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Decoding Grammars of Trust:

How Chinese Leaders Can Build Trust with Members of Their Global Teams

by

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Abstract

The primary objective for this project is to develop a comprehensive, evidence-based trust-building solution tailored specifically for Chinese leaders who currently lead—or are preparing to lead global teams. This project employs a qualitative research design, featuring in-depth, semi-structured interviews with 20 Chinese leaders, each with a minimum of three years of experience leading global teams, with the research question as what attributes and behaviors will facilitate or impede Chinese leaders to build trust with team members in global teams, integrated with a multi-disciplinary literature review covering trust theories in both western and Chinese literatures, the GLOBE Project, global mindset, and Chinese paternalistic leadership. The findings reveal that Chinese leaders enhance trust with their team members through three antecedents: **Ability**(concept of trust, global mindset, adaptive leadership), **Benevolence**(respect for diversity, support for personal growth and care, and organizational justice), and **Integrity** (seek principles congruence, 真诚 (sincerity + honesty), and 责任 (responsibility + accountability). Another finding is that organizational values only build trust when leaders actively embody them. The project concludes with a practical framework and a trust in leadership model for Chinese global teams, as well as a six-module training program designed to prepare Chinese leaders who currently lead or are about to lead global teams. Limitations and directions for future research are also discussed.

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1. Introduction

The "Global CEO Survey 2024" by PwC reveals that over 4,700 CEOs worldwide cite "geopolitical conflict" as the number one threat to growth (outpacing inflation and cyber risks). They see "geopolitical conflict" as the main factor driving "structural changes" in the global economy.

A 2024 McKinsey report on "Geopolitics and the Geometry of Global Trade" confirms this, noting that geopolitics is reshaping global trade. The report also mentions that the number of new global trade restrictions each year has been steadily increasing, from about 650 in 2017 to more than 3,000 in 2023.

As a direct result of geopolitical tensions, a new lexicon has emerged among policymakers and business leaders. Terms such as "decoupling," "derisking," "reshoring," "nearshoring," and "friendshoring" have increased more than twentyfold in corporate presentations between 2018 and 2022.

China stands at the epicenter of these current geopolitical tensions and the restructuring of global trade.

China's Belt and Road Initiative, first introduced in 2013, saw its investment peak in 2018 before declining due to external challenges. Based on our surveys with clients, the US-China tension serves as the top challenge for Chinese companies going global.

To better respond to global challenges and the pressure from US-China tensions, China introduced the "Dual Circulation" (双循环) economic strategy in May 2020 as a formal, long-term framework. This strategy includes two key components:

- **Internal Circulation** (国内循环): This is the mainstay. It emphasizes boosting domestic demand, consumption, innovation, and technological self-sufficiency to make the economy more resilient and less dependent on external markets.
- **External/International Circulation** (外/国际循环): While remaining important, this is now supplementary. It involves continued engagement with the global economy through higher-level opening-up, but on terms that prioritize China's own security and industrial upgrading.

Following the implementation of the "Dual Circulation" policy, Chinese corporations have been facing the challenge of large-scale, cut-throat competition domestically. For example, according to data from the China Association of Solar Panel Industry, in 2024 alone, over 40 solar panel manufacturers either went bankrupt, were delisted, or were acquired. Those that remained listed on the A-share market collectively lost RMB60 billion in 2024. To better describe this intense "rat-race" phenomenon of domestic competition, in 2020 the term "involution" (内卷) emerged on social media. To survive, more companies are turning to overseas markets. For instance, BYD is building its largest factory outside of China in Brazil and expanding aggressively in Japan, Latin Americas and Europe. One executive who oversees global business at one of China's

largest energy companies stated in our interview: "Going global has high risk, but if we do not go overseas, there is no future." Since the economic reforms introduced in the late 1970s, Chinese corporations have been emulating and learning from their Western counterparts with respect to corporate strategic management, rule-based organizational structures and governance, and formal human resources management systems (Guthrie, 2001). As a result, the number of Chinese corporations (including Taiwan) on the Fortune 500 list has increased from 16 in 2004 to 142 in 2023 (135 from Mainland China, 6 from Taiwan). Going global has become an imperative for many Chinese corporations today.

