

From Social Trust and Happiness to Government Trust: The Moderating Role of Political Systems and Governance in the Philippines

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Abstract

There are frequent calls to enhance citizen's trust on government that would pave the way towards a new paradigm of participatory governance and strong citizen support on government. In various governance realms, citizens may directly or indirectly engage with the government through various available mediums. Albeit the availability of various policies and services provided by the government, citizens remains to be passive and adamant on trusting public sector government. While many studies have explored a set of determinants that influence citizen's trust on its government (i.e., central government, local government, parliament, and legal system) few studies ascertain the relationship and the role of social trust, happiness, governance, and political systems. These are critical factors that may influence the trust in government. To resolve the gap, this study draws on the theoretical lens of *social capital theory*, proposing that cognitive social trust and citizen's happiness—environment and performance—are most likely to predict the citizen's trust on government. Also, this study assumes that the citizen's perception on governance and political system will moderate the impact of social trust and happiness on trust in government. Using the data from a large sample of the *Asia Barometer Survey 2007* focusing on the data collected from the *Philippines*, the study tests a latent model employing structural equation modeling technique. The study found that happiness negatively predicts trust in central government and the legal system while all other predictors do not give any significant effect. The findings also show that political system moderates the impact of social trust and happiness on the trust in government. Finally, the article points out the study's theoretical, empirical, and practical implications and directions for future research.

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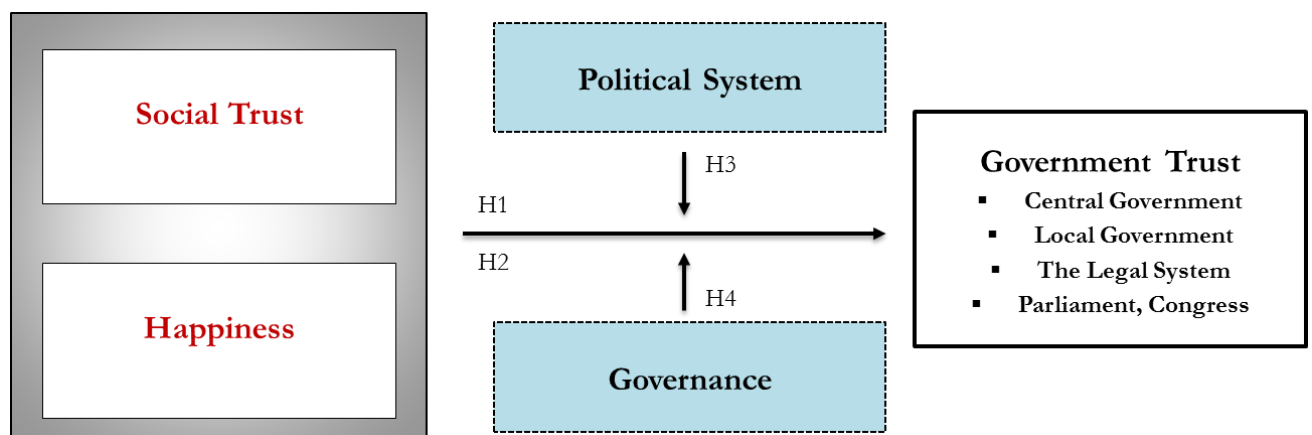
Introduction

There are frequent calls to enhance citizen's trust on government that would pave the way towards a new paradigm of participatory governance and strong citizen support on government. In various governance realms, citizens may directly or indirectly engage with the government through various available mediums. Albeit the availability of various policies and services provided by the government, citizens remains to be passive and adamant on trusting public sector government. Scholars have recognized that the causes and effects of trust in government are complex (Kim, 2010). There has been wide evidence that the public are more likely to evaluate government trustworthiness based on recent government actions.

Trust has been acknowledged as a key factor in the relationship between citizens and government and lack or failure of trust can hinder the creation of public value (Kelly, Mulgan, & Muers, 2002). According to Ba and Pavlou (2002), trust is defined "as the subjective assessment of one party that another party will perform a particular transaction according to his or her confident expectations, in an environment characterized by uncertainty" (p. 245). While there is a growing body of literature on trust in government, there are few theoretical and empirical studies that details the role of individual values or well-being—social trust (social capital) and happiness (subjective well-being)—on the trust of citizens in their government in the Asian context. Thus, this study analyzes how social trust and happiness are associated with government trust; and then explores the interaction effect of government's governance performance and political system.

