

Motivated to “Roll the Dice” on Trust: The Relationships Between Employees’ Daily Motives, Risk Propensity, and Trust

Michael D. Baer¹, Hudson Sessions², David T. Welsh¹, and Fadel K. Matta³

¹ Department of Management and Entrepreneurship, W. P. Carey School of Business, Arizona State University

² Department of Management, Lundquist College of Business, University of Oregon

³ Department of Management, Terry College of Business, University of Georgia

Models of trust have focused on the notion that an employee’s trust in a coworker is based on that coworker’s trustworthiness and the employee’s trust propensity—a generalized tendency to believe others are trustworthy. Although these models capture the general *assessment* of risk associated with trusting a particular coworker, they provide insufficient insight into why an employee might *take* the risk associated with trust on a particular day. Bringing the concept of *risk propensity*—the tendency to accept or avoid risk—from the decision-making literature into the trust literature, we build a model of trust that suggests employees’ trusting behaviors stem from both their calculated assessment of risk (encapsulated in trustworthiness and trust propensity) and their tendency to take those risks. We draw on motivated reasoning theory (Kunda, 1990) and the decision-making literature to suggest that employees’ daily strivings for achievement, affiliation, stimulation, and security induce a biased reasoning process that influences employees’ risk propensity that day. Our test of this theoretical model demonstrates that generalized work motives have an indirect effect on employees’ trust in their coworkers, through risk propensity, that goes above and beyond established bases of trust.

Keywords: trust, motivated reasoning, risk propensity, motives, trustworthiness

Each day, employees must decide whether to engage in a variety of risk-taking behaviors with their coworkers, such as relying on them for important tasks or disclosing sensitive information. These risky decisions hinge on *trust*—the willingness to accept vulnerability to another person (Mayer et al., 1995). The literature has focused on the notion that employees’ trust in these situations stems from a careful assessment of the data, which is encapsulated in the specific coworker’s trustworthiness and the employee’s trust propensity—a generalized evaluation that others are trustworthy (Kramer, 1999; Mayer et al., 1995). Taken together, these two predictors have dominated conceptual and empirical trust research (Baer & Colquitt, 2018; Colquitt et al., 2007; Möllering, 2006; van der Werff et al., 2019).

Although this focus is intuitive, it places a sole emphasis on the *assessment* of risk associated with trusting behaviors (Möllering, 2001, 2006), thereby ignoring fundamental insights from the decision-making literature about why people *take* risks. In some ways, the trust and decision-making literatures have operated in parallel, with both acknowledging that risk taking is based on calculated assessments of risk (Kramer, 1999; March & Shapira, 1987). In a substantial divergence, however, the decision-making

literature has proposed that risk taking is also based on a person’s *risk propensity*—their current tendency to take or avoid risks (Bromiley & Curley, 1992; Fischhoff et al., 1981; Kogan & Wallach, 1964; Rowe, 1977; Sitkin & Pablo, 1992). This perspective acknowledges that risk taking stems from a person’s *assessment* of the risks and their willingness to *take* those risks (Das & Teng, 2001).

We propose that the absence of risk propensity in models of trust has contributed to an incomplete and limited understanding of employees’ day-to-day trusting behaviors. Scholars have argued that trusting behaviors require the trustor to take a “leap of faith” that goes beyond the available data (Lewis & Weigert, 1985; Möllering, 2001, 2006; Simmel, 1990). After evaluating the potential risk involved, the trustor must “bracket out” the uncertainty and take a step “down an essentially unknowable path” (Möllering, 2006, p. 102). Despite these proposals, the trust literature has been hesitant to relinquish its focus on risk assessments (Baer & Colquitt, 2018; Möllering, 2006; Pratt et al., 2019), making it difficult to predict why an employee might want to take the risks associated with trusting behaviors.

Drawing on motivated reasoning theory (Kunda, 1990) and the decision-making literature, we build a theoretical model that outlines the impact of employees’ daily risk propensity on trust and teases apart the motivational forces that might cause risk propensity to vary from day to day. Decision-making research indicates that people have a higher preference for risk when those risks provide access to a desired outcome (Loewenstein et al., 2001; Pleskac & Hertwig, 2014). Consequently, scholars have proposed that a person’s *motives*—conscious desires for a particular outcome (Roberts et al., 2004)—might be a primary driver of their current tendency to

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Michael D. Baer  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4524-2436>

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Michael D. Baer, Department of Management and Entrepreneurship, W. P. Carey School of Business, Arizona State University P.O. Box 874006, Tempe, AZ 85287-4006, United States. Email: mikebaer@asu.edu

take risk (Zou et al., 2020). Employees come to work each day with a variety of motives, such as a preference for achievement, affiliation, stimulation, and security (Bilsky, 2006; Bilsky & Schwartz, 2008; Emmons, 1997), that direct their attention and energy toward daily activities that help attain those desired outcomes (Foullk et al., 2019; Roberts et al., 2004). Motivated reasoning theory suggests that motives induce heuristic processing that biases people's estimate of the likelihood for success, contributing to a sense of unrealistic optimism or pessimism that can affect risk-taking tendencies (Kunda, 1990; see also Krizan & Windschitl, 2007; Zou et al., 2020). We integrate these proposals with decision-making research on risk propensity to argue that employees' daily work motives will have a biasing effect on their daily trust, with risk propensity conveying this indirect effect (see Figure 1).

Our research makes two interrelated contributions to theory. First, we draw on motivated reasoning theory to propose that a complete and accurate model of daily trust must move beyond the literature's narrow focus on risk assessment. Borrowing the concept of risk propensity from the decision-making literature, we build and test theory that suggests trustors' risk propensity is an essential base of daily trust. Our model provides a "course correction" and extension to the trust literature that places it in sync with models of risk-taking in adjacent literatures.

Second, we contribute to theory by drawing on motivated reasoning processes to outline the role employees' work motives play in their risk propensity and, indirectly, in their trust. A growing body of research suggests that risk-taking tendencies have a substantial within-person component (Das & Teng, 2001; Schoemaker, 1990; Slovic, 1972), with some scholars proposing that these fluctuations are driven by a person's momentary goals (Zou et al., 2014, 2020). Although conceptual work has suggested that employees may be "motivated to trust," our work diverges from and extends this work in several ways. Prior work has centered on explaining how an employee's desire to build and maintain their relationship with a specific coworker might motivate the employee to see that coworker as "trustworthy enough to be relied on" (Williams, 2001, p. 387; see

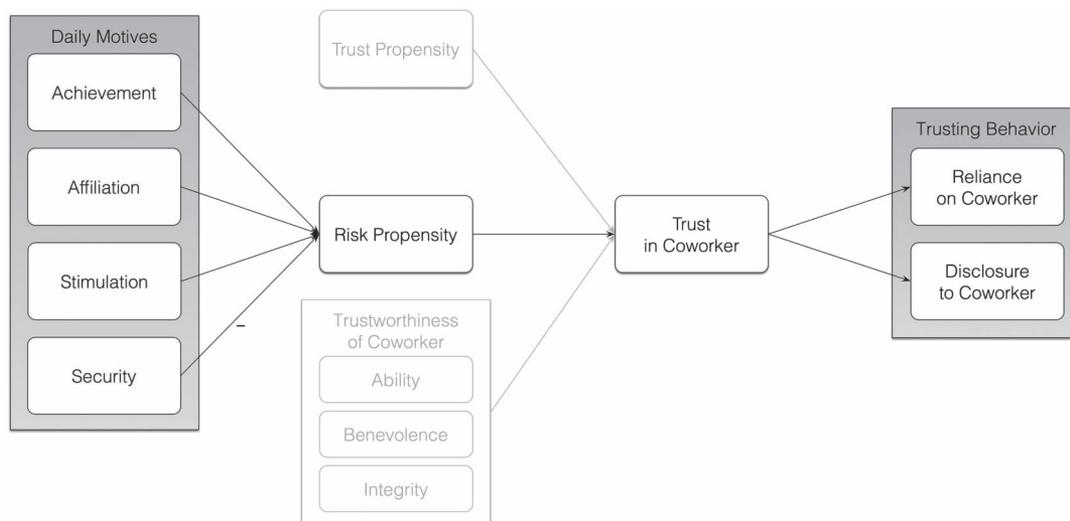
also van der Werff et al., 2019; Weber et al., 2004). This untested proposal finds some parallels in research on trust in romantic relationships, which has argued that people have an impulsive motivation to view their partner as caring and reliable (Murray et al., 2011, 2012, 2013). Whereas this between-person work suggests why an employee might trust one coworker more than another, we build and test a daily model that proposes an employee's generalized work motives—desires for achievement, affiliation, stimulation, and security—will influence the employee's general trust in all their coworkers. Taken together, our model draws on motivated reasoning theory and the decision-making literature to integrate constructs from adjacent literatures—daily motives and risk propensity—into the trust literature. These additions provide theoretical and practical insights into trust that could not be anticipated from prior work.