However, "going global" is only the first step. True success depends on cross-cultural leadership. Guthrie (2001) emphasizes that, despite Chinese corporations having imitated their Western counterparts since the inception of economic reforms, Chinese managers and firms continue to be profoundly shaped by "old habits," state influence, and the legacy of the command economy. Consequently, the path for Chinese managers to become truly global managers remains a long march. Plus, the research findings from the Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness (GLOBE) project, particularly House et al.'s (2004) Culturally Endorsed Implicit Theory of Leadership, discuss that the essence of leadership—which includes influencing and motivating followers—is universal. However, the recipes for effective leadership are culturally specific. House et al. (2014) further emphasize that while being perceived as trustworthy is a universal requirement for a CEO, the behavioral pathway to achieve

that trust is culturally specific. Trust is the core and foundational currency of effective global strategic leadership, yet its construction is deeply rooted in local cultural soil.

This is especially critical for Chinese society that is predominantly based on Confucian values. It has a different pathway to building trust when compared with most other cultures. The renowned sinologist A.C. Graham has claimed that Chinese society is best described as **"way-seekers,"** the while the Western world originating in Greek philosophy is **"truth-seekers."** Understanding this difference requires a deep dive into the concept of "trust" itself. When we discuss "trust," we must recognize that two distinct cognitive frameworks may underlie the term, profoundly impacting the effectiveness of cross-cultural cooperation. Thus, understanding different pathways of trust building and decoding the local grammars of trust are key for Chinese managers and leaders to be successful in global markets.

The key objective of this project is through literature review and qualitative research to develop both a framework and insights that will enable Chinese managers and leaders to build trust across cultures and, as a result, lead global teams effectively. The core research question is: **What attributes and behaviors will facilitate or impede Chinese leaders to build trust with members of global teams?**

The scope of the literature review will focus on:

- Trust building with members of global teams.
- Leader's trustworthy behaviors in the context of global teams.

2. Research Question and Research Plan

Primary Research Question of the Project:

What attributes and behaviors will facilitate or impede Chinese leaders to build trust with their team members in global teams?

To accomplish the research objective of answering this question, a systematic, multi-step study is required. The project outline and plan structure this study process into six interconnected phases, each addressing a specific layer of the trust-building process for Chinese leaders who are leading global teams. What follows is an explanation of what needs to be done in each phase to fulfill the research aim. In the study, the term "leaders" will used interchangeably to represent managers and executives.

Step 1: Establish a Culturally Grounded Definition of Trust

The first task is to review literatures regarding how to understand and define trust; to examine how trust is conceptualized within Chinese society. This involves analyzing *guanxi* dynamics in Chinese trust building process and comparing these with Western pathway of trusting building. By completing this comparison, the study will produce a working definition of trust specifically tailored to Chinese managers operating in global teams. To define trust in a culturally sensitive manner that reflects Chinese and Western differences;

Step 2: Identify Antecedents of Trust

Second, the research will map the known antecedents of trust and review related trust building literatures which include trustworthiness (ability, benevolence, integrity), contextual factors and propensity to trust. For each antecedent, the study will explain how each antecedent is connected to trust building process.

Step 3: Examine Leadership Attributes and National Cultural Impact

Third, the research specifically focuses on leadership attributes and behaviors, as the question concerns Chinse managers and executives who are leading global teams to build trust with their members from different cultural background. Effective global leadership is a *moderating factor* for building trust with members of global teams, understanding cultural impact on leadership is essential to achieve the research objective. The GLOBE project is the largest and most prestigious study of its kind in the social sciences. It started in 1994, has continued for over 30 years completing several phases of research, and involves more than 200 researchers from 62 countries. In its early phases alone, the project studied over 17,000 mid-level managers. Using the GLOBE Project framework and results are very legitimate and proper, especially GLOBE project has identified 9 societal value dimension, 21 primary leadership and 6 global leadership dimensions, out of those results, the following three categories of leadership attributes are truly critical for Chinese managers and executives to understand:

- **Universally desirable attributes** (e.g., integrity, decisiveness) – these should facilitate Chinese leaders' trustworthiness by members of global teams if demonstrated;
- **Universally undesirable attributes** (e.g., asocial, dictatorial) – these should impede Chinse leaders' trustworthiness by member of global team if behaved;
- **Culturally contingent attributes** – these are the most critical for the research question. For instance, participative leadership is universally desirable in many Western contexts, for Chinese managers, it violates hierarchical expectations, therefore. Chinse managers need to adapt their leadership behaviors in most western contexts to enhance trustworthiness by members of global teams.