Generally, this study inquires on how social trust and happiness are associated with trust in the government—central, local, legal system, and legislature? Do political system and government’s governance performance moderate impact of social trust and happiness on the trust in the government. Accordingly, this study asks three questions: (1) How do social trust influences citizen’s happiness and trust in government? (2) Do happiness mediate the relationship of social trust and trust in government? (3) What is the relationship of happiness and trust in the government? And (4) Do governance and political system moderate the impact of the predictors on trust in government. To answer these questions, first, we work on literature review using the social capital theory (Putnam, 2008; 2001; 1993) as the primary theoretical lens explaining the relationship of the variables (i.e., social trust, happiness, and trust in government). Second, we discuss the research methods and measures used to denote the variables. Third, we present the research findings and results of validity and reliability test i.e., exploratory factor analysis [EFA], regression analysis, moderation, and mediation test. Lastly, following the discussion of results, we explain the findings; discuss theoretical and practical implications, and present the limitations and paths for future research. Figure 1 depicts the conceptual model of the study.

Figure 1. **Research Model**



Literature Review

Trust in Government

Trust in the government is generally the reflection of government's performance (Keele, 2007) which may serve as the foundation for the success of public policies ("Trust in Government", OECD, n.d.). It refers to the degree of trust and confidence the public has towards its government—executive, legislative, and judicial branches of the government ("Trust in Government", Gallup, n.d.). Scholars have recognized that the causes and effects of trust in government are complex (Kim, 2010). There has been wide evidence that the public are more likely to evaluate government trustworthiness based on recent government actions. That is, looking at the performance of the politicians—public executives, legislators, and the legal system (Keele, 2007; Citrin, 1974).

The citizen's trust is important for the government to make "binding decisions, commit resources to attain the societal goals" (Gamson, 1968; Chanley, Rudolph, & Rahn, 2000, p. 240) and ascertain citizen's acquiescence and/or agreement to public policies (Chanley et al., 2000; Levi, 1998; Scholz & Lubell, 1998; OECD, n.d.). Interpersonal trust is learned through interactions and civic activities (Brehm & Rahn, 1997) which can lay the foundations for the trust in government (Putnam, 2000; Brehm & Rahn, 1997). The citizen's involvement in civic activities connotes a trust in the political process and government's effort to bring social change (Keele, 2007).

Social Trust, Happiness, and Trust and Government

Putnam (1993) is the scholar behind the conceptualization of civic engagement. He

pointed out the importance of “social capital” which refers to the social connections, networks, and interpersonal trust that occur in communities (Putnam, 2000). It also indicates the quantity and quality of social interactions in a community (Petrou & Kupek, 2008). Social capital has two aspects: (a) civic engagement in a community, state, or nation, and (b) interpersonal trust, or willingness to ascribe benign intentions to others (Keele, 2007, p. 243~244). Helliwell and Putnam (2004) argued that social capital is an essential predictor of happiness. They argued that social capital—social trust—can enhance happiness through health to well-being (Tokuda et al., 2010). These theoretical backdrops enable us to propose the following hypotheses:

Hypotheses 1: *Social trust is positively and significantly related with happiness.*

In the same manner, interpersonal trust is learned through interactions and civic activities (Brehm & Rahn, 1997) which can lay the foundations for the trust in government (Putnam, 2000; Brehm & Rahn, 1997). The citizen’s involvement in civic activities connotes a trust in the political process and government’s effort to bring social change (Keele, 2007). Thus, we propose:

Hypotheses 2: *Social trust is positively and significantly related with trust in government.*

Happiness and Trust in Government

Contemporary public policy and governance have started to notice the importance of subjective wellbeing (SWB), a factor going beyond economic growth. Indeed, happy people live longer, and happiness is what people ultimately pursue (Diener & Seligman,

2004). To capture SWB empirically, scholars use both cognitive (i.e., life satisfaction or happiness) and emotional (i.e., positive and negative affect) measures (Arthaud-Day, Rode, Mooney, & Near, 2005; Şimşek, 2011).