Theory and Hypotheses

Within-Person Trusting Intentions and Behaviors

Although employees may have a general notion of whether each of their coworkers can be trusted (Lind, 2001; Mayer et al., 1995), their willingness to take risks in those relationships is unlikely to be constant from day to day (Baer et al., 2018). For example, there are days when an employee is generally more or less willing to take coworkers' words at face value, to reduce their monitoring of coworkers' behavior, to rely on coworkers' knowledge, or to disclose sensitive information to their coworkers (Flores & Solomon, 1998; Möllering, 2006). These varying degrees of trust can be partially attributed to fluctuations in employees' trust propensity and their perceptions of coworkers' trustworthiness. Turning first to trust propensity, scholars have suggested that employees draw on a holistic assessment of the positive and negative treatment they receive each day to inform their sense of whether people in general are trustworthy (Baer et al., 2018). Likewise, people continually gather information that updates their assessments of specific others' trustworthiness, even in long-term

Figure 1
Conceptual Model



relationships (Murray et al., 2013; Rempel et al., 1985). As employees vigilantly assess the people around them each day, they are likely to perceive varying levels of risk, which should influence their degree of trust that day.

Theory suggests, however, that these daily variations in risk assessment are unlikely to fully explain daily variance in trust. Building on foundational trust research (e.g., Lewis & Weigert, 1985; Simmel, 1990), Möllering (2001, 2006) argued that trusting behaviors are momentary, episodic leaps into the unknown that cannot be fully explained by mere risk assessment. He proposed that as scholars strive to uncover the “further element” that facilitates these leaps of faith, they may find it fruitful to examine the trustor’s motivations and tendencies. Our investigation of daily motives and risk propensity provides necessary insight into this “further element” of employees’ daily trusting intentions and behaviors.

Motivated Reasoning, Risk Propensity, and Trust

To build our theoretical model, we turn to motivated reasoning theory (Kunda, 1990) and the decision-making literature on risk propensity. Motivated reasoning theory proposes that motives fall into two broad categories: accuracy and directional. Accuracy motives are a desire to arrive at the most appropriate conclusion, whereas directional motives are a desire to arrive at a particular conclusion. This distinction impacts the method that people use to arrive at the conclusion. When motives are low or absent, people’s baseline approach to decisions and behaviors is a relatively objective reliance on the available data.

Accuracy motives induce people to attend to the relevant information even more carefully and to process it more systematically (Kunda, 1990). In the context of trust, people’s desire for accuracy provides insight into why trustors rely so heavily on the information provided by trustworthiness and trust propensity. The informational value of trust propensity looms largest in the early stages of an employee–coworker relationship, before the employee has gathered sufficient data on the coworker (Mayer et al., 1995; McKnight et al., 1998). Lacking data, the employee necessarily extrapolates the information they have gathered on people, in general, to assess whether the coworker can be trusted. As the relationship develops, the employee gathers data about the coworker’s trustworthiness that largely supplants this generalized information (Mayer et al., 1995). Although the trust literature’s focus on data and desire for accuracy is intuitive, it provides a limited outlook that does not acknowledge that people also have directional motives. Whereas accuracy motives increase reliance on the data, directional motives induce the use of heuristics and tendencies that lead decision makers to go beyond the data. We contend that the directional motives in our model will bias a trustor’s sense of risk, thereby influencing risk-taking with their coworkers. We introduce these four motives and then turn to motivated reasoning theory to outline their direct effects on risk propensity and indirect effects on trust.

Employees approach each day with conscious intentions—motives—to shape or adapt to their environments (Roberts et al., 2004). To fulfill these daily motivational states, employees engage in motive-congruent behaviors during the day (Foulk et al., 2019). Through a program of research, Schwartz and Bilsky classified motives into four basic categories: Self-enhancement, self-transcendence, openness to change, and conservation (Bilsky, 2006; Bilsky & Schwartz, 2008; Schwartz, 1992; Schwartz & Bilsky, 1987). These

four categories encompass the motives that have been identified across a host of typologies (e.g., Buhler, 1964; Emmons, 1997; Emmons & Diener, 1986; Novacek & Lazarus, 1990; Pervin, 1983; Wicker et al., 1984).

We focused on a parsimonious yet inclusive set of motives that draws from each of the four categories: Achievement (self-enhancement), affiliation (self-transcendence), stimulation (openness to change), and security (conservation; Bilsky, 2006; Schwartz, 1992; Schwartz & Bilsky, 1987). These choices were driven by Bilsky’s (2006, p. 81) work that identified these four motives as exemplars that “optimally fit the four poles” of the overarching categories. The achievement motive involves a desire to demonstrate competence. The affiliation motive is characterized by wanting to have close, satisfying relationships with others. The stimulation motive involves a desire for a variety of interesting experiences. The security motive is characterized by wanting safety and stability.

Directional motives of this nature contribute to behaviors that are perceived to be a viable means of satisfying the motives (Kunda, 1987, 1990; Pyszczynski & Greenberg, 1987). Speaking to the centrality of risk in this motivated reasoning process, Zou et al. (2020) observed: “people often take risks in the service of their goals . . . risk matters to the extent that it offers a higher likelihood—or sometimes the only possibility—of satisfying one’s goals” (p. 89). We suggest that daily achievement, affiliation, and stimulation motives can be satisfied by taking the risks inherent in trust, whereas the security motive can be satisfied by avoiding those risks.

Turning first to the achievement motive, scholars have argued that trust contributes to higher levels of performance by providing access to social and instrumental support (Lind, 2001) and by freeing employees of the need to “watch their backs” around coworkers (Mayer & Gavin, 2005). Turning next to the affiliation motive, scholars have argued that close personal ties can only be built when individuals are willing to accept risk in the relationship (Rempel et al., 1985; Rusbult & Van Lange, 2003). To satisfy the stimulation motive, an individual must step outside their standard set of activities to try a variety of new things (Schwartz, 1992). Trust reduces the concern that mistakes will be punished, thereby allowing for experimentation, stretch assignments, and novel experiences (Edmondson, 1999). With respect to the security motive, a reduction in trust may protect employees from the risk of exploitation and exclusion that unavoidably accompanies trust (Lind, 2001; Mayer et al., 1995; Murray et al., 2013). In sum, employees should perceive that higher trust is a viable and often necessary means of satisfying the achievement, affiliation, and stimulation motives, whereas lower trust is a viable means of satisfying the security motive. We draw on motivated reasoning theory to unpack the biasing effect that motives have on employees’ risk propensity and, in turn, on their trust in coworkers.

Motivated reasoning theory suggests that as people pursue their motives, they do not feel “at liberty to conclude whatever they want to conclude” (Kunda, 1990, p. 482). Rather, they feel compelled to construct a defensible justification for their attitudes and behaviors (Kunda, 1990; see also Boiney et al., 1997; Kunda & Sanitioso, 1989; Pyszczynski & Greenberg, 1987). Accordingly, motivated individuals craft “a biased set of theories according to which their own attributes can cause desirable outcomes and deter undesirable ones” (Kunda, 1990, p. 637). These motivated theories are formed by a biased memory search and the application of a positive-test

strategy (Kunda, 1987, 1990; see also Gilovich, 1991; Krizan & Windschitl, 2007; Pyszczynski & Greenberg, 1987).

Motivated decision makers tend to access only a subset of their memories as they selectively recall past successes in similar situations while skipping over past failures (Kunda, 1990). Consequently, as people reflect on the likelihood of success they can more easily and quickly generate examples of when motive-congruent behaviors helped them achieve their goals (Kunda, 1987; Pyszczynski & Greenberg, 1987; Ross et al., 1981; Sanitioso et al., 1990). This biased memory search gives the decision maker an unrealistic optimism in their ability to secure a successful outcome (Krizan & Windschitl, 2007; Kunda, 1990) that contributes to a tendency to take risks (Anderson & Galinsky, 2006; Barberis et al., 2001; Zou et al., 2020). In a similar vein, a directional motive for *avoiding* an undesirable outcome, as is the case with the security motive, can lead to an unrealistic pessimism (Krizan & Windschitl, 2007) that reduces the tendency to take risks.

Applying these tenets of motivated reasoning theory to our model, employees' desire to satisfy their daily work motives through trust should lead to a biased memory search that imbues employees with an unrealistic sense of their exposure to risk that day (Kunda, 1990). Specifically, the achievement motive should induce employees to recall past incidents when relying on coworkers led to higher performance and achievement. Likewise, the affiliation motive should prompt employees to recall situations in which opening up to coworkers led to feelings of acceptance and support. In a similar vein, the stimulation motive is likely to trigger memories in which trying new things, such as stretch assignments, was a satisfying experience. The security motive is likely to have the inverse effect, serving to increase the salience of past and present dangers. As employees recall incidents when a conservative approach yielded the desired safety, they should have a lower tendency to take risks.

Motivated reasoning theory suggests that the biased memory search also consists of a positive-test strategy in which people look for evidence that confirms their position rather than evidence that might suggest an alternative approach (Kunda, 1990; see also Klayman & Ha, 1987; Wason & Johnson-Laird, 1972). Elaborating on this suggestion, Gilovich (1991) noted that motives cause people to ask themselves "*Can I do this?*" rather than questioning whether they *should* or *must* do it. Dawson et al. (2002) observed that this directional hypothesis creates "a rather permissive evidential standard, because some supportive evidence can be found for all but the most outlandish propositions" (p. 1379). In support of these proposals, substantial research indicates that motivated reasoning contributes to a truncated search for memories that might confirm the desired action; when confirming memories are inevitably and quickly located, the search ends without a consideration of potentially disconfirming memories (see, for reviews, Klayman & Ha, 1987; Krizan & Windschitl, 2007; Kunda, 1990).

