

# THE EFFECT OF OPENNESS TO EXPERIENCE ON TRUST BEHAVIOR: THE MODERATING ROLE OF SITUATIONAL STRENGTH

Hidajat Hendarsjah\*

Management Study Program, Faculty of Economics and Business, Sebelas Maret University  
Jl. Ir. Sutami No.36, Kentingan, Kec. Jebres, Surakarta City, Central Java 57126, Indonesia  
h.hendarsjah@staff.uns.ac.id

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## ABSTRACT

*The research aimed to integrate how trusting behavior was formed by an interaction between individual personality traits and situational context. Trust game protocol and a series of personality trait questionnaires were utilized to generate the data. A moderated regression with categorical variables was established to test the hypothesis of whether a player's role or situational strength moderated the relationship between players' trait and their corresponding trusting behavior. Regression results showed that situational strength moderated the U-shaped relationship between openness to experience and trusting behavior; such that the U-shaped relationship was more pronounced in weak situations. The research tested the hypotheses in the trust game setting to isolate the moderating role of weak and strong situations. In future research, it is necessary to present both weak and strong situations in a real organizational setting. The research offers insight into how individuals, from lower to higher openness to experience developed the trusting behavior to explore information to enhance their knowledge of an economic decision-making situation. The U-shaped relationship implies the course of the knowledge enhancement; first, by exploring the internal belief (thus it makes lower trust) to understand the situation, and second, by putting more trust in others to reduce the need for instantaneous compensation because of an enhanced expectation that commitment would be honored in the future.*

**Keywords:** *trusting behavior, personality trait, situational strength*

## INTRODUCTION

Interpersonal trust has a critical role in managing organizations. When trusting, people in organizations will put their positive expectations on the trustees while being voluntarily vulnerable in such circumstances. This is the essence of the trust definition, as many management scholars have a common viewpoint that trust is a willingness to rely on another party and to take action in circumstances where such action makes one vulnerable to the other party (i.e., Koole, 2020; Hung-Baesecke & Chen, 2020; Vokic, Bilušić, & Perić, 2021; Ömüriş, Erdem, & Aytemur, 2020; Rajaobelina et al., 2021; Steinbruch, Nascimento, & de Menezes, 2022; Vanhala, 2020). In addition, the research on the formation of trust (Lewicki, Tomlinson, & Gillespie, 2006), which links

norms, underlying behavioral assumptions, cognitive process, and trust development, has provided ideas for future development of research: what causes trust to change over time?

An individual's moral awareness, moral judgment, and moral intent (as caused either by disposition, cognition, or affect-based trust) are predicted to affect trust development in a social context (Vokic, Bilušić, & Perić, 2021; Omuris, Erdem & Aytemur, 2020). That perspective can lead to the possibility that some authorities are more trusted than others as a consequence of the different sources in which trust can be rooted. Nevertheless, to estimate trustworthiness is often difficult to estimate, so people look to more observable behaviors as cues of indirect evidence of trustworthiness. The meanings of those observed behaviors can be explained by authorities'

moral awareness, moral judgment, and moral intent. The latter argument implies that individual traits have a pivotal role in determining one's trustworthiness (Athota, Budhwar, & Malik, 2020).

The latest research findings also indicate that openness to experience traits affect trust dimensions, such as knowledge acquisition, knowledge application, knowledge sharing, networking behavior, gratitude, psychological well-being, and commitment to change (Esmaeelinezhad & Afrazeh, 2018; Soltani-Nejad, Mirezati, & Saberi, 2020; Bendella & Wolf, 2020; Quach et al., 2020; Schuster, Ambrosius, & Bader, 2017; Tang, 2020; Rahman et al., 2018; McCannon & Stevens, 2017; Meskelis & Whittington, 2020; Marchalina, Ahmad, & Gelaidan, 2021; Zhang et al., 2022; Pour & Taheri, 2019). It seems that, in general forms, trusting behavior is influenced by the individuals' openness traits.

