



## An Investigation into the Factors Affecting People's Trust in Government Performance

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**Abstract.** The present study aimed to investigate and analyze the role of the government performance in people' and citizens' trust in the government. Public trust means that the public expect officials and employees of state-owned organizations to positively respond to their expectations by their actions in dealing with the public. The present study is applied in terms of the objective and descriptive with regard to the method. Also, the method of data collection is documentary-library one. The obtained results showed that from management perspective, the reason for distrust in government pertains to the type of government performance. From the specific perspective of public administration, the high workload and the area of widespread government activity are the causes of distrust because according to the limited budget, the volume of the government's responsibilities is so broad that the government does not have the ability to do all of them which in turn will reduce or deprive the citizens' trust.

**Keywords:** Government Performance, Trust in government

### 1. INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, researchers have recognized that the cause of most distrusts in governments is the type of their performance. From the perspective of public administration, the high workload and widespread government sections are one of the roots of mistrust because according to the limited budget, the volume of the government's responsibilities is so broad that the government does not have the ability to do all of them. This is what researchers in sociology call the lack of social capital and economists name distrust in the lawyer [1].

A bulk of studies suggests that much of the distrust is related to the lack of accountability and governments' incompetence. Hence, in previous studies, most orientations on public trust focused on accountability and the role of strategic environmental factors and also providing a classification in this regard have attracted little attention.

Trust is essentially formed in the context of the degree of risk and uncertainty; in other words, trust is necessary in situations where information is incomplete. Accordingly, trust is the belief about which others will do or will not act. When we trust in others, we are not sure of their consequences i.e. we expect in relation to others' actions without knowing what will be the end result [2].

Public trust in the government is very important for managers, employees and agents of each political system because they play a central role in the support of formulation and implementation of public policies as well as effective accompaniment and cooperation of citizens[3].

In this regard, the main objective of this study is to answer which factors are effective in increasing people's trust in the government in line with the level of government performance.

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### **The study objective**

- The current study aims to investigate factors influencing people's trust in governments.

### **The study questions**

- What is the relationship between the concept of political trust and people's trust in government performance?
- What is the relationship between the concept of public trust and people's trust in government performance?
- What factors affect people's and citizens' trust in government performance?

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

This study is applied in terms of the objective and descriptive with regard to the method. It is descriptive because depicts a reality-based picture of the current situation and perfectly describes what is observed. Also, the present study is a documentary–library type in a way that to collect the required data to answer the study questions, by reviewing the resources and literature, this issue would be achieved.

## **3. REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE**

### **3.1. Trust**

The reason that people in the community live together, respect each other and perhaps have charitable or at least non-malicious behavior towards each other pertains to a kind of superficial trust among individuals, but the functional and beneficial value of trust appears to prevent the risk of social relations that is the necessary condition to prevent chaos and paralysis of society is to strengthen trust among people.

In political and modern sociology theory, the concept of trust is normally defined within the framework of a relationship [4], however, in this regard, many researchers in sociology pay attention to individuals and systems. In a trust-based atmosphere, instruments such as compulsion lose their performance and satisfaction is replaced for it which is one of the major objectives that the society administrators are seeking for. Hence, trust is a rational possibility based on which an actor anticipates the behavior of other groups before its occurrence [4]. Some definitions related to the concept of trust have been mentioned as follows:

- In Oxford English Dictionary, trust means to ensure or rely on some features or characteristics of a person or organization, accept or give credit to a person or organization without reviewing and receiving evidences and so on.
- Trust is a positive expectation with regard to the fact that the other party does not opportunistically behave in their speech, behavior and decisions [3].

Trust means the psychological state enabling people to put their vulnerability and welfare in the hands of other sectors and expect positive behavior of these sectors [5].

Trust is a level of confidence that a person has with regard to others and accordingly, provides a fair, ethical and predictable conduct [6].

### 3.2. Political trust

Political trust emphasizes on people's tendency to follow the political leaders in the community. Fukuyama points out to the common understanding of ethical, social and political society with consensus on the social values [7]. On the other hand, according to Hetherington, political trust is the degree of citizens' belief on the ability and success of political leaders in meeting their expectations. From his perspective, there is, on one hand, a close relationship between social and political trusts and on the other hand, between the political experiences of individuals and their perceptions of government performance. In this definition, the key and important element lies in the perception of citizens on government efficiency and not reality related to government's successes and status [8].