Drawing on these proposals, we suggest that achievement, affiliation, and stimulation motives will prompt employees to ask, "Can I take risks to fulfill my desire for achievement, affiliation, and stimulation?" whereas the security motive will prompt employees to ask, "Can I *not* take risks to fulfill my desire for security?" Given the low standard of evidence required to support these directional hypotheses (Dawson et al., 2002; Gilovich, 1991), the employees' memory search is likely to confirm that risking—or not risking, in the case of the security motive—is appropriate. In sum, on days when an employee is focused on performing at a high level, building

relationships, and/or having a variety of experiences, they are likely to have daring tendencies. In contrast, when an employee is focused on safety, they are likely to have conservative tendencies.

Hypothesis 1: Within individuals, daily achievement (1a), affiliation (1b), and stimulation (1c) motives will have a positive relationship with risk propensity; the daily security motive (1d) will have a negative relationship with risk propensity.

Indirect Effects of Motives on Trust Through Risk Propensity

Building on motivated reasoning theory, we propose that these changes in risk propensity, stemming from daily motives, will have a downstream influence on employees' trust in all their coworkers. Risk propensity represents an employee's general desire to be more daring in their attitudes and behaviors (Bromiley & Curley, 1992; Das & Teng, 2001, 2004; Fischhoff et al., 1981; Sitkin & Pablo, 1992). This tendency makes it more likely that decision makers will view a risk as acceptable, thereby facilitating risk-taking behavior in their various activities (Brockhaus, 1980; MacCrimmon & Wehrung, 1990; March & Shapira, 1987; Sitkin & Weingart, 1995). Applying this notion to trust, we argue that daily fluctuations in risk propensity—driven by employees' motives—will influence employees' daily leaps of trust.

At a fundamental level, an employee's willingness to trust is a balance between the benefits of a cooperative relationship and the risks that their trust will be violated (Lind, 2001; Murray et al., 2013). Risk propensity increases employees' focus on the potential benefits of trust-related risks, such as gaining coworkers' assistance and support, while reducing the salience of the potential downsides, such as coworkers who make costly mistakes or break confidentiality (Das & Teng, 2001, 2004). Given that risk propensity is a current tendency, it should provide insight into an employee's daily trust in each and all coworkers. Paralleling this effect, research indicates that trust propensity has an across-the-board influence—both within- and between-person—on employees' trust in their coworkers (Baer et al., 2018; Colquitt et al., 2007; van der Werff & Buckley, 2017). In a similar vein, we theorize that employees' daily risk propensity will have a generalized influence on their willingness to be vulnerable to all their coworkers throughout the day.

To illustrate the effect of risk propensity, consider an employee who, on two consecutive days, must decide whether to trust their coworkers by relying on their help with an important project. On the first day, the employee may be focused on performing at a high level, building close personal relationships, or trying new things. The motivated reasoning process that ensues should lead to an increase in the employee's risk propensity which manifests as a greater willingness to take risks throughout the day. Now consider a day on which the employee has a lower risk propensity, perhaps due to a focus on the security motive. On that day, the employee's general desire to avoid risk should be associated with a lower willingness to take risks. Given that trust is a form of risk taking, these varying levels of risk propensity should have an across-the-board influence on the employee's willingness to trust their coworkers.

Hypothesis 2: Within individuals, the daily achievement (2a), affiliation (2b), and stimulation (2c) motives will have a positive indirect effect on daily trust, through risk propensity; the

daily security motive (2d) will have a negative indirect effect on daily trust, through risk propensity.

Trusting Behaviors

The behavioral manifestation of an employee's willingness to be vulnerable to their coworkers is evidenced through risk-taking in that relationship, or *trusting behavior* (Mayer et al., 1995; McKnight et al., 1998). Scholars have suggested that these risk-taking behaviors are the "only credible demonstration of trust" (Skinner et al., 2014, p. 218)—a clear indication that a person has taken a leap of faith (Lewis & Weigert, 1985; Möllering, 2006; Schoorman et al., 2007). Through a comprehensive set of inductive and confirmatory studies, Gillespie (2003) identified two primary types of trusting behaviors: reliance and disclosure. *Reliance* is depending on a coworker's knowledge, skills, and abilities, such as entrusting a coworker with an important task. *Disclosure* is sharing sensitive work-related or personal information, such as confiding in a coworker about frustrations with a project.

When employees' willingness to be vulnerable to their coworkers is elevated, they feel more confident translating their trusting intentions into concrete behaviors (Mayer et al., 1995; McKnight et al., 1998; Skinner et al., 2014). Turning first to employees' reliance on their coworkers, these daily trusting behaviors might include depending on coworkers to present a joint idea to the supervisor, relying on coworkers' skills and abilities without double-checking their work, or depending on coworkers for backup during a difficult team meeting (Baer et al., 2018; Gillespie, 2012). An elevated level of daily trust indicates that the employee is willing to accept the risks inherent in these behaviors (Mayer et al., 1995). On days when an employee has higher intentions to trust their coworkers, they should be willing to take the final step and engage in these reliance behaviors (Flores & Solomon, 1998; Möllering, 2006).

Relatedly, on days when the employee has elevated trust in their coworkers, they should feel less of a need to "watch their back" to protect against exploitation and exclusion (Mayer & Gavin, 2005). This sense of safety should manifest as an employee choosing to have honest conversations and discuss sensitive information (Mayer et al., 1995). Such daily disclosure might include the employee discussing work-related mistakes they have made, confiding in coworkers about personal issues that are hindering their performance, or sharing personal feelings about the organization (Gillespie, 2012; Skinner et al., 2014). Given that these disclosure behaviors give coworkers access to potentially damaging information, it is likely that an elevated level of daily trust will be associated with higher levels of these behaviors.

Hypothesis 3: Within individuals, daily trust will have a positive effect on daily reliance on coworkers.

Hypothesis 4: Within individuals, daily trust will have a positive effect on daily disclosure to coworkers.

Method

Sample and Procedure

The sample for this study was 103 full-time employees we recruited through the MBA alumni networks of two large public universities in the United States. This study was approved and monitored by the

Institutional Review Board at Arizona State University (Protocol Number: STUDY00006905; Title: Daily Trust Motives). Participants, hereafter referred to as "employees," were all employed full-time in a variety of fields, including marketing, finance, retail, healthcare, and manufacturing. Employees' average age was 42.27 years ($SD = 11.04$); they had an average organizational tenure of 9.36 years ($SD = 8.22$). Sixty-six percent of employees were female. Employees were 5% African American, 12% Asian/Pacific Islander, 75% Caucasian, 7% Hispanic, 1% Native American, and 1% other races.

Each employee was asked to select a single coworker, with whom they would be paired for the entirety of the study. This design provided several benefits, including controlling for trustworthiness and trust propensity as alternative explanations for daily variance in trust; controlling for previous-day assessments, thereby demonstrating a change in trust and trusting behaviors from day to day; and incorporating an assessment of trusting behaviors that was rated by another source. Consistency in the dyad allowed for a controlled focus on variations from the employee's central tendencies and the implications of such daily fluctuations for trusting behavior toward a specific coworker, without confounding our results by introducing different coworkers across days.¹ Our design follows prior experience sampling research that has utilized a single coworker-rater to provide an example of a generalized effect (Baer et al., 2018; Bush et al., 2021; Hill et al., in press; Tang et al., 2020).

The average age of coworkers was 36.13 years ($SD = 10.32$); they had an average organizational tenure of 7.26 years ($SD = 5.43$). Fifty-six percent of coworkers were female. Coworkers had worked with the focal employee for an average of 5.14 years ($SD = 4.03$). Coworkers were 7% African American, 7% Asian/Pacific Islander, 71% Caucasian, 13% Hispanic, 2% Native American, and 1% other races. One week before the start of the daily surveys, employees and coworkers completed a registration survey that confirmed their participation and captured their demographics. Following registration, our experience sampling method (ESM) design utilized daily surveys that were administered online over a period of 12 consecutive workdays. Over the period of the study, we asked employees to complete two surveys per day—the first at mid-day and the second in the afternoon—and coworkers to complete one survey in the afternoon. Employees reported their work motives at mid-day and their risk propensity and trust in coworker in the afternoon. Coworkers reported the employees' trusting behavior in the afternoon. Thus, we employed both time and source separation in our model as procedural remedies for common method variance (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

Consistent with prior ESM research (e.g., Koopman et al., 2016; Rodell & Judge, 2009), we asked participants to complete both surveys—a "full day" of surveys—on at least 10 days during the 12-day window. This extended window allowed participants with conflicting circumstances (e.g., sick days, meetings, planned absences) more opportunities to participate in the study. Following prior research, we retained responses from participants who exceeded study

¹ Our theorizing focuses on the proposal that generalized motives will influence a generalized risk propensity that explains variance in daily trust in coworkers, above and beyond the variance explained by the two traditional predictors of trust—trustworthiness and trust propensity. In our design, the paired coworker acts as a proxy for the generalized impact of motives and risk propensity while enabling us to control for day-to-day changes in trustworthiness and trust propensity (for similar, see Baer et al., 2018). We discuss the implications of this element of our research design in the Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research.

requirements by completing 11 or 12 daily surveys (Baer et al., 2018; Koopman et al., 2016; Rodell & Judge, 2009). We emailed employees the mid-day survey at 11 a.m. each day; the survey was automatically closed at 2 p.m. The response rate was 90.7% (1,121 data points out of a maximum 1,236). On average, employees completed the mid-day survey at 11:46 a.m. We emailed all employees a link to the afternoon survey at 3 p.m. each day; the survey closed at 6 p.m. On average, employees completed the afternoon survey at 3:52 p.m.; the response rate was 91.6%. We emailed coworkers a link to their survey at 3 p.m. each day; the survey closed at 6 p.m. On average, coworkers completed the survey at 4:03 p.m.; the response rate was 85.4%.