Step 4: Assess Global Mindset as a Potential Facilitator

Fourth, the research will examine whether developing a "global mindset" as a key facilitator to enhance Chinese leaders' trustworthiness t members of global teams. The "Global Mindset" framework developed by a team led by Dr. Mansour Javidan is to equip leaders to lead effectively across cultures. The research will study Chinese managers and executives who have successfully built trust with members of global teams and identifying what specific attributes and behaviors related to intellectual, psychological, and social capital they possess. Specifically, the study will determine whether global mindset enables Chinese managers to adapt their leadership styles and

trust-building behaviors without losing their cultural authenticity. If global mindset proves to be a significant facilitator.

Step 5: Analyze Organizational Context as Enabler or Barrier

Fifth, the research will not ignore the organizational environment. Trust-building behaviors in global teams do not occur in a vacuum. The study will examine how trust in organization, organizational justice, values and cultures including policies, reward systems, reporting structures either facilitate or impede Chinese managers' ability to build trust in global teams.

Step 6: Synthesize Findings into an Actionable Framework

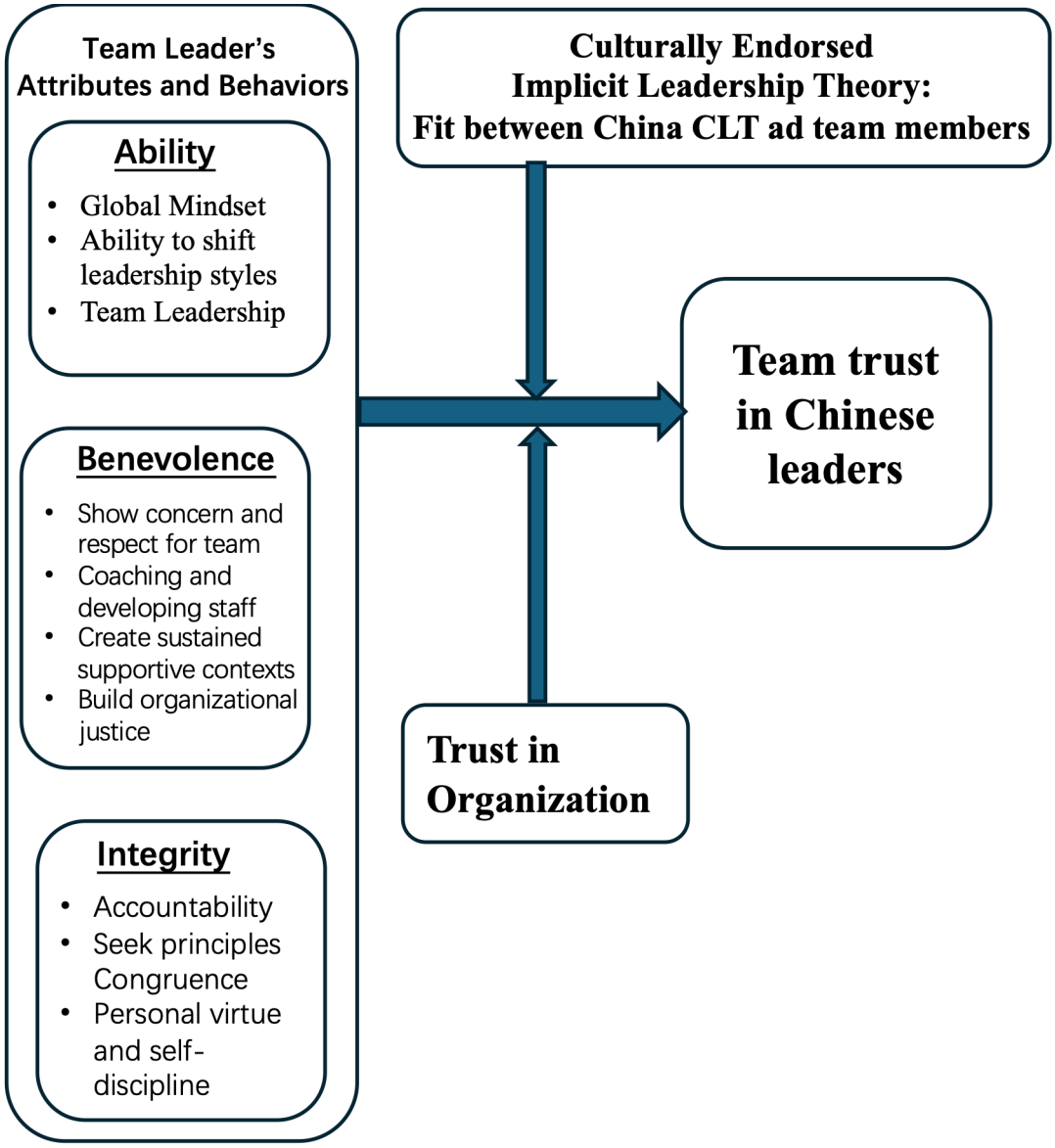
Finally, each of these steps corresponds directly to a section of the project outline and plan, ensuring that the research design is fully aligned with the question it seeks to answer. A research framework (see figure 1) is presented as research model to distinguishes clearly between factors; the proposed model is based on the and research and frameworks from *"An Integrative Model of Organizational Trust"* (Mayer et al. 1995) and "*Integrated multi-level framework for understanding trust in leadership* (Burke et al. 2007):