Studies on happiness in the western countries (e.g., U.S.) lend no support to the proposition that the general public put their trust into government's matters of maximizing the happiness (Duncan, 2013). This is surprising because the services delivered by the government intend to enhance the wellbeing of the citizens. In the OECD, the trust in government is also anchored on the "citizen's experiences when receiving public services" which may enhance citizen's happiness. In this study, we argue that happiness will foster public's trust in government. These theoretical backdrops enable us to propose the following hypotheses:

Hypotheses 3: *Happiness is positively and significantly related with trust in government.*

In addition to the direct relationships discussed above, the relationship between social trust and trust in government could be mediated by happiness. The mediation process can be observed on the relationship that has been established between social trust and happiness and the discussion explicating the relationship that happiness and trust in government. Thus, we propose:

Hypotheses 4: *Happiness mediates the relationship between social trust and trust in government.*

The Moderating Role of Governance and Political System

Governance, as it was differed with government, relates to "the processes of interaction

and decision-making among the actors involved in a collective problem that lead to the creation, reinforcement, or reproduction of social norms and institutions” (Marc, 2011; “Governance”, n.d.). We argue that it is in the process (i.e., creation, reinforcement, and reproduction) that social trust and happiness are most likely to be enhanced. It may as well provide the base for the government to be trusted. Thus, we propose:

Hypotheses 5: *Governance moderates the relationship of (a) social trust and (b) happiness and trust in government.*

As a broad and encompassing system of politics and government, political system, the set of formal legal institutions that constitute a “government” or a “state” (Heslop, 2014), has an influential role on social trust, happiness, and the subsequent trust in government. Easton (1965) have described that political systems are closer to trust in government—trust as the central dimension. Thus, we propose

Hypotheses 6: *Political system moderates the relationship of (a) social trust and (b) happiness and trust in government.*

Data and Method

The causal relationship of latent variables in the hypothesized model was determined by employing multiple regression analysis on SPSS (version 21). Prior to the causal analysis, we employed factor analysis testing on the distinctiveness and convergent validity of the measuring constructs. The estimation is based on a weighted least square (WLS) parameter (Hox, Maas, & Brinkhuis, 2010) and principal component analysis (PCA). The Expectation-Maximization (EM), compared with multivariate analysis has the ability to measure multiple can simultaneously measure the relationships of variables in a model (Byrne, 2001) and

define a model explaining an entire set of relationships (Kline, 2005). Finally, the multiple-linear regression technique was employed to assess the relationship of the variables and the moderating role of governance and political system.

Data and Instrumentation

The data employed in the study is the *Asia Barometer Survey 2007*. The proponent of the survey—jointly researched at Research and Information Center for Asian Studies, Institute of Oriental Culture, University of Tokyo, described it as: (a) represents the largest ever, comparative survey in Asia, covering East, Southeast, South and Central Asia; (b) focuses on daily lives of ordinary people (bumi putra) and their relationships to family, neighborhood, workplace, social and political institutions and market place; and (c) conducts country-wide face-to-face surveys using standardized instruments designed around a common research framework. The survey was administered to seven Asian countries, namely: (1) Cambodia, (2) Indonesia, (3) Laos, (4) Malaysia, (5), Myanmar, (6) The Philippines, and (7) Thailand. The total number of useful samples is 7,020. In the extant study, it focuses only on the data collected from the Philippines with the total respondents of 1000.

Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) with the principal component analysis technique was used to bring intercorrelated variables together under one general and underlying variable. We computed factor extraction and found composite factor scores for each of the identified constructs in the research model. Results show that all latent variables were clearly defined by each underlying variable.

Missing Data Adjustments

Researcher attempted alternative techniques for dealing with missing data, such as mean

substitution; however, these did not give any significant change in the overall mean (see Cohen, Cohen, West, & Aiken, 2003). While listwise or pairwise deletion techniques were considered, these dropped a significant amount of data in the analysis (Roth, 1994). In lieu of mean substitution and listwise deletion techniques, the researchers employed the Expectation-Maximization (EM) method to deal with missing values. This approach is an iterative method that is appropriate for imputing single values—it uses other variables to impute a value and accordingly verifies that the imputation is the most likely value of the variable through the iteration of the E (expectation) and M (maximization) steps (Dempster, Laird, & Rubin, 1977; Gold & Bentler, 2000).

Measures

The *Asia Barometer Survey 2007* was designed to gather citizen's perception on the government's effort to implement various democratic policies—or the fulfillment of rights enshrined in the constitution such as the right to vote, to demonstrate, and among others; the trust in the government institutions—the central government, local, congress, legal system, educational system, and the like; the political predisposition; and the citizen's engagement in the politics. Table 1 shows the exploratory factor analysis employing the principal component analysis rotation technique and Varimax extraction method. The factor loading ranges from .436 to .825.