We utilized full-information maximum likelihood (FIML) within Mplus 7.4 (Muthén & Muthén, 2015) to handle missing data (Graham, 2009). When used in combination with random slopes, FIML can estimate a likelihood function for missing data on the terminal dependent variables (i.e., coworker-rated trusting behaviors) if there is complete data on the predictors (i.e., employee-rated daily motives, risk propensity, and trust; Grund et al., 2018). Accordingly, we retained data from days (Level-1 observations) on which the employee completed a full day of surveys—both the mid-day and afternoon survey (for similar uses of FIML see Hill et al., in press; Koopman et al., 2020; Yoon et al., 2021). We also followed suggested best practices for determining which employees (Level-2 observations) should be included in the final sample. Although we received at least one full day of surveys from 110 employees, scholars have argued that three Level-1 observations are necessary statistically to suitably model within-person relationships and to reflect employees' "lived experience" (Beal et al., 2013; da Motta Veiga & Gabriel, 2016; Gabriel et al., 2018; Singer & Willett, 2003; Trougakos et al., 2014). Thus, we retained 103 employees who provided at least three Level-1 observations (i.e., 3 full days of surveys); our results are unchanged if all 110 employees are included in the analyses. Combined, the 103 employees completed a full day of surveys on 816 occasions—an average of 7.9 full days per employee. Coworkers completed their daily survey on 763 of those 816 days (94%). Given that Mplus's default FIML approach estimates a likelihood function for any missing data on the dependent variables, no Level-1 or Level-2 observations were lost due to this missing data on the coworker surveys. Accordingly, our final Level-2 sample size was 103 dyads and our Level-1 sample size was 816. Employees received \$4 for completing the registration survey, \$2 for completing each daily survey, and an \$8 bonus for completing surveys on eight or more days. Coworkers received \$2 for completing each survey and a \$6 bonus for completing surveys on eight or more days. Our compensation structure follows research that has induced higher participation in ESMs by providing bonuses when participants reach or exceed 80% participation (Carr et al., 2020; Hill et al., in press; Sabey et al., in press; Sessions et al., 2021).

Employee-Rated Measures

We assessed all employee-rated measures using a 7-point scale (1 = *Strongly Disagree* to 7 = *Strongly Agree*). Reported coefficient alphas are an average across all days of the study.

Daily Work Motives

We drew from two sources for measures that accurately reflect Bilsky and Schwartz's definitions of the four motives in our model.

The lead-in for all motives was: "At work today, I am focused on . . ." We assessed the affiliation, stimulation, and security motives using Cable and Edwards's (2004) 3-item measures. Items for the affiliation motive were: "Forming relationships with coworkers," "Getting to know my fellow coworkers well," and "Developing close ties with coworkers" ($\alpha = .95$). Items for the stimulation motive were: "Doing a variety of things," "Doing something different," and "Doing many different things on the job" ($\alpha = .86$). Items for the security motive were: "Being certain of keeping my job," "Being sure I will always have a job," and "Being certain my job will last" ($\alpha = .98$). Turning to the achievement motive, Schwartz (1992) argued that its defining feature is a desire to demonstrate competence through high performance (see also McClelland, 1987; Ryan & Deci, 2000; Wicker et al., 1984). Cable and Edwards (2004) intentionally diverged from this conceptualization to assess employees' desire for "pay," rather than their general achievement motive. To accurately represent the conceptualization in Bilsky and Schwartz's typology, we developed items for the achievement motive by drawing from past measures capturing the achievement of high performance (e.g., MacKenzie et al., 1993).² Items were: "Performing very well in my work activities," "Doing an outstanding job in my work," and "Producing excellent work" ($\alpha = .95$).

Risk Propensity

Given that the existing measures of risk propensity have been between-person, we developed a within-person measure for our study (see Appendix for content validation and confirmatory factor analysis using two samples). The validated items are: "Today, I have been open to taking risks," "Today, I have felt daring," and "Today, I have been willing to take a chance on something" ($\alpha = .82$).

Trust in Coworker

Each day, employees rated their trust in their paired coworker using four items from Mayer and Gavin (2005) that were adapted to reflect our daily methodology. Items were: "Today, I have been willing to increase my vulnerability to [Coworker Name]," "Today, I have been willing to share my opinion about sensitive issues with [Coworker Name]," "Today, I have been willing to rely on [Coworker Name] for something that is critical to me, even if I was not able to monitor their actions," and "Today, I have been willing to let [Coworker Name] have an impact on issues that are important to me" ($\alpha = .91$).

Coworker-Rated Trusting Behaviors

We utilized a 7-point scale (1 = *Strongly Disagree* to 7 = *Strongly Agree*) for coworker-rated measures. We inserted the employee's name into the items with the survey software.

² To provide evidence that our items were content valid, the sample of 125 full-time employees who evaluated the content validity of our risk propensity measure (see Appendix) also rated the definitional correspondence of our achievement motive items to the conceptual definition (Schwartz, 1992). The mean definitional correspondence for the measure was 6.64 out of 7.00, which indicates very strong content validity (Colquitt et al., 2019).

Reliance and Disclosure

The paired coworker rated the employee's reliance and disclosure behaviors each day using Gillespie's (2003, 2012) 5-item measures (all items are listed in Appendix). Sample items for reliance included: "Today, [Employee Name] has relied on my work-related judgments" and "Today, [Employee Name] has relied on my task-related skills and abilities" ($\alpha = .94$). Sample items for disclosure included: "Today, [Employee Name] has confided in me about personal issues that are affecting their work" and "Today, [Employee Name] has discussed work-related problems or difficulties with me that could potentially be used to disadvantage them" ($\alpha = .95$).

Control Variables

We included several theoretically motivated control variables in our model. To reflect our starting point with Mayer et al.'s (1995) model, the primary predictors in the between-person trust literature (Colquitt et al., 2007), and the nascent within-person trust literature (e.g., Baer et al., 2018), we controlled for employees' daily trust propensity and their daily perceptions of the coworker's ability, benevolence, and integrity (all items are listed in Appendix). In the afternoon survey, employees rated their daily trust propensity ($\alpha = .93$) using the 5-item measure from Baer et al. (2018; adapted for ESM from Mac Donald et al., 1972) and their coworker's ability ($\alpha = .94$), benevolence ($\alpha = .86$), and integrity ($\alpha = .92$) using the 3-item measures for each from Baer et al. (2018; adapted for ESM from Mayer & Davis, 1999). We also controlled for previous-day levels of all endogenous variables. Controlling for previous-day levels allows us to interpret our results as a change in these variables (Johnson et al., 2014; Scott & Barnes, 2011). As an additional robustness check, we tested a model controlling for the day of the week as well as the sine and cosine of this variable (Beal & Ghandour, 2011); these controls related to the day of the week did not impact our results and were not included in the final model.

Data Analysis

We tested our hypotheses using multilevel path analysis in Mplus 7.4 (Muthén & Muthén, 2015). We used random slopes for the hypothesized paths (Beal, 2015), all constructs were specified as Level-1 (within-person) variables, and we group-mean centered exogenous Level-1 variables (e.g., Enders & Tofghi, 2007; Hofmann & Gavin, 1998; Ohly et al., 2010). Group-mean centering these variables allows us to empirically evaluate fluctuations from baseline levels to understand how deviations in central tendencies in work motives affect the other variables in our model. Our approach to isolating within-person variance ensures that any unmodeled Level-2 constructs (e.g., gender, personality) are uncorrelated with such variation, thereby eliminating such variables as potential confounds (Enders & Tofghi, 2007).

Following recommendations for the use of control variables (e.g., Breaugh, 2008; Spector & Brannick, 2011), we conducted analyses with and without these controls. The results of our hypothesis testing were functionally identical both with and without trust propensity, ability, benevolence, integrity, and previous-day ratings of our endogenous predictors. We present our analyses with these control variables to demonstrate how motives and risk propensity operate alongside traditional predictors of trust and to provide a

conservative test of our predictions that accounts for alternative explanations.

