significant relationship existed between institutional corruption (IC) and institutional trust (IT),  $r = .522$ ,  $p < .01$ . Results are true to the sample and also to the respondents of MSU. It tells that institutional corruption is affecting the institutional trust of respondents. This affects everyone according to Baldock (2015).

The results of Pearson's Product Moment Correlation test show that a statistically significant relationship existed between social trust (ST) and institutional trust (IT),  $r = .584$ ,  $p < .01$ . It is true for the entire MSU population. It expresses that the social trust of the respondents in the officials has an impact on their institutional trust in Mindanao State University, Main Campus. Social trust means the faith of people in others they do not personally know (Ervasti et al., 2018).

The results of Pearson's Product Moment Correlation test show that a statistically significant relationship existed between institutional performance (IP) and institutional trust (IT),  $r = .672$ ,  $p < .01$ . It expresses that the university performance affects the institutional trust of the students. Good performance of the university influences the high level of institutional trust. This result is reinforced by the study of Murtin et al. (2018), which showed that confidence in government and perceived institutional performance are positively linked.

## 4. Conclusion

Based on the results, the researchers concluded that the respondents shared different perceptions of the University. The positive results of the study imply satisfaction among officials of the university. The level of social trust of the respondents is high implying that they trust the officials in the University. In addition, this study found that the respondents considered the faculty of the College of Education as the most trustworthy. However, this result could also imply that the respondents might not be brave enough to say anything against the university or the officials for fear of getting low grades or not being able to graduate on time.

Additionally, the students perceived institutional corruption to be moderately low level. It means that they somewhat agree that there is no corruption happening in the university or all officials are not corrupt. However, this could also imply that the respondents were uncertain. They may not have known or experienced that corruption happens in the university. Students might hear rumors about corruption in the university, but they might have no proof to believe it. Because of this, the results could imply that the respondents are satisfied with the performance of the officials and the university. It could also convey no complaints at all about the performance of the faculty or any officials in the University. However, they could also be afraid to give low ratings to the officials.

Furthermore, the results testified that social trust, institutional corruption, and performance affect institutional trust. Since the respondents trusted every official, perceived no corruption in the university, and were satisfied with their performances, this could imply that their level of institutional trust in Mindanao State University, Marawi City is high. Moreover, in the interviews conducted among selected respondents on the mechanisms to improve institutional trust, the following were suggested: services, transparency, and accountability would

improve institutional trust. This means that institutional trust could improve more if all officials would improve the said mechanisms.

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