Trust in Government. The items used to measure the trust in government were based on the response made by the participants on the survey questionnaire, "Please indicate to what extent you trust the following institutions to operate in the best interests of society. If you don't know the reply or have no particular opinion, please say so (SA for each institution): the central government; your local government; the legal system; and the parliament,

congress.” The selected items depict the trust in the government institutions representing the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of the government. The responses are classified into “trust a lot”, “trust to a degree”, “don’t really trust”, “don’t trust at all”, “haven’t thought about it”, and “don’t know”. The Cronbach’s α value (four items) is equal to .803.³

Social Capital. The measures of social capital are derived from the survey item that asked the respondents to indicate their responses on the following questions, such as: “Generally, do you think people can be trusted or do you think that you can’t be too careful in dealing with people (that it pays to be wary of people),” and with responses, “most people can be trusted, can’t be too careful in dealing with people, and don’t know.” Second, the participants were also asked, “Do you think that people generally try to be helpful or do you think that they are mostly look out for themselves” and with responses, “people generally try to be helpful, people mostly look out for themselves, and don’t know.” Lastly, item include response on, “if you saw somebody on the street looking lost, would you stop to help?” and asked them to respond, “I would always stop to help, I would help if nobody else did, it is highly likely that I wouldn’t stop to help, and don’t know.” The Cronbach’s α value (four items) is equal to .273.

Happiness. The measures for happiness asked the respondents on how they perceive the happiness they experience based on the following survey items: “All things considered, would you say that you are happy these days?” with responses, “very happy, quite happy, neither happy nor unhappy, not too happy, very unhappy, and don’t know.” Also, “how often do you feel you are really enjoying life these days?” and asked to response: often, sometimes,

³ The exploratory factor analysis conducted on the trust in government includes all institutions--government organizations such as police, educational institution, the army, and the public health. The purpose of putting them all in the factor analysis is to be able to extract whether all these institutions may be grouped as one factor or construct. Thus, it may provide a strong support that the survey item for trust in government is a representative of all the public institutions.

rarely, never, and don't know." Lastly, asked the participants "how much do you feel you are accomplishing what you want out of your life?" and must respond in a manner such as "a great deal, some, very little, none, and don't know." The Cronbach's α value (three items) is equal to .773.

Political System. The measures adapted for the construct political system was based on how the participants perceive if it is "very good", "fairly good", "bad", or "don't know" the following systems: (a) governance by a powerful leader without the restriction of parliament or elections, (b) a system whereby decisions affecting the country are made by experts (such as bureaucrats with expertise in a particular field) according to what they think is best for the country; (c) military government; and (d) a democratic political system. The Cronbach's α value (three items) is equal to .626.

Governance. The measures used to describe governance were taken from the responses that asked the participants on "how well do you think the [YOUR COUNTRY] government is dealing with the following issues?" with responses such as "very well, fairly well, not so well, not well at all, and don't know". The following fields include: (a) The economy; (b) Political corruption; (c) Human rights; (d) Unemployment; (e) Crime; (f) The quality of public services; (g) Increase of immigration; (h) Ethnic conflict; (i) Religious conflict; and (j) Environmental problems. The Cronbach's α value (eight items) is equal to .852.

Table 1. Exploratory Factor Analysis

Pattern Matrix^a						
Variable		Cronbach's α				
		.803	.852	.626	.773	.273
<i>Government Trust</i>	Q30c	.780				
	Q30b	.749				
	Q30e	.739				
	Q30d	.737				
	Q30f	.735				
	Q30a	.721				
	Q30g	.719				

	Q30h	.578		
Governance	Q32d		.825	
	Q32e		.805	
	Q32b		.772	
	Q32j		.714	
	Q32a		.631	
	Q32h		.602	
	Q32f		.571	
	Q32c		.524	
Political System	Q39b			.772
	Q39a			.734
	Q39c			.724
Happiness	Q5			.788
	Q6			.750
	Q7			.436
Social Trust	Q12			.715
	Q13			.653
	Q14			.494

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Promax with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 5 iterations.