Results

Variance Components and Test of Measurement Model

Before testing our hypotheses, we investigated the extent of within- and between-person variance in our constructs. Our analysis (see Table 1) showed that the within-person variance was generally substantial, indicating our within-person approach was appropriate.

We conducted a multilevel confirmatory factor analysis that modeled all constructs at the within-person level using item-level indicators. Our hypothesized model had acceptable fit to the data: $\chi^2(794) = 2361.25$, $p < .001$; CFI = .94; RMSEA = .04; SRMR (within) = .04. All indicators loaded significantly on their corresponding factor.

Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

The means, standard deviations, coefficient alphas averaged across days of the study, within- and between-person correlations, and demographics are reported in Table 2.

Test of Hypotheses

Table 3 presents the results from our multilevel path analysis (see also Figure 2). Hypothesis 1 predicted that the achievement (1a), affiliation (1b), and stimulation (1c) motives would have a positive relationship with risk propensity, whereas the security motive would have a negative relationship with risk propensity (1d). As shown in Table 3 and Figure 2, the achievement ($\gamma = .16$, $SE = .06$, $p = .015$), affiliation ($\gamma = .10$, $SE = .04$, $p = .007$), and stimulation ($\gamma = .17$, $SE = .04$, $p < .001$) motives were all positively related to risk propensity; the security motive was negatively related to risk propensity ($\gamma = -.08$, $SE = .04$, $p = .041$). Thus, Hypothesis 1 was supported. We calculated pseudo R^2 values based on the reduction of unexplained variance when predictors were added to our model (LaHuis et al., 2014). The pseudo R^2 for risk propensity was 37.8%.³

³ To investigate the relative importance of each motive in predicting daily risk propensity, we performed a dominance analysis (Azen & Budescu, 2003; for a similar approach, see Scott et al., 2014). For each motive, we derived the mean amount of incremental variance explained by the motive when modeled alongside all possible combinations of the other motives. Thus, we analyzed the incremental variance explained in risk propensity for (a) four models wherein we included each motive as solitary predictors, (b) six models wherein we included pairs of all combinations of the motives as predictors, (c) four models wherein we included all combinations of three motives as predictors, and (d) the model from our primary analysis wherein all four motives simultaneously predicted risk propensity. We then isolated the variance explained by each motive for the subset of these models in which the motive was included. The resulting values were used to calculate the mean of variance explained for each motive across all models, thereby deriving the average of each motive's relative importance. This analysis revealed the stimulation motive to be the dominant predictor of daily risk propensity (average $\Delta R^2 = 14\%$) followed by the achievement motive (average $\Delta R^2 = 10\%$). The security motive was the third most important predictor of daily risk propensity (average $\Delta R^2 = 8\%$) followed closely by the affiliation motive (average $\Delta R^2 = 7\%$). We took a parallel approach to a dominance analysis for daily trust in coworker. We found that daily trustworthiness was the strongest predictor (average ability $\Delta R^2 = 10\%$; average benevolence $\Delta R^2 = 12\%$; average integrity $\Delta R^2 = 10\%$), followed by daily risk propensity (average $\Delta R^2 = 7\%$) and daily trust propensity (average $\Delta R^2 = 7\%$).

Table 1
Variance Components of Null Models for Daily Variables

Variable	Within-person variance (ρ^2)	Between-person variance (τ_{00})	Percentage of variability within-person
Achievement motive	0.60**	0.50**	54.5
Affiliation motive	0.73**	1.07**	40.6
Stimulation motive	0.86**	0.80**	51.8
Security motive	0.63**	2.68**	19.0
Risk propensity	0.56**	1.32**	29.8
Trust in coworker	0.61**	1.05**	36.7
Reliance on coworker	0.89**	1.11**	44.5
Disclosure to coworker	1.08**	1.46**	42.5
Trust propensity	0.48**	0.79**	37.8
Coworker ability	0.45**	0.52**	46.4
Coworker benevolence	0.72**	0.72**	50.0
Coworker integrity	0.52**	0.65**	44.4

Note. ρ^2 = within-person variance in the dependent variable. τ_{00} = between-person variance in the dependent variable. Percentage of variability within-person was computed as $\rho^2/(\rho^2 + \tau_{00})$.
** $p < .01$.

Hypothesis 2 predicted that the achievement (2a), affiliation (2b), and stimulation (2c) motives would have a positive indirect effect on trust through risk propensity, whereas the security motive would have a negative indirect effect on trust through risk propensity (2d). As a necessary pre-condition, risk propensity was positively related to trust ($\gamma = .14, SE = .06, p = .001$; see Table 3 and Figure 2); the pseudo R^2 for trust was 43.5%. We used a Monte Carlo simulation to bootstrap 95% bias-corrected confidence intervals for our indirect effects (Selig & Preacher, 2008). The achievement, indirect effect = .02, 95% CI [.004, .049], affiliation, indirect effect = .01, 95% CI [.003, .028], and stimulation motives, indirect effect = .02, 95%

CI [.008, .045] all had positive indirect effects on trust through risk propensity. The security motive had a negative indirect effect on trust through risk propensity, indirect effect = $-.01$, 95% CI $[-.025, -.001]$. Accordingly, Hypothesis 2 was fully supported.

Finally, Hypothesis 3 predicted that trust would have a positive effect on reliance and Hypothesis 4 predicted that trust would have a positive effect on disclosure. As shown in Table 3 and Figure 2, trust was positively related to reliance on coworker ($\gamma = .33, SE = .05, p < .001$) and disclosure to coworker ($\gamma = .46, SE = .08, p < .001$). Thus, Hypotheses 3 and 4 were supported. Supplemental tests (Table 4) showed that all four motives had significant serial indirect

Table 2
Descriptive Statistics, Within-Person Correlations, and Reliabilities of Study Variables

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
1. Achievement motive	5.94	1.04	(.95)	.41*	.47*	.27*	.39*	.29*	.33*	.17	.48*	.67*	.39*	.66*	.18	-.05	.14	.27*
2. Affiliation motive	4.95	1.39	.41*	(.95)	.52*	.40*	.55*	.43*	.40*	.33*	.65*	.27*	.52*	.27*	-.16	.02	-.11	.26*
3. Stimulation motive	5.06	1.35	.38*	.29*	(.86)	.32*	.71*	.39*	.34*	.22*	.48*	.27*	.46*	.38*	.04	-.13	.06	.27*
4. Security motive	4.79	1.81	.27*	.23*	.29*	(.98)	.30*	.10	.28*	.13	.19	.06	.13	.10	-.24*	.11	-.20	-.01
5. Risk propensity	4.67	1.36	.22*	.20*	.25*	.07	(.82)	.42*	.40*	.27*	.61*	.26*	.48*	.35*	-.08	.05	.09	.32*
6. Trust in coworker	4.97	1.32	.14*	.12*	.06	.05	.12*	(.91)	.43*	.70*	.45*	.44*	.79*	.54*	-.03	-.19	.06	.25*
7. Reliance on coworker	5.05	1.30	.13*	.13*	.06	.05	.08*	.25*	(.94)	.53*	.42*	.30*	.35*	.26*	-.07	.03	.16	.35*
8. Disclosure to coworker	4.56	1.60	.01	.07*	-.02	-.05	.00	.27*	.40*	(.95)	.30*	.22*	.49*	.27*	-.05	-.10	.05	.16
9. Trust propensity	5.30	1.15	.17*	.17*	.11*	.15*	.19*	.21*	.12*	.00	(.93)	.46*	.53*	.51*	.11	-.06	.10	.35*
10. Coworker ability	5.95	0.99	.14*	.08*	-.02	-.02	.05*	.34*	.16*	.09*	.35*	(.94)	.56*	.89*	.27*	-.22*	.28*	.31*
11. Coworker benevolence	5.07	1.22	.06*	-.02	-.04	.02	.01	.35*	.14*	.11*	.26*	.42*	(.86)	.70*	-.02	-.06	.00	.36*
12. Coworker integrity	5.73	1.09	.07*	.11*	.10*	.02	.10*	.32*	.14*	.08*	.28*	.57*	.41*	(.92)	.22*	-.23*	.17	.31*
13. Employee age	42.27	11.04	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	-.25*	.61*	.23*
14. Employee gender	0.66	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	.09	-.08
15. Tenure with organization	9.36	8.22	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	.54*
16. Tenure with coworker	5.14	4.03	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

Note. Level 1: $n = 816$. Level 2: $n = 103$. Average coefficient α across days is provided along the diagonal. All correlations below the diagonal are at the within-person level. All correlations above the diagonal are at the between-person level. Between-person correlations were calculated using the aggregated Level-1 variables. Dummy code for gender: Female = 1, Male = 0. Because demographics do not have within-person variance they cannot correlate with within-person variables.
* $p < .05$.