- Elements that facilitate or impede Chinese leaders' perceived trustworthiness by members of global teams;

- Factors that moderate the trust-building relationship for Chinese leaders by members of global teams

At the end of the research, all findings will be synthesized into a practical evidence-based farmwork answering the original research question. This framework should be presented in a way that is useful for practical application to train Chinese leaders for global leadership roles.

Figure 1: Proposed Framework: Trust in Leadership for Chinese Global Team



3. Literature Review: Understanding Trust and Trustworthiness

3.1 Defining Trust

The concept of trust spans multiple academic disciplines, each with its own focus. Economists emphasize costs and benefits, psychologists focus on consistent and benevolent behavior, and sociologists consider aspects of society. As a result, there is no universally agreed definition. The English word "trust" shares the same Indo-European root *deru*-as "true," implying a core meaning of "stable" or "firm," and by extension, conformity with an objective standard or fact. This etymological foundation leans toward a form of trust based on "cognitive verification"—grounded in information, data, and past performance—with the goal of confirming that the other party is "true and reliable." This is the **"truth-seekers"** pattern of thinking coined by Graham that originates in the assumption and pursuit of demonstrable truth foundational in Greek philosophy that takes mathematics as its paradigm of knowledge. This philosophical root aligns closely with the notion of cognitive trust and the definition of trust as a personality trait.

Depending on the intent of the researcher, trust has been examined as a relatively unchanging **trait**, an **emergent state, or** a **process** (Burke et al., 2007). Understanding trust as a **trait** means viewing it not merely as a feeling in a specific moment or a judgment about a particular situation, but as a stable, enduring personal characteristic that an individual consistently demonstrates across time and in different relationships.

As a trait, trust has been described as an individual difference called **the propensity to trust**—that is, a person's general predisposition to trust others. This is often contrasted with **trust as a state of mind,** which is situational and variable (Burke et al., 2007). Trust as a trait is often referred to as "cognitive trust" or "generalized trust." Kramer (2010) has coined the term **"presumptive trust"** to describe the tendency to trust without deliberate thought.

Research that has conceptualized trust as a **process** has primarily done so under the guise of investigating the development of trust (Khodyakov, 2007). Trust is also conceptualized as an **emergent or psychological state**, referring to cognitive, motivational, or affective states that are dynamic and vary as a function of contextual factors as well as inputs, processes, and outcomes (Marks, Mathieu, & Zaccaro, 2001; Burke et al., 2007). Trust may also be viewed as an intervening process through which other important elements—such as behaviors, attitudes, and relationships—are either enhanced or weakened (Burke et al., 2007).