Demographics. Demographic factors include gender, age, educational attainment, and marital status. The gender is recorded as a “1” for male respondents and “0” for female respondents. Age is grouped into 20-29 y/o, 30-39 y/o, 40-49 y/o, 50-59 y/o, and 60-69 y/o. The educational attainment is classified into no formal education, elementary, high school, professional school or technological vocation, university/graduate school, and N/A. The marital status is classified into single, married, divorced/separated, and widowed. Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics of variables used in the study.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of all Participants

Characteristic	N	%
Gender		
Women	506	50.6
Men	494	49.4
Age		
20-29	276	27.6
30-39	266	26.6
40-49	204	20.4
50-59	159	15.9
60-69	95	9.5
Education		
No formal education	98	9.8
Elementary	231	23.2
High school	402	40.3
Prof. School/Tech	53	5.3

University/Graduate School	213	21.4
N/A	9	
Marital Status		
Single	165	16.5
Married	772	77.2
Divorced/separated	24	2.4
Widowed	39	3.9
N/A		

N/A stands for not applicable.

The descriptive statistics of variables (see Table 3) provides that governance (2.81) of the respondents is the highest mean value among the variables identified in the model followed by political system (2.38), trust in government (2.16), happiness (1.87), and social trust (1.71), respectively.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of Variables

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Deviation</i>	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Maximum</i>
Trust in Government	2.16	.57	1	4
Social Trust	1.71	.29	1	3
Happiness	1.87	.62	1	4
Political System	2.38	.40	1	3
Governance	2.81	.52	1	4
<i>Demographic Variables</i>				
Gender (<i>0 = female, 1 = male</i>)	1.51	.50	0	1
Educational Attainment	3.05	1.24	1	5
Marital Status	1.94	.584	1	4
Age	39.71	13.23	20	69

n = 1000

Results

Testing on the causal relationship provided in the hypothesized model, we employed regression analysis on determining the direct impact of the independent variables (i.e., social trust and happiness) on the trust in government (i.e., central government, local government, legal system, and the parliament or congress) as well as the moderating role of political system and governance. The bootstrapping analysis was used to check on the mediation effect

of happiness on the relationship of social trust and trust in government.

First, as the results shows (see Table 4), there is no significant effect of social trust on happiness ($\beta=.042^{ns}$), thus rendering *Hypothesis 1* not supported. The mediation analysis also provides that happiness do not play a mediating role on the relationship between social trust and trust in government, thus *Hypothesis 2* is not supported. Though the results do not give any concrete evidence on the role of social trust on happiness; and the subsequent intervening role of the latter on impact of social trust on trust in government, it may imply that the feebleness of social capital among the citizens may not be strong enough to trigger individual happiness.

**Table 4. Causal Relationship and Mediation Analysis ($n = 1000$)
[Social Trust and Happiness]**

Characteristic	Happiness
<i>Direct Effects</i>	
Social Trust	.042
<i>Mediation Effects</i>	
Social Trust - Happiness - Central Government	.011
Social Trust - Happiness - Local Government	.012
Social Trust - Happiness - Legal System	.006
Social Trust - Happiness - Parliament, Congress	.014
<i>Demographic Characteristics</i>	
Gender	-.010
Age	-.055
Education	-.212***
Marital Status	-.041
R²	.046
Adjusted R²	.041
F	9.607***

* $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.001$

Second, the results reveal that social trust (see Table 5) does not give any significant

effect on trust in government. However, happiness is significantly and negatively associated with the trust in the central government ($\beta = -.555$, $p < .01$) and legal system ($\beta = -.466$, $p < .05$); while not significant on trust in local government and the parliament of congress. These results provide that *Hypothesis 3* is partially supported. The result may imply that the extent of happiness may influence the direction of trust in government. For example, happiness may negatively affect trust in the central government due to some reasons such as the government's failure to bring the expected services for the public. In the same manner, happiness is associated with the judiciary when they failed to satisfy the needs for justice and fair dealings in the legal system.

Lastly, the results on the moderating role of governance reveals no significant effect on the impact of social trust and happiness on trust in government, thus renders *Hypotheses 4 & 5* not supported. On the contrary, political system dampens the positive impact of social trust on trust in central government ($\beta = -.490$, $p < .05$), thus partially supports *Hypothesis 6*. Also, political system shows a significant moderating effect on happiness and its impact on trust in the central government ($\beta = .517$, $p < .05$), local government ($\beta = .693$, $p < .001$), legal system ($\beta = .508$, $p < .05$), and parliament or congress ($\beta = -.615$, $p < .05$). This result reveals that political system plays an influential role in the process of enhancing happiness as well as the trust in the government. Though it clearly suggests some critical notes on the identification of effective and applicable political system, there is a need to carefully identify this political aspect. There might be some specific political system that may apply in a given context. For example the case of the Philippines, have been in a democracy for almost 3 decades, may require a stronger political system that may embody the public's demand for total happiness and trust in the government. Table 5 summarized the results of the multiple regression and the

moderation analyses.