Further, previous research findings suggest the importance of openness traits in certain settings and samples; that is, the main effect of openness on trust is to be expected, given the context examined. Specifically, a situation or a context is relevant to Openness traits if, "It is thematically connected by the provision of cues, responses to which (or lack of responses to which) indicate a person's standing on the trait" (Tett & Burnett, 2003). This assertion indicates that trust development suggests individual-situation interactions that may shape trusting behavior. Employing the Trait Activation Theory, Judge and Zapata (2015) have argued that there is a unique role of situational specificity; whether a trait predicts performance depends on the context or whether a particular contextual feature is relevant depends on the trait. This is in line with Tett and Burnett's (2003) assertion that trait activation is the process by which individuals express their traits when presented with trait-relevant situational cues.

The research posits that the person-situation strength influences trust formation (Judge & Zapata, 2015). In a situation in which social uncertainty is substantial, trust is needed, or, in other words, trust is most needed in situations of high social uncertainty; conversely, trust is not needed in stable relationships where trust is most easy to produce. In addition, the scant literature review also indicates that different personalities may yield different trusting behavior given the identical situation strength, as people have a unique general tendency to trust others (i.e., Chieffi et al., 2022; Sampat & Raj, 2022; Bezbaruah et al., 2021; Zhang, Guan, & Jin, 2021; Baia & Franco, 2021; Jiao et al., 2021; Liang, Lee, & Workman, 2021; Heinström, Nikou, & Sormunen, 2021; Obrenovic et al., 2021; Träskman & Skoog, 2021; Eroglu & Sanders, 2021). This perspective implies that a personality-situation fit may lead to different trusting behavior. In this context, knowledge of the personality-trust relationship will be an invaluable contribution when individuals are dealing with others in organizations.

Several previous studies reveal that people in Asia are more inclined to have certain personality

traits (among the Big Five personalities) as compared to westerners (Allik & McCrae, 2004; Bartram, 2013; Kajonius, 2017). From this point of view, researchers also notice that there is a different proportion of personality traits between Asians and westerners: openness traits are found higher in westerners as compared to Asians, and vice-versa (Allik & McCrae, 2004; Bartram, 2013; Kajonius, 2017). The finding implies that there is a possibility that Asians will lead to certain trusting behavior given a certain situational strength, as implied by their openness personality tendency. The research aims to integrate how trusting behavior is formed by an interaction between individual openness traits and situations in the Asian context.

Among the Big Five Personality traits, openness to experience is described by intellectual inquisitiveness, novelty pursuing, the consciousness of inner feelings, imagination, and appreciation for the arts (Coan, 1972). When discussing the relationship between openness to experience and trust, research findings are mixed, either (1) positive (Fahr & Irlenbusch, 2008; Muller & Schwieren, 2019) or (2) unrelated (Evans & Revelle, 2008). The finding on the personality trait tendency for Asians (Table 2) implies a unique possible phenomenon, as Asians are deemed to be low in openness to experience (Bartram, 2013; Kajonius, 2017) and thus, as a consequence, interpersonal trust can be lower in Asia (Fahr & Irlenbusch, 2008; Muller & Schwieren, 2019). However, when an individual is exposed to a certain situation, according to Trait Activation Theory, it is also possible that trusting behavior will shift as the situation develops (Tett & Burnett, 2003).

Referring to the work of Coan (1972), openness to experience has six dimensions, namely openness to ideas, values, feelings, actions, aesthetics, and fantasy. Openness to ideas implies open-mindedness and thinking about things in different ways as well as pursuing intellectual interests; openness to values is the readiness to re-evaluate an individual's old values; openness to feelings describes how to suit the individual with their emotional circumstances; the initiative to explore new activities as well as trying new things instead of routines is the openness to actions; openness to aesthetics is all about appreciating the arts; and lastly, the tendency to practice vivid imagination reflects the openness to fantasy.