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Table 3
Results of Multilevel Path Analysis of Hypothesized Model

Variable	Risk propensity		Trust in coworker		Reliance on coworker		Disclosure to coworker	
	γ	<i>p</i> value	γ	<i>p</i> value	γ	<i>p</i> value	γ	<i>p</i> value
Achievement motive	.16*	.015	.02	.623	.06	.470	-.06	.432
Affiliation motive	.10*	.007	.05	.208	.05	.318	.08	.120
Stimulation motive	.17*	< .001	.04	.262	.01	.770	-.04	.531
Security motive	-.08*	.041	.03	.293	.01	.825	-.08	.089
Risk propensity			.14*	.001				
Trust in coworker					.33*	< .001	.46*	< .001
Trust propensity			.03	.593				
Coworker ability			.17*	.018				
Coworker benevolence			.23*	<.001				
Coworker integrity			.12	.055				
Previous-day risk propensity	.04	.303						
Previous-day trust in coworker			-.05	.207				
Previous-day reliance on coworker					.04	.228		
Previous-day disclosure to coworker							.06	.146
Pseudo <i>R</i> ²	37.8%		43.5%		31.1%		23.0%	

Note. All variables were modeled at the within-person level: Level-1 *n* = 816. Hypothesized relationships (bolded) were modeled using random slopes. * *p* < .05.

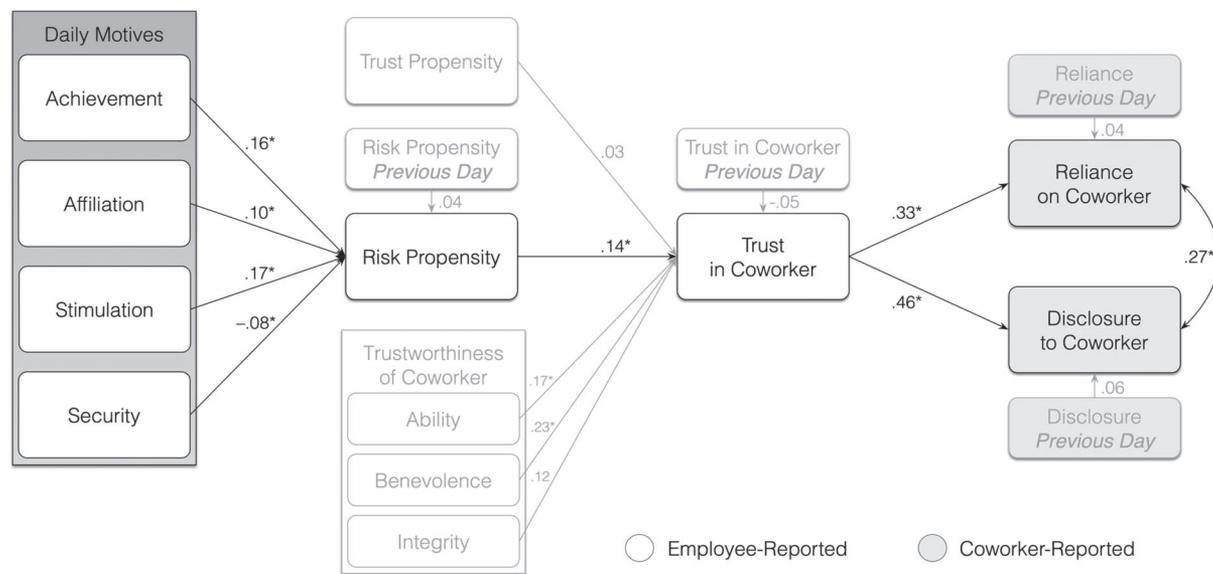
effects on both trusting behaviors (i.e., motive → risk propensity → trust → trusting behaviors). The pseudo *R*² for reliance was 31.1%; the pseudo *R*² for disclosure was 23.0%.

Supplemental Analyses

We conducted three supplemental analyses to provide evidence of the robustness of our model (see Appendix). The first analysis

operationalized trustworthiness and trust propensity as parallel mediators, alongside risk propensity, of the effects of daily work motives on trust. The second analysis explored whether any of the four motives behaved as an accuracy motive, rather than a directional motive, by testing whether they moderated the relationship between trustworthiness and trust. The third analysis explored whether risk propensity, trustworthiness, and trust propensity interacted to predict trust. The results of all three analyses provide

Figure 2
Test of Hypothesized Model



Note. Level 1: *n* = 816. All hypothesized relationships were modeled using random slopes. The direct effects of the four motives were also modeled on trust, reliance, and disclosure (see Table 3 for full results). For simplicity, the direct effects are not shown in the figure; none of those effects were significant. * *p* < .05.

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Table 4
Indirect Effects of Daily Motives on Daily Trusting Behavior

Indirect effects	Estimate	95% CI
Achievement motive → risk propensity → trust in coworker → reliance on coworker	.01	[.001, .018]
Achievement motive → risk propensity → trust in coworker → disclosure to coworker	.01	[.002, .026]
Affiliation motive → risk propensity → trust in coworker → reliance on coworker	.01	[.001, .010]
Affiliation motive → risk propensity → trust in coworker → disclosure to coworker	.01	[.001, .014]
Stimulation motive → risk propensity → trust in coworker → reliance on coworker	.01	[.002, .017]
Stimulation motive → risk propensity → trust in coworker → disclosure to coworker	.01	[.003, .022]
Security motive → risk propensity → trust in coworker → reliance on coworker	-.004	[-.009, -.001]
Security motive → risk propensity → trust in coworker → disclosure to coworker	-.01	[-.013, -.001]

evidence that our hypothesized model is an appropriate reflection of the data.⁴

Discussion

Trust is a risky business. Although trust can provide access to valued resources, it also exposes the trustor to exploitation and exclusion (Lind, 2001; Mayer et al., 1995). An employee who is considering whether to rely on coworkers' advice and abilities on a new project might gain helpful support, but it is also possible that the coworkers will let them down. Likewise, disclosing sensitive information to coworkers might garner helpful advice and support, but the coworkers might use that information against the employee. Given these risks, it is intuitive that the literature has focused on the notion that trust is based on whether coworkers are trustworthy. Despite the intuitiveness of this perspective, it is somewhat surprising that models of trust—a construct that reflects a willingness *to take risk*—continue to overlook the trustor's tendency to take risks and the motivational forces driving that tendency. Consequently, current models of trust are ill-equipped to explain why employees' trusting behaviors might vary from day to day.

To craft a more complete and accurate model of trust, we turned to the decision-making literature, which provides substantial evidence that employees' risk-taking tendencies have a global influence on risk taking that transcends calculated assessments (Fischhoff et al., 1981; Kogan & Wallach, 1964; Rowe, 1977; Sitkin & Weingart, 1995). Whereas calculated assessments provide relevant situation-specific data, risk propensity influences the likelihood that decision makers will "take the leap" and engage in the risky behavior (Das & Teng, 2001, 2004). Borrowing the concept of risk propensity from the decision-making literature, we proposed that employees' daily tendency to accept risk would provide much-needed insight into employees' trusting behaviors. If trust requires a leap that goes beyond the data (Lewis & Weigert, 1985; Möllering, 2001, 2006; Pratt et al., 2019), it is imperative to expand models of trust beyond predictors that merely encapsulate the data in different ways.

Rather than simply introducing risk propensity as an exogenous base of trust, we drew on motivated reasoning theory to build and test a theoretical model that outlines why employees' tendency to

take risks might vary from day to day. Scholars have suggested that the key to understanding employees' leaps of faith may lie within their motivations and tendencies (Flores & Solomon, 1998; Möllering, 2006). Our results indicate that employees' achievement, affiliation, and stimulation motives led them to be more risk seeking, whereas their security motive led them to be more risk averse. The indirect effects of these motives on trust, through risk propensity, provide evidence for our proposal that trusting behaviors are based on more than risk assessments. As employees considered whether to rely on or disclose to their coworkers, their motives provided a nudge that encouraged them to take those leaps of faith or, in the case of the security motive, to step back.

These results provide an important first empirical voice in the growing literature on motives and trust (e.g., Murray et al., 2013; van der Werff et al., 2019; Weber et al., 2004; Williams, 2001). Whereas prior conceptual work has focused on motives to trust a particular person, our research indicates that generalized, untargeted motives can "move the needle" on general levels of trust from day to day. Given that the literature has not previously conducted empirical studies on the relationships between motives, risk propensity, and trust, these results could not be anticipated from prior work. Our work also suggests that as scholars conduct additional research into the association between motivation and trust they should carefully consider the role that employees' risk propensity might play in this relationship. Although the motivation to trust a particular person might influence trust by biasing trustworthiness perceptions (van der Werff et al., 2019; Weber et al., 2004), an extrapolation of our results hints that the effect might also be conveyed through motivated reasoning processes.

Practical Implications

Our work has several practical implications. First, our results suggest that employees should strive to be aware of how their daily motives are affecting their trust. When people go beyond the data provided by trustworthiness, they expose themselves to greater risks (Lind, 2001; Murray et al., 2011, 2013). Importantly, however, these risks are not necessarily detrimental. The achievement, affiliation, and stimulation motives introduced a bias that led to trusting behaviors which generally contribute to higher-performing work groups (Edmondson, 1999; Lawler, 1992; Lind, 2001; Tyler & Lind, 1992). In that sense, motivated reasoning has beneficial outcomes. It is possible, however, that motivated reasoning may lead to reliance and disclosure in instances when these behaviors are unwise. For example, an employee focused on the affiliation motive is more likely to disclose sensitive information. Although this behavior can strengthen a relationship (Rempel et al., 1985; Rusbult & Van Lange, 2003), there are undoubtedly occasions when, from an unbiased perspective, that disclosure is unduly risky.