Table 5. Causal Relationship and Moderation Analysis ($n = 1000$)

Characteristic	Trust in Government			
	<i>Central</i>	<i>Local</i>	<i>Legal System</i>	<i>Congress</i>
<i>Direct Effects</i>				
Social Trust	.274	.043	.155	.415
Happiness	-.555*	-.315	-.466**	-.003
Governance	.243	.234	.138	.235
Political System	.160	-.119	.107	.373
<i>Interaction Effects</i>				
Social Trust x Governance	.005	.137	.128	-.028
Happiness x Governance	.223	-.231	.086	-.150
Social Trust x Political System	-.490**	-.224	-.343	.185
Happiness x Political System	.517**	.693***	.508**	-.615**
<i>Demographic Characteristics</i>				
Gender	-.028	-.020	-.045	.035
Age	-.082*	-.103**	-.028	-.044
Education	.129***	.034	.104***	.145***
Marital Status	.065**	.026	.082*	.081**
R ²	.175	.098	.118	.060
Adjusted R ²	.165	.087	.107	.048
F	17.289***	8.808***	10.886***	5.195***

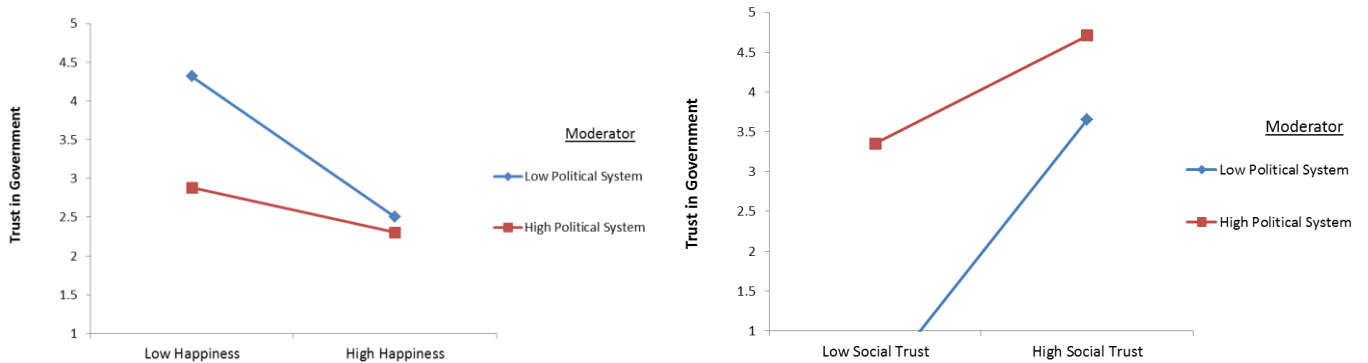
* $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.001$

Moderation Test of Political System

The regression model has an R-squared value of .175, which means that 17.5% of variance of trust in the central government is explained by the predictors in the hypothesized model. The F-value is equivalent to 17.29 at $p < .001$ level signifies that predictors of trust in the central government have significant influence on the latter. From the results, we can see that the interaction effect reveals a significant effect on the impact of happiness and social

trust on trust in central government. From the plot analysis (see Figure 2), we can observe that there is a significant change in the slope based on the level of political system.