While individuals score high on most dimensions of openness to experience, the distinction of each dimension makes it promising for someone to be extremely open in one facet, at the same time, extremely closed in another (Coan, 1972). Therefore, it is inaccurate to say that individuals are open in the same manner, even if their overall openness scores are identical. This logical flow implies that the relationships between openness to experience and trust are mixed, either positive or unrelated (Fahr & Irlenbusch, 2008; Muller & Schwieren, 2019; Evans & Revelle, 2008). The next question is whether it will also be possible for a negative relationship.

Using the lens of openness to ideas dimension, it is likely that individuals who are high on this facet may have greater flexibility in processing information and exploring the environment. The willingness to explore different things as well as examine and reflect on novel experiences is also easily found in individuals high on openness to ideas (McCrae & Costa, 1997). Thus, an individual high on openness to ideas may always show more engagement in activities that have the potential to increase knowledge, even if it does not reflect the willingness to engage in novel behaviors. Further, when individuals with high openness to ideas are situated in a vulnerable position, it is possible that they tend to make an effort to think about them positively. This implies that they will challenge themselves to cope with the situation and trust others to gain new insight that may increase their knowledge. The argument fits Tett and Burnett's (2003) assertion that individuals may express their traits (i.e., openness to experience) when presented with trait-relevant situational cues. In other words, a trait that predicts performance depends on the context. If the situational cues or the context is unstructured (uncertain or weak situation), individuals may have more discretion in expressing their traits, as opposed to the more structured situation (more certain or strong situation) (Judge & Zapata, 2015).

When trust is needed in a higher social uncertainty context, then, as a consequence, there is a possibility that openness to experience and trust may have a positive relationship. However, the openness to ideas dimension also implies that individuals may challenge themselves to cope with an uncertain situation. Thus, the more individuals challenge themselves; they may exhibit lower trust. From this standpoint, it is implied that to acquire knowledge; individuals first may challenge themselves to understand unstructured social situations. Second, they will seek perspectives from others to manage the situation more effectively.

The behavioral process through which situational cues possibly will influence trusting behavior may be better described through the lens of Attribution Theory. The theory assumes that an individual evaluates a large amount of information (i.e., about multiple persons in various situations) to make a single attribution (Lakshman, Lakshman, & Gok, 2021; Lai-Bennejan & Beitelspacher, 2021; Bos-Nehles et al., 2020; Trif et al., 2020; Carson, Waddingham, & Mackey, 2020; Stone & Jawahar, 2021; Chou, Barron, & Ramser, 2021; Al-Sharif, 2021; Moehl & Friedman, 2021). However, in most cases, individuals have insufficient time, motivation, or information to engage in this course of information processing. Consequently, they take attributional shortcuts by using their causal schema to make attributions based on limited information about a person and situation. In line with this logic, trust development can be viewed as an attributional process; individual processes limited information and draw inferences about the other person as well as develops and can report an internal belief about his/her level of trust in the person. The Attribution Theory thus implies that when developing their trust,

as well as their knowledge of others, individuals may first develop their self-perception. Compared to those with lower openness to ideas, individuals with higher openness to ideas may develop their self-perception first before putting their trust in others to develop their knowledge of a situation. Taken together, it is promising that openness to experience has a negative relationship with trusting behavior.

Further, when one finds that exchange is not instantaneous or there is some temporary inequity in outcomes between exchange partners, the individuals with higher openness to experience will develop their trust in others to reduce the perfect congruence in value in a single exchange. Trust also reduces the need for instantaneous compensation because each party is confident that commitment will be honored in the future. When trusting, an individual possibly believes that things turn out best when one is willing to depend on others, even though others may or may not be trustworthy.

Thus, trusting behavior does not lead to beliefs about other people but supports one's willingness to depend on that person. The latter argument also implies a possibility of an increase in individual knowledge in a situation. In summary, (1) if individuals with higher openness to ideas facet find that their self-perception does not satisfy their need for better knowledge of a situation (thus leading to lower trust and implied negative relationship), then (2) they will develop their trust to their exchange partners, thus exhibits a positive relationship between openness to experience and trusting behavior, as a consequence, the U-shaped relationship between openness and trust may develop.