Employees should also be aware that a security motive may limit their daily trust. Trusting behaviors are evidence of trusting

⁴ Our data collection also included a 5-item measure (Zhou & George, 2001) of daily creativity that was rated by the coworker. At the suggestion of the review team, our final model focused on reliance and disclosure as the dependent variables. To provide a complete picture of our data and results, we also report the results related to creativity. When creativity was modeled alongside reliance and disclosure, trust in coworker had a .28 effect ($p < .001$) on creativity. Creativity had a .17 ($p = .005$) covariance with reliance and a .25 ($p < .001$) covariance with disclosure.

relationships and contributors to their creation (Zand, 1972). Employees who do not engage in trusting behaviors are signaling, intentionally or unintentionally, that they do not trust their coworkers (Baer et al., 2021; Skinner et al., 2014). On days when an employee is focused on security, they may be unwilling to risk relying on coworkers or disclosing important information. If that occurs on a regular basis, coworkers may see that employee as untrusting—which can damage the relationship (Dunning et al., 2014).

There are undoubtedly situations, however, in which employees will want to “unbias” their reasoning and ensure their trust is grounded in rational risk assessments. Research on motivated reasoning provides some insights into how this might be accomplished. Although the biased memory search prompted by motivated reasoning tends to overlook past failures while highlighting past successes, people are ultimately constrained by the data (Kunda, 1990). When failures are made salient, the decision maker feels obligated to include that data in their calculations, which reduces their unrealistic optimism (Kunda, 1990). For particularly important trust decisions, employees should take time to create a mental list of the outcomes of similar trusting behaviors. Although it will require disciplined effort to create a balanced, unbiased list of successes and failures, research suggests that people can learn to be more risk averse by recalling their losses and be more risk seeing—which may be necessary when the security motive is high—by recalling their successes (Barberis et al., 2001; March, 1996).

Employees could also “unbias” their reasoning by adopting a disconfirming approach to their trust/do-not-trust decision. Gilovich and colleagues have argued that a disconfirming frame, such as “*Must I engage in this behavior?*,” creates a higher burden of proof than the confirming frame prompted by motivated reasoning, such as “*Can I engage in this behavior?*” (Dawson et al., 2002; Gilovich, 1991). With respect to trust, a “*Must I trust?*” criterion may lead to disconfirming evidence that reduces the likelihood of falling prey to biased reasoning (Gilovich, 1991; Klayman & Ha, 1987). This disconfirming evidence should help ensure trust is not based on unrealistic optimism—in the case of the achievement, affiliation, and stimulation motives—or unrealistic pessimism—in the case of the security motive.

Our model of the indirect effects of motives on daily trust, through risk propensity, gives organizations additional avenues for increasing trust among their members. Prior scholarly advice has focused on encouraging organizational members to be more trustworthy (Abrams et al., 2003; Korsgaard et al., 2002). In contrast to this focus on coaching trustees, our research suggests that supervisors may be able to increase trust by coaching the trustor. Our dominance analysis suggested that the stimulation and achievement motives were the most impactful influences on risk propensity, followed by security and affiliation. The dominance of the stimulation motive is an encouraging result for organizations, as managers likely have a pronounced ability to activate that motive. For example, it may be possible for supervisors to emphasize a desire for stimulation by encouraging employees to learn new skills and try new assignments. Closely related, supervisors may be able to decrease the security motive by coaching employees that the environment is safe for this experimentation. Supervisors could also have a direct impact on risk propensity by ensuring employees that taking risks is part of the learning process (Edmondson, 1999). Of course, this approach would require supervisors to be more tolerant of the failures that inevitably accompany risk taking.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

Although our field approach enabled us to investigate the trust antecedents and outcomes of real employees within organizations, field studies allow for limited causal inference. To establish causality, future research would need to employ an experimental approach. Alternative explanations could also limit the conclusions of our research. To address this concern, we controlled for alternate explanations in our primary analysis and further explored them in a supplemental analysis. Relatedly, our within-person approach helps eliminate alternative explanations by ensuring that any unmodeled Level-2 constructs (e.g., personality, gender, and culture) are uncorrelated with such within-person variation (Enders & Tofghi, 2007).

We tested our proposal that employees’ motives, through risk propensity, would have a general effect on their trusting intentions and behaviors by focusing on a single coworker as a proxy of this generalized effect. Our research design allowed us to control for daily risk assessments while also creating source separation between our predictors and the dependent variable. Despite the benefits provided by our design, there are limitations that could be addressed in future research. Our predictors are at a more general level—untargeted motives and risk propensity—compared to subsequent coworker-specific outcomes—trust, reliance, and disclosure. In other words, although all stages of our model are nested within employees, our model starts from a higher level of within-person analysis relative to the within-person dyadic tie examined in later stages of the model. An additional limitation of our approach is that the employee selected the coworker with whom they were paired. Employees may have tended to select a coworker with whom they had a positive relationship, potentially contributing to range restriction at the higher end of trust and trusting behaviors. Although our design follows prior research that has utilized a single coworker as a proxy for a generalized effect (Baer et al., 2018; Bush et al., 2021; Hill et al., *in press*; Tang et al., 2020), these limitations could be addressed by future research. A starting point for this inquiry could be an experience-sampling network study. As in our study, this design could ask the employee to rate their daily motives in a mid-day survey and their risk propensity in an afternoon survey. However, rather than providing daily ratings of a single coworker’s trustworthiness and trust in that coworker, the employee could provide daily ratings of trustworthiness for all coworkers in their immediate workgroup or team, as well as their trust in each of those coworkers. The researchers could then recruit this same group of coworkers to rate the employee’s trusting behaviors on each day of the study. Although such an approach is an ambitious undertaking, this comprehensive data collection may provide further support for our model and address the limitations inherent in our approach.

We centered our research on building a model of daily trust, which necessitated theory and empirics focused on the within-person level. It is likely, however, that similar effects would be found at the between-person level. Zou et al. (2014, 2020) argued that employees’ momentary and stable goals should influence people’s risk preferences, which have both state and stable components. Typologies of daily motives are relatively interchangeable with typologies of more enduring motives, which are often termed “values” (Bilsky, 2006). Whereas motives focus on strivings “today,” values represent strivings that transcend situations and contexts (Schwartz, 1992). Future research could assess whether

employees' enduring values over the past weeks or months similarly influence their trust through risk propensity. Scholars might also explore additional predictors of daily risk propensity, such as daily mood. Our focus on daily motives was driven by motivated reasoning theory and the literature on risk propensity, which are largely silent on mood and emotions (Das & Teng, 2004; Kunda, 1990; Zou et al., 2020). However, given that positive emotions tend to lead to an expansive mindset (Fredrickson, 2001), it is possible that a positive mood might increase employees' willingness to be daring that day.

Conclusion

Roll the dice or play it safe? Reduced to its core, trust is the willingness to take risk in a relationship (Schoorman et al., 2007). Although a careful assessment of the potential risks is certainly a critical component of risk taking, trust ultimately requires employees to go beyond the data—to take a leap of faith (Lewis & Weigert, 1985; Möllering, 2001, 2006; Simmel, 1990). Surprisingly, however, the trust literature has seemed hesitant to move beyond predictors of trust that simply capture the data in different ways, perhaps feeling constricted by foundational models of trust that are centered on trustworthiness and trust propensity (e.g., Mayer et al., 1995). We built and tested a theoretical model that suggests employees are influenced by a process of motivated reasoning as they decide whether to trust. Moving forward, the trust literature would benefit from models that consider the role employees' motivations and risk-taking tendencies play in navigating the “risky business” of trust.

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Appendix

Measure Validation for Risk Propensity

In accordance with suggested procedures (Hinkin, 1998; Hinkin & Tracey, 1999), we quantitatively assessed the correspondence between our items and the conceptual definition of risk propensity with a sample of 125 full-time employees recruited through Prolific Academic. Participants rated the definitional correspondence using a 7-point scale (1 = *item is an extremely bad match to the definition* to 7 = *item is an extremely good match to the definition*). The mean definitional correspondence was 6.05 out of 7.00, which provides evidence that our items are a content valid assessment of risk propensity (Colquitt et al., 2019). The validated items are: “Today, I have been open to taking risks,” “Today, I have felt daring,” and “Today, I have been willing to take a chance on something.”