According to Sitrin, Political trust refers to individuals' feeling about politicians and their policies. Lipset and Schneider limited political confidence to political leaders and believed whenever people think that politicians only consider their own interests, the trust in the government falls. Easton believes that political trust has a direction toward both political system and holders of power at grassroots level [9]. According to Britzr's theories, the dimensions of political trust can be considered in a wide range of the types of political trust including the following:

- The rate of people's trust, belief or confidence in the system or political system
- The rate of people's trust, belief or confidence in the active agents in political system

The rate of people's trust, belief or confidence in available political institutions [10].

### 3.3. Public trust

According to March's and Olson's views, trust is based on a kind of expectation. The deviation from these expectations makes trust undermined. According to Zakir, mistrust is created when suspicions occurs [11]. So, public trust means that the public expect officials and employees of state-owned organizations to positively respond to their expectations by their actions in dealing with the public [12].

Based on the classifications made in connection on the basis of investigating the public trust, five types of approaches of public trust have been raised including management, governmental management, sociology, economics and Islamic approaches [13].

In the business management approach, the cause of public distrust is the government performance and reformation on the quality of services can increase trust in the government. In the governmental management approach, according to the budget, the volume of government's responsibilities is so vast to the extent that government does not have the required ability to do all of them and due to the high workload, it cannot meet the needs of their citizens. Economic view is a rational and utilitarian approach to public trust. From this perspective, the existence of original and attorney shows the growth of distrust between the two sides that is each of the two original and attorney groups maximizes their own interests and in this case, they cannot trust each another. In sociological approach, factors such as social capital are effective on improving public trust. In Islamic view, the most important factor of distrust between people and government is management and its solution is the close relationship between the government and citizens of Muslim community [1].

#### 4. CONCLUSION

This study investigates factors affecting the trust of citizens in the performance of governments. In this study, using documentary – library method, the theoretical backgrounds to respond to the study questions were addressed. In this regard, in addition to how to work and administrate affairs, state-owned organizations should have pay attention to reflect their activities on public opinion, view, people’s perception on activities and their policies and carefully examine the causes of improvement and reduction in this field. According to the results of this study and similar studies, a special attention to the level of political trust is necessary with regard to effective environmental factors. Based on the available literature, four factors including political participation, rate of civil liberties, the rule of law and people’s perception of political corruption are factors influencing the attitude of people on public and political trust in government performance. Some cases of the required measures that the government should do in order to increase public and political trust of people have been mentioned as follows:

- In order to strengthen and rehabilitate the political participation of people, providing necessary facilities are required for increasing the share of people in policy- and public decision-making, taking full advantage of ability and talent of the people, the implementation of public policies and programs and providing an opportunity so that people use the right of evaluation and constant monitoring on the activities of politicians.
- In order to improve the status of people’s perception on civil liberties, it is essential that citizens be allowed in a way that they can address their views and opinions in relation to problems by free and independent news media with various political and social views. Also, people are let to use the rights of comment, criticism and freedom of expression.
- In order to promote the country’s legal status, managers must pay attention to cases such as law implementation, clarity and transparency of rules in the society, not discriminate between ordinary people and those in power and wealth against the rules, authority and independence of the judiciary system against the pressure of political, economic and social groups and barricade against them.
- People’s perception on the rate of the existence and spread of corruption in any society is more important than the actual level of corruption prevailing in a country because their perceptions and current attitude form the basis of people's judgment and behavior. In this regard, some recommendations are offered: the legitimate and non-personalized allocation of political posts and governmental positions based on meritocracy, lack of the use of state managers of their political influence to obtain personal gain and prohibit others from doing this, and the lack of authorities’ use of specific information and exclusive concessions for themselves.
- The performance of political parties during periods seizing power or election campaigns in various countries has deeply created the belief in people that any dominated party acts based on corruption system and only considers the interests of their own party. Thus, all appointments are usually made on the basis of partisanship and developed policies will be guided toward the group interests of the parties. In this regard, governments should design and plan economic, political and party structures in the government such that the political and economic distortions of these parties will be prevented as far as possible and they will be conducted toward national interests.

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