Based on the Trait Activation Theory (Judge & Zapata, 2015), if openness to experience is thought of as a resource, then trusting behavior should be enhanced when one possesses the trait necessary to behave under the environmental demands present. On the other hand, trusting behavior should be diminished when an individual does not possess the trait necessary to behave under environmental demands. Individuals in trait-relevant situations, predictably, realize that their inner tendencies are beneficial given the demands of the situation. However, Trait Activation Theory does not postulate that poor trusting behavior will result if situations are not trait relevant. Rather, a lack of trait activation should weaken the trait (i.e., openness to experience) and trusting behavior relationship (Judge & Zapata, 2015).

The research posits the specific situational strength as a moderator of the openness to experience and trusting behavior relationship. In a general sense, situational strength represents the degree to which situational constraints are present in the environment (Judge & Zapata, 2015; Bishit & Mahajan, 2021; Wihler et al., 2017; Bendella & Wolff, 2020; Zia et al., 2020; Woods et al., 2018; Bani-Melhem et al., 2021; Wilhau, 2021; Kim, Kim, & Yun, 2017; Jeong, Kosgaard, & Morrell, 2021). Situations are strong to the extent that rules, structures, and cues provide clear guidance as to the expected behavior. In contrast,



weak situations are that the context is ambiguously structured with limited external control over one's behavior (Judge & Zapata, 2015).

In other words, weak situations provide few cues regarding expected behaviors and thus should result in behavioral expressions that are in line with one's basic personality tendencies. In line with the logic, the U-shaped relationship between openness to experience and trusting behavior may be strongly exhibited in weak situations, as the personality trait will address the trusting behavior in ambiguous situations. Therefore, the research tests the following hypothesis: Openness to experience and trusting behavior will form a U-shaped relationship, such that the U-shaped relationship is more pronounced in weak situations.

The remaining problem of the argument is how to present weak and strong situations so that they can be conceptualized and measured in the research. Following the work of Bowen and Ostroff (2004), activities in which the outcomes are impactful send strong signals about what strategic goals are most important and what individual behaviors are expected. Conversely, psychologically weak situations tend to be those that do not offer salient cues to guide behavior and are relatively unstructured and ambiguous. However, it is not easy to identify either weak or strong situations in the real organizational context.

Trusting behavior is quite sparse when individuals are embedded in groups or organizations because, in each group, it is possible that the privately taken decision of one of the players, the autonomous agent, is decisive for how trust is played (Fahr & Irlenbusch, 2008). Based on this perspective, the research employs the trust game experiment to present the weak and strong situations, not observing individual trusting behavior in the group or organization setting.

## METHODS

A trust game experiment is developed to acquire trusting decision data (Berg, Dickhaut, & McCabe, 1995; Rosenberger et al., 2020; van den Akker et al., 2020; Sofianos, 2022; Chiong et al., 2022; Chetty et al., 2021; Reiersen, 2019; Li, Li, & Wang, 2021; Muldoon, Bauman, & Lucy, 2018; Gampa et al., 2018). The trust game is the most common situation used to study trust. The original form is by Berg, Dickhaut, and McCabe (1995). There are two players, the sender and the receiver. In stage one, the sender receives 10 dollars from the experimenter and must decide how much of his/her 10 dollars to send to an anonymous counterpart (a receiver). "The sender will keep the money that he/she does not send". In stage two, the amount sent is tripled by the experimenter, and the receiver is given the triple amount that the sender sends. The receiver must decide how much money to return to the sender (and how much to keep for his/herself). The sender role exhibits the deep dependence situation: a trustee's (the receiver) behavior is often

outside the trustor's (the sender) view and, therefore, is difficult to monitor. This concept is identical to the weak situation characteristics (Judge & Zapata, 2015). In contrast, the sender role of the game exhibits a deep interdependence situation: the capacity of parties to communicate (i.e., to trust) is essential.

