

Session III-B

HOW TO DEVELOP A TRUSTWORTHY RELATIONSHIP TO REDUCE A PERCEIVED RISK FACTOR: IS INFORMATION DISCLOSURE SUFFICIENT?

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Risk communication is important in developing a trusting relationship between citizens, companies, administrative officials and the like. However, it is still unclear as to what are the most effective means accomplishing this. In fact, sometimes it is thought that “giving information disclosure is sufficient” and that “it is enough to implement and strengthen sanctions.” We propose that information disclosure and sanction implementation are important, but are not sufficient. The aim of this study is to determine the necessary conditions on which trust from the viewpoint of public evaluation may be built.

We argue two points in this presentation. The first concerns information disclosure. Organizations and administrative officials would be more trusted when someone outside the organization is involved in the disclosure process, thereby improving transparencies of procedure. In such case, it is important to identify who should have legitimacy in such an intervention. This was explored through a survey. Respondents were asked how trustworthy the method of information disclosure is, and who is considered to be a third party. The second concerns implementing sanctions. Sanctions declared by an organization itself would increase trust, while sanctions forced by outside factors would not increase trust. Method: The survey area was the Kanto district which includes Tokyo. 2,500 individuals were sampled using a stratified random sampling method with mailing. City size was stratified according to the population

of municipalities. 621 responses were obtained- a response rate of 24.8%.

Results: The first analysis examined respondents' opinions on method of trust. It was found that self declaration of sanctions was seen as most trustful, and with involvement on outsider also trusted. Involvement of a citizen in information disclosure was relatively less trusted, it was still seen as effective. The second analysis concerned a third party. Academics and citizens interested in the issue were considered as the most appropriate as third party, followed by habitants of the area and NPO/NGO. On the other hand, politicians, governor/mayor and administrative officials were considered less appropriate as third parties. Mass media was also considered less appropriate as a third party. Furthermore, cluster analysis showed that mass media was within the same cluster as politicians, governor/mayor and administrative officials. Citizens interested in the issue were an independent cluster, which implied citizens were regarded as an independent party; an important factor for an unbiased party.

Discussion: Results from this survey suggested that a) self declaration of sanctions and commitment of an outsider in information disclosure should be encouraged, b) citizens who are interested in the issue should be involved since they are regarded as an acceptable third party when information is disclosed. These implications are important in developing a trustworthy relationship.