

THE HONG KONG POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT & MARKETING
DEPARTMENTAL RESEARCH SEMINAR

**Employees' Trust in their Organizations:
Does Familiarity Breed Contempt?**

By

**Prof. Jone L. Pearce
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Date: Wednesday, 14 April 2010

Time: 2:30 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Venue: M802

All interested are welcome

Employees' Trust in their Organizations: Does Familiarity Breed Contempt?

ABSTRACT

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We propose that employees' trust in their organizations is not generalizable from their trust in their supervisors, but an independent judgment based on their assessment of the reliable implementation of organizational policies and procedures. In a large sample consisting of twelve organizations in three distinct studies: ten large geographically dispersed businesses, a federal government agency in the United States, and a Lithuanian manufacturer, we found that employees could distinguish between their interpersonal trust in their immediate supervisory and their trust in the organization. As hypothesized, employees were less likely to trust their organizations the longer their tenure there. Their distrust of their organizations with increasing tenure was independent of their age (which was positively associated with organizational trust in the federal agency), their commitment to their organizations, and their trust in their supervisors. These results contradict previous claims that employees generalize from their interpersonal trust in their supervisors to their organizations and have important theoretical and practical implications.