However, in some instances, communication is not always possible. In the trust game, the receiver perceives the amount sent from the sender as a communication signal. Thus, the receiver experiences a strong situation. In summary, the trust game can be the appropriate tool to test the moderating role of situational strength as exhibited by both the weak and strong properties of the game.

The research is conducted in Indonesia. The research participants (undergraduate students of a vocational college and both undergraduate and MBA students of a business school) are assigned to a condition (send-only or return-only) using a block random protocol. Before beginning the task, participants complete an Openness to Experience personality inventory and four other personality traits inventory (John, Donahue, Kentle, 1991). Participants are told the rules of the task. They are assigned to the role of the sender or the receiver. The senders decide how much money to invest, and the receivers decide how much money to return. In the send-only condition (stage one), participants are given IDR 100.000 (approximately 6,7 dollars) to invest; and they are told that the receiver could send them back any amount between zero rupiahs and the tripled amount sent by the sender. In the return-only condition (stage two), participants receive an investment of IDR 150.000 or equal to 10 dollars (a tripled IDR 50.000 or approximately 3,3 dollars) investment from the (fictitious) sender and decide how much to return. The send-only condition refers to a weak situation, as the sender does not have any clue about the previous behavior of the receiver, whereas the return-only condition refers to a strong situation, as the receiver could evaluate the previous behavior of the sender. Trust is measured by the proportion of rupiah sent off the initial investments. In each condition, the actions of the 'partner' are controlled by the experimenter.

Before beginning the trust game, participants are asked four questions to check whether they fully understand the instructions of the trust game (Ainsworth et al., 2014). The questions are (1) to indicate how many experiment rupiahs they would receive at the beginning of the game (100.000 experiment rupiahs); (2) whether they would be assigned to be a send-only player or receive-only player; (3) what would be the possible amount of experiment rupiahs they could send to the other person (any amount from 0 to 100.000); and (4) how many experiment rupiahs the other person could send back to them (any amount from 0 to three times the amount sent by the participant). Each session of the game consists of stage one and stage two, which take 45 minutes. At the end of each session, participants are debriefed. They are told that they are not interacting with another person. Each participant is

granted credits (in terms of active participation grade) for completing the experiment.

Ninety participants attend the experiment, but the last remaining sample fit for further analysis consists of 84 participants. Responses from six participants are considered unfit because of (1) incomplete responses or (2) does not answer the four confirmation questions correctly.

To test the hypotheses, a moderated regression with a categorical variable is held to test whether participants' roles (the trust game's situational strength) moderate the relationship between players' openness to experience personality trait and their trusting decision. Finally, a simple slope analysis is utilized to elaborate on the relationship.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The research conducts a factor analysis to validate the personality measures. In doing so, all five personality measures are extracted (John, Donahue, Kentle, 1991). The result of factor analysis using principal component analysis and varimax rotation extraction on responses to the questionnaire items shows that the five personality traits are grouped into five different factors (Table 1). The factor analysis confirms that the openness to experience variable could be represented by the instrument items in the questionnaire, as the items successfully differentiate the openness variable from the other four personality

traits. Further, Cronbach's alpha value for the responses for the instrument items on openness to experience is 0,79. The result shows that the instrument used is reliable.

A moderated regression analysis is established to test the hypotheses (Table 2). In step 1, the send-only categorical variable (representing the situational strength, that is, the sender does not have any clue about the previous behavior of the receiver) is entered to test its relationship with rusting behavior (by the amount of the experiment rupiahs sent). In step 2, openness and openness squared are entered to identify a U-shaped relationship pattern between openness to experience and trusting behavior. An increase in the determination coefficient or  $\Delta R^2$  is found to be statistically significant ( $\Delta R^2 = 0,063$ ,  $p < 0,1$ ). Further, the openness to experience has a U-shaped relationship pattern with trusting behavior (openness regression coefficient =  $-2,23$ ,  $p < 0,05$ ; openness squared regression coefficient =  $2,19$ ,  $p < 0,05$ ). Thus, the data provided supports the main effect of openness to experience.