We then conducted a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA; MacKenzie et al., 2011) using a separate sample of 125 full-time employees recruited through Prolific Academic. We included daily risk propensity and two constructs that live in a similar conceptual

space: daily trust propensity and daily positive affect. We measured trust propensity using the 5-item measure from Baer et al. (2018; $\alpha = .88$) and positive affect using the 5-item measure from Mackinnon et al. (1999; $\alpha = .91$). Risk propensity was correlated with trust propensity at .55 and with positive affect at .53 (trust propensity–positive affect correlation was .56), providing initial evidence of its distinctiveness. The 3-factor model exhibited acceptable fit to the data: $\chi^2(62) = 104.74$, $p < .001$; CFI = .96; RMSEA = .07; SRMR = .06. To provide evidence of discriminant validity, we tested two alternative models in which we constrained the relationships between risk propensity and the two other constructs to unity. A significant Wald Chi-Squared Test demonstrated that the model constraining risk propensity and trust propensity had a worse fit to the data: $\Delta\chi^2(1) = 94.08$, $p < .05$. Likewise, a significant Wald Chi-Squared Test indicated that the model constraining risk propensity and positive affect had a worse fit to the data: $\Delta\chi^2(1) = 48.53$, $p < .05$. Taken together, the CFA and alternative model tests provide further evidence of construct validity.

Supplemental Analyses

Alternative Mediators

We conducted a supplemental analysis to further account for the variables—trustworthiness and trust propensity—that are traditionally utilized to predict trust. Although we controlled for these variables in our primary analyses, a supplemental analysis allowed us to test whether motives exerted their effects solely through risk propensity or whether they also exerted their effects through the literature's established mechanisms. As shown in Table A1, we tested this model by adding paths from the achievement, affiliation, stimulation, and security motives to coworker trustworthiness (ability, benevolence, and integrity) and trust propensity. To be consistent with our primary analysis, which included previous-day controls of all endogenous variables, we controlled for previous-day ratings of the three trustworthiness facets and trust propensity. We found that the effects of the achievement, affiliation, stimulation, and security motives continued to be transmitted to trust in coworker through risk propensity, thus strengthening support for our theoretical model. Notably, 14 of the 16 additional paths that we modeled (4 motives → 4 mediators [ability, benevolence, integrity, and trust propensity]) were non-significant, suggesting that the effects of motives are generally not conveyed through the oft-researched bases of trust. The sole exception was the achievement motive, which had significant indirect effects on trust in coworker through ability, .02, CI [.017, .028], and benevolence, .02, CI [.006, .025].

Exploratory Interactions

At the suggestion of the review team, we first performed a supplemental analysis that explored whether daily motives interacted with the other two proximal predictors in our model

(trustworthiness and trust propensity). This analysis tests our proposal that the daily motives in our model behave as directional motives as opposed to accuracy motives (Kunda, 1990). Accuracy motives exert an effect on decision makers by inducing more cognitive effort, careful processing, and attention to relevant data (Kunda, 1990). In models of trust, the available data on a coworker is represented by trustworthiness and, to a lesser extent, by trust propensity—the employee's generalized perception of all coworkers (Baer & Colquitt, 2018; Kramer, 1999; Lewis & Weigert, 1985; Mayer et al., 1995). If daily work motives behaved in manner akin to accuracy motives, they would be expected to increase the extent to which the data influences trust, rather than having an indirect effect through risk propensity. Indeed, Kunda (1990) noted that data has “ruled out” the possibility that accuracy goals operate simply by inducing a “tendency to make more conservative, less extreme judgments” (p. 481; see also Kassin & Hochreich, 1977; Pittman & D'Agostino, 1985; Tetlock, 1985). This research suggests that accuracy motives would not affect risk propensity. If our daily work motives behave akin to directional motives, as we theorize, they should induce heuristic thinking that flows through risk propensity (i.e., indirect relationships with trust). In contrast, if the motives exhibit the expected characteristics of accuracy motives (i.e., increased reliance on the data), they would be expected to interact with trustworthiness or trust propensity to predict trust. Our analyses showed that none of the four motives interacted with any of the three facets of trustworthiness or trust propensity (16 total interactions) to predict trust.

In line with prior work on risk taking (e.g., Das & Teng, 2001, 2004; Sitkin & Weingart, 1995), we theorized that risk propensity and risk assessments (i.e., trustworthiness and trust propensity) would have additive rather than interactive effects. However, at the suggestion of the review team we tested whether risk propensity interacted with trustworthiness or trust propensity to predict trust.

Table A1

Results of Multilevel Path Analysis of Supplemental Model With Alternative Mediators

Variable	Risk propensity (γ)	Trust propensity (γ)	Ability (γ)	Benevolence (γ)	Integrity (γ)	Trust in coworker (γ)	Reliance on coworker (γ)	Disclosure to coworker (γ)
Achievement motive	.16*	.09	.20*	.14*	.10	.02	.06	-.06
Affiliation motive	.15*	.04	-.05	-.03	.06	.04	.01	-.05
Stimulation motive	.10*	.07	.00	-.04	.02	.02	.05	.07
Security motive	-.08*	.08	.05	.07	-.01	-.03	.02	-.07
Risk propensity						.11*		
Trust in coworker							.33*	.47*
Trust propensity						.08		
Coworker ability						.15*		
Coworker benevolence						.26*		
Coworker integrity						.14*		
Previous-day risk propensity	.05							
Previous-day trust propensity		-.03						
Previous-day Ability			-.05					
Previous-day benevolence				-.08				
Previous-day integrity					.01			
Previous-day trust in coworker						.12*		
Previous-day reliance on coworker							.04	
Previous-day disclosure to coworker								.07
Pseudo R^2	34.8%	22.5%	47.9%	24.6%	25.5%	34.5%	31.2%	23.2%

Note. All variables were modeled at the within-person level. Hypothesized relationships are bolded.

* $p < .05$.

(Appendix continues)

Our analysis found that none of these interactions were significant: Ability \times Risk Propensity, $\gamma = -0.05$, $SE = 0.05$, $p = .350$; Benevolence \times Risk Propensity, $\gamma = 0.07$, $SE = 0.05$, $p = .147$; Integrity \times Risk Propensity, $\gamma = 0.01$, $SE = 0.05$, $p = .769$. Additionally, Trust Propensity \times Risk Propensity did not have a significant effect on trust: $\gamma = 0.03$, $SE = 0.03$, $p = .293$. Finally, we tested whether trustworthiness interacted with trust propensity to predict trust. Although scholars have suggested they might interact (Mayer et al., 1995), a recent review observed that this proposal has not been tested in the management literature (Baer & Colquitt, 2018). These interactions were not significant: Trust Propensity \times Ability, $\gamma = -0.04$, $SE = 0.07$, $p = .500$; Trust Propensity \times Benevolence, $\gamma = 0.09$, $SE = 0.09$, $p = .303$; Trust Propensity \times Integrity, $\gamma = 0.02$, $SE = 0.04$, $p = .698$.

Complete List of Measures

Daily Motives

Lead in for all motives items: *At work today, I am focused on . . .*

Achievement

Doing an outstanding job in my work.
Performing very well in my work activities.
Producing excellent work.

Affiliation

Forming relationships with coworkers.
Getting to know my fellow coworkers well.
Developing close ties with coworkers.

Stimulation

Doing a variety of things.
Doing something different.
Doing many different things on the job.

Security

Being certain of keeping my job.
Being sure I will always have a job.
Being certain my job will last.

Risk Propensity

Today, I have been open to taking risks.
Today, I have been willing to take a chance on something.
Today, I have felt daring.

Trust

Today, I have been willing to increase my vulnerability to [Coworker Name].

Today, I have been willing to let [Coworker Name] have an impact on issues that are important to me.

Today, I have been willing to rely on [Coworker Name] for something that is critical to me, even if I was not able to monitor their actions.

Today, I have been willing to share my opinion about sensitive issues with [Coworker Name].

Reliance

Today, [Employee Name] has relied on my work-related judgments.

Today, [Employee Name] has depended on me to handle important issues on their behalf.

Today, [Employee Name] has relied on my task-related skills and abilities.

Today, [Employee Name] has depend on me to back them up in difficult situations.

Today, [Employee Name] has relied on me to represent their work accurately to others.

Disclosure

Today, [Employee Name] has shared personal feelings with me.

Today, [Employee Name] has discussed work-related problems or difficulties with me that could potentially be used to disadvantage them.

Today, [Employee Name] has confided in me about personal issues that are affecting their work.

Today, [Employee Name] has discussed with me how they honestly feel about their work, even negative feelings and frustration.

Today, [Employee Name] has shared their personal beliefs with me.

Trust propensity

Today, I have had faith in the promises or statements of other people.

Today, I have expected other people to be honest and open.

Today, I have had faith in human nature.

Today, I have felt that other people can be relied upon to do what they say they will do.

Today, I have been more trusting than a lot of people.

Trustworthiness of Coworker

Coworker Ability

Today, [Coworker Name] has been very capable of performing their job.

Today, I have felt very confident about [Coworker Name]'s skills.

(Appendix continues)

Today, [Coworker Name] has had much knowledge about the work that needed to be done.

Coworker Benevolence

Today, [Coworker Name] has been very concerned about my welfare.

Today, [Coworker Name] has really looked out for what is important to me.

Today, [Coworker Name] has been willing to go out of their way to help me.

Coworker Integrity

Today, [Coworker Name]'s actions and behaviors have been very consistent.

Today, [Coworker Name] has tried hard to be fair in dealing with others.

Today, [Coworker Name] has had a strong sense of justice.

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