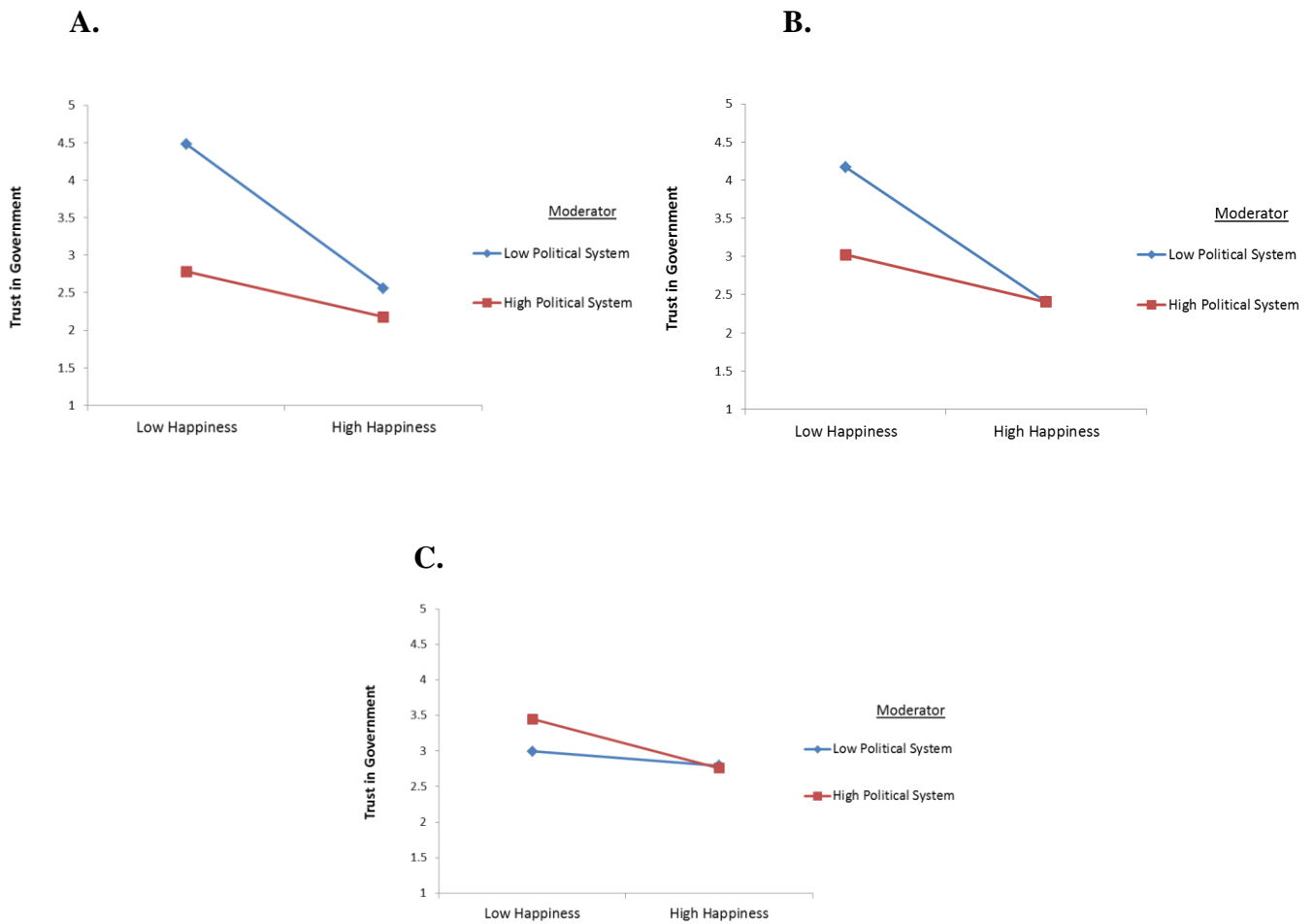
Figure 2. Plot for the Moderation Effect: Central Government



For the trust in the local government, the findings show that political system moderates the impact of happiness on trust in government. The regression model has an R-squared value of .098, which means that 9.8% of variance of trust in the local government is explained by the predictors in the hypothesized model. The F-value is equivalent to 8.80 at $p < .001$ level signifies that predictors of trust in the local government have significant influence on the latter. From the results, we can see that the interaction effect reveals a significant effect on the impact on trust in local government. The plot analysis (see Figure 3-A), you can observe that there is a significant change in the slope based on the level of political system. For the trust in the legal system, the model that include the interaction effect reveals an R-squared value of .118, which means that 11.8% of variance of trust in the legal system is explained by the predictor variables. The F-value is equivalent to 10.89 at $p < .001$ level. The moderation plot (see Figure 3-B) displays a significant change in the slope considering the level of political

system.

Figure 3. Plot for the Moderation Effect



Lastly, for the trust in the parliament or congress, the regression model has an R-squared value of .060, which means that 6.0% of variance of trust in the parliament or congress is explained by the predictors in the model. The F-value is equivalent to 5.19 at $p < .001$ level showing that the predictors have significant effect on the trust in the parliament or congress. The slope in the plot analysis (see Figure 3-C) shows a significant change as a political change is added in the interaction model.