A moderated regression analysis is established to test the hypotheses (Table 2). In step 1, the send-only categorical variable (representing the situational strength, that is, the sender does not have any clue about the previous behavior of the receiver) is entered to test its relationship with trusting behavior (by the amount of the experiment rupiahs sent). In step 2, openness and openness squared are entered to identify a U-shaped relationship pattern between openness


Table 1 Factor Analysis of Five Personality Traits

Responses	Component					Responses	Component				
	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
Extraversion						Neuroticism					
E1	0,133	0,737	0,099	0,142	0,143	N1	-0,071	-0,292	0,021	0,576	-0,249
E2	0,066	0,747	0,012	-0,185	-0,094	N2	-0,401	0,194	-0,100	0,491	-0,151
E3	0,361	0,542	0,193	-0,032	-0,143	N3	-0,076	-0,188	-0,075	0,692	0,114
E4	-0,055	0,833	0,060	-0,256	-0,058	N4	-0,044	0,007	-0,203	0,648	0,078
E5	0,311	0,642	0,226	0,049	0,312	N5	0,012	0,073	-0,064	0,574	0,040
Agreeableness						N6	-0,075	-0,116	0,148	0,687	-0,010
A1	0,221	-0,041	0,191	-0,374	0,418	Openness to Experience					
A2	0,125	0,117	-0,105	0,046	0,757	O1	0,635	0,190	0,197	-.258	-0,221
A3	-0,120	0,057	-0,032	0,134	0,440	O2	0,694	0,173	-0,058	-.048	0,127
A4	-0,160	-0,231	0,210	-0,207	0,675	O3	0,672	0,082	0,118	-.069	-0,059
Conscientiousness						O4	0,529	-0,060	-0,093	-.012	-0,026
C1	0,038	0,062	0,704	0,004	-0,013	O5	0,618	0,259	0,081	-.219	-0,060
C2	-0,271	0,086	0,665	-0,143	0,128	O6	0,777	0,103	0,042	0,037	0,066
C3	-0,109	0,224	0,688	-0,333	0,174						
C4	0,301	0,160	0,736	0,024	-0,131						
C5	0,407	-0,228	0,499	-0,059	0,107						
C6	0,477	0,156	0,564	0,066	-0,209						

to experience and trusting behavior. An increase in the determination coefficient or  $\Delta R^2$  is found to be statistically significant ( $\Delta R^2 = 0,063$ ,  $p < 0,1$ ). Further, the openness to experience has a U-shaped relationship pattern with trusting behavior (openness regression coefficient =  $-2,23$ ,  $p < 0,05$ ; openness squared regression coefficient =  $2,19$ ,  $p < 0,05$ ). Thus, the data provided support for the main effect of openness to experience.

In step 3, two variables are entered: (1) the interaction between the send-only and linear term of openness to experience and (2) the interaction between the send-only and quadratic term of openness to experience. The b5 coefficient of the moderated regression equation with categorical variable,  $b_0 + b_1\text{Send-Only} + b_2\text{Openness} + b_3\text{Openness Squared} + b_4(\text{Send-Only} \times \text{Openness}) + b_5(\text{Send-Only} \times \text{Openness Squared})$  (Cohen et al., 2003), is statistically significant (send-only x openness squared regression coefficient =  $13,07$ ,  $p < 0,01$ ). The ANOVA table (not shown in the article) of the full model or the regression equation also supports the hypothesis that situational strength moderates the U-shaped relationship between openness to experience and trusting behavior,  $F(5,83) = 3,23$ ,  $p = 0,01$ .

Table 2 The U-Shaped Relationship between Openness and Trust

Variables	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
 Snippet_31A1230C3.idms	-0,073	-0,053	11,94*
Send-Only			
Openness		-2,23*	-1,06
Openness Squared		2,19*	1,04
Send-Only x Openness			-24,72**
Send-Only x Openness Squared			13,07**
R <sup>2</sup>	0,005	0,068	0,172
$\Delta R^2$	0,005	0,063+	0,104*

Note: +  $p < 0,1$ ; \*  $p < 0,05$ ; \*\*  $p < 0,01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < 0,001$

Table 2 also implies that the U-shaped relationship might differ between the two situational strength contextual factors. Further, based on a simple slope plot, it is found that the U-shaped relationship is more pronounced in a weak situation or send-only condition (Figure 1).