Discussion and Conclusion

Given seemingly borderless public governance, the public sector now faces the tremendous challenges of advancing a more participatory, collaborative, and open government. These concepts, which define the principle of democracy, require an effective and efficient government that is founded on trust, transparency, and accountability. While the government has to engage citizens to promote full participation in government affairs, the issue of credibility and daunting corruption undermines people's trust and demoralizes citizens and continuous support for the government. The study has identified and assessed the predictors of trust in government—trust in central government, local government, legal system, and parliamentary or congress. Among the important determinants that may be considered are social trust, citizen's happiness, the impact of governance, and political system.

This study analyzed the relationship of social trust, happiness, and trust in government.. Also, it investigated the mediating role of happiness in the relationship between the social trust and outcome variable—trust in government (i.e., trust in central government, local government, legal system, and parliament or congress). The research model and causal relations were tested employing the *Asia Barometer Survey 2007* focusing on the data collected from the *Philippines*. The results of the EFA, reliability analysis, and CFA confirmed that proposed causal model is a good fit for the data.

First, this study found that social trust doesn't have any significant impact on happiness and trust in the government which renders *Hypotheses 1 and 2* not supported. Though the result did not give any evidence to claim the connection between these variables, we argue that social trust has a contributory impact on happiness and trust in the government (see, for

example, Keele, 2007; Tokuda, Fujii, & Takashi, 2010).

Second, the results of the study revealed that happiness influence trust in the central government and legal system, thus partially supports *Hypothesis 3*. Conversely, the findings of the study provide that happiness do not mediate the relationship between social trust and with trust in government; therefore *Hypothesis 4* is not supported. The results reflects that happiness do not necessarily impact trust in government. This finding supports Duncan's (2013) apprehension that the general public put their trust into government's matters of maximizing the happiness.

Lastly, the results on the moderating role of governance and political system provide interesting findings. The role of governance does not show any significant moderating impact on both the interaction terms on social trust and happiness, therefore *Hypothesis 5* is not supported. While political system provides a significant moderating role on the interaction with social trust in the trust in central government; and the interaction terms with happiness and the whole trust in happiness; thus *Hypothesis 6* is supported.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

This study shows that social trust is found to be lower among Filipinos. This may imply for a need to enhance government intervention and bring important policy strategies that may bring an active interaction—favorable interaction among citizens. This also suggests that the government must improve the fundamental competencies that can be able to enhance the citizen's trust in the government (Kim, 2010). For example, “improving the economic development and the quality of public services, and reducing corruption are necessary

components of leadership development for enhancing public trust in government” (Kim, 2010, p. 808). The government—the central government, local, legal systems, and congress—must encourage the adoption of political system that may be able to allow citizens to enjoy a free and fair interaction among citizens, enhance their happiness through various projects and activities that may directly ask the involvement of the people, and provide services that gears towards real governance.

Limitations and Future Research

This study has some limitations. Relying solely on survey data may affect the reliability and generalizability of the findings. Although the survey collects data from a large pool of respondents, “common method bias” and social desirability might not be fully eliminated in this research. For this study, respondents were randomly approached in their houses. This may pose a bias challenge. Finally, this study obtained data from one time period only; therefore, the findings should be generalized with some level of caution.

Appendix

Construction of Indices

Predictors of Trust in Government

Social Trust (3 items)

- a. Generally, do you think people can be trusted or do you think that you can't be too careful in dealing with people (that it pays to be wary of people)?
- b. Do you think that people generally try to be helpful or do you think that they mostly look out for themselves?
- c. If you saw somebody on the street looking lost, would you stop to help?

Happiness (3 items)

- a. All things considered, would you say that you are happy these days?
- b. How often do you feel you are really enjoying life these days?
- c. How much do you feel you are accomplishing what you want out of your life?

Trust in Government

Please indicate to what extent you trust the following institutions to operate in the best interests of society. If you don't know what to reply or have no particular opinion, please say so.

- a. The central government
- b. Your local government
- c. The legal system
- d. Parliament, Congress

Political System

I'm going to describe various types of political systems. Please indicate for each system whether you think it would be very good, fairly good or bad for this country.

- a. Governance by a powerful leader without the restriction of parliament or elections.
- b. A system whereby decisions affecting the country are made by experts (such as bureaucrats with expertise in a particular field) according to what they think is best for the country.
- c. Military government
- d. A democratic political system

Government Performance

How well do you think the [YOUR COUNTRY'S] government is dealing with the following issues?

- a. The economy
- b. Political corruption
- c. Human rights
- d. Unemployment

- e. Crime
- f. The quality of public services
- g. Increase of immigration
- h. Ethnic conflict
- i. Religious conflict
- j. Environmental problems

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