As employed in the research, economic decision-making may be a situational strength in the relationship between openness to experience personality traits and trusting behavior. If individuals deal with a weak situation, then they with higher openness to experience can express their responses in two ways, first is by challenging themselves by developing their self-perception of their counterparts, and as the situation

develops, the second is to trust others just to gain knowledge in coping with the situation. Specifically, in the second course of action, they will develop their trust in others to reduce the perfect congruence in value in a single exchange, or trust is needed to lower the monitoring activities on opportunistic behavior. As individuals have limitations in processing various information because of their limited cognition and attention, then every effort in monitoring activities in anticipating opportunistic behavior has a high cost in a social relationship because it reduces the cognition and attention of the actors.

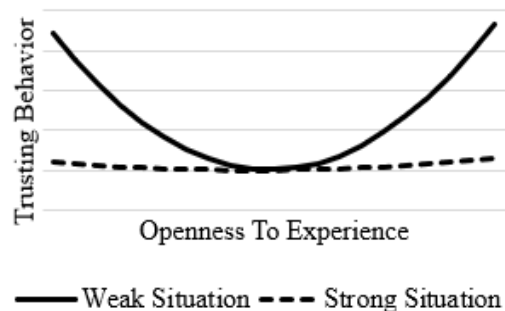


Figure 1 Simple Slope Plot for Weak and Strong Situation

Individuals with higher openness to experience seem to exhibit cognitive exploration. Cognition is in terms of mental processes involved in learning about the situation and one's experience, including reasoning and perceptual processes. Further, cognitive exploration involves information exploration, in contrast to behavioral exploration, which appears to be primarily associated with extraversion in the Big Five (DeYoung et al., 2014). Thus, it is possible that individuals with higher openness to experience exhibit the ability and tendency to seek, detect, comprehend, and utilize more information than those low in openness to experience. The finding also implies that in the economic decision-making situation (as in the trust game experiment), the cognitive behavior directs individuals with higher openness to testing their counterparts with lower trust and, second, will extrapolate their positive expectations by putting higher trust in others.

## CONCLUSIONS

Based on the literature, the psychological function that appears to be openness to experience is cognitive exploration. The research offers insight into how individuals from lower to higher openness to experience develop their trusting behavior to explore information in enhancing their knowledge of a situation (an economic decision-making situation). The U-shaped relationship implies the course of knowledge enhancement; first, by exploring the internal belief (thus exhibits lower trust) to understand the situation,

and second, by putting more trust in others to reduce the need for instantaneous compensation because of an enhanced expectation that commitment will be honored in the future. The findings have some practical implications. Openness to experience characterizes people who are willing to encounter a wide variety of ideas, feelings, and activities. Further, openness is beneficial to organizations when individual cognition is the only means to attain a specific performance.

However, when innovation is the targeted performance, for example, the need for information exchange (hence trust) is necessary (Hendarsjah et al., 2019). The U-shaped relationship between openness and trusting behavior, as exhibited in research, implies that unexpectedly moderate openness will lead to the lowest trusting behavior. As a consequence, there is a possibility that moderate openness will not sustain high innovation. On the contrary, lower or higher openness with higher trust is more beneficial to enhance innovation. This also indicates that self-exploration, as for individuals with moderate openness, will promote less information exchange and thus will lower innovation.

The research also has a limit; that is, the research tests the hypotheses in the trust game setting, not in the real organizational context, to isolate the moderating role of weak and strong situations. In future research, it is necessary to present both weak and strong situations in the organizational setting. Thus, the openness-trusting behavior relationship can be tested in real situations. The remaining issue is how to present the weak and strong situations in the organizational setting.

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