3.1.a. Types of Trust

Trust can also be categorized into different **types**. In his seminal 1995 article, McAllister defines **cognitive trust** as a form of trust grounded in an individual's assessment of another person's reliability, dependability, and competence. This is a rational, evidence-based judgment often stemming from observing a person's past performance and track record. In contrast, **affective trust** is defined as the emotional

bond that forms between individuals. This dimension is rooted in the emotional connections, mutual care, and concern that develop through social interaction, reflecting confidence in a relationship based on feelings of safety and perceived genuine care.

Shapiro, Sheppard, and Cheraskin (1992) propose a developmental model for trust. Trust is understood as building sequentially, starting with **deterrence-based trust**, progressing to **knowledge-based trust**, and culminating in **identification-based trust.** **Deterrence-based trust**, also called **calculus-based trust** is the first and most foundational stage of trust, typical of early-stage or transactional relationships, and is conditional on the potential costs and benefits to each party of being trustworthy or engaging in opportunistic behavior. In essence, a party trusts another because the threat of punishment or the cost of losing future benefits makes untrustworthy behavior too risky. **Knowledge-based trust** is the second stage of trust, which develops over time through repeated interactions. Trust is based on the accumulated knowledge of the other party's trustworthiness, predictability, and past performance. It emerges from a history of interactions where both parties have had the opportunity to learn about each other's behavior patterns and reliability. **Identification-based trust** is the third and most robust stage of trust, representing the highest level of relational development. Trust exists because the parties have internalized each other's preferences and intentions. This occurs when an individual has fully identified with the other party's wants and desires,

such that they can act as an agent for the other and trust that their interests will be protected.

Kramer (2010) creates the term **collective trust** to conceptualize trust as a kind of generalized trust conferred on other organizational members. Its distinctive characteristic is that its target is the organization and its collective membership taken as a whole—in other words, the cognitive unit is a larger social aggregate. Thus, *the trust in global team is a collective trust.*

Trust not only varies in form—as trait, state, or process—but can also exist at different l**evels** within an organization. Trust can exist at the team level (e.g., between team members), the leadership level (e.g., between team members and the leader), the organizational level (e.g., between employees and the organization), and the interorganizational level (e.g., between organizations) (Burke et al., 2007). This research project covers team level in organization.

3.1.b. Trust in Chinese Society

The Chinese word for trust 信任 (*xìnrèn*) literally has two meanings. The first is *xìn* (信), which is integrity or trustworthiness. It is composed of two parts: 亻 (*rén*) = person / man,言 (*yán*) = speech / word. So, the literal meaning of 信 is "a person standing by her/his word." Its core meanings are to believe, to be trustworthy, to be credible; and a message or a letter. The philosophical depth here is significant. In

Confucian thought, *xìn* 信 is one of the five constant virtues (五常, *wǔcháng*), alongside consummate conduct (仁 *rén*), appropriateness (义 *yì*), propriety (礼 *lǐ*), and wisdom (*zhì* 智). While other is 任 (*rèn*) – the execution of trust, 任 (*rèn*) is a slightly more complex character. It is also a compound: 亻 (*rén*) =person; 壬 (*rén*) = a phonetic component that originally depicted a spindle or a heavy burden. Its core meanings are: 1. to bear / to shoulder; 2. to assign / to entrust responsibility / duty; 3. office or official position. While *xin* (信) is about the character of a person speaking, 任 is about the capacity and responsibility of a person acting. It implies being reliable under a heavy load. When you "give a task" to someone, you entrust (*rènming* (任命)) them who will bear a heavy responsibility(*zérèn* (责任)). Therefore, *Chinese trust is* ***relational and context-specific concept*** *that must be continuously proven and renewed in practice by fulfilling one's responsibility and obligations in one's social roles.* To build trust for Chinese, one not only needs to know their social roles, but also to act upon them, to engage in a state of knowing and acting as one (知行合一). Graham's understanding of building trust is in the Chinese tradition of **"way-seekers"** focuses on finding the appropriate path of action within dynamic, concrete human relationships and interactions. Researchers Tan & Chee (2005) find that in Confucian society, businesspeople have a strong commitment to honoring one's words where a trusted business associate is expected to honor his or her words even in adverse circumstances, A strong commitment to honoring a promise is a key ingredient in the development of trust in business relationship. Strong "*xìnrèn*" (信任) resides not only in what one says,

but also in what one does, and in how one acts appropriately within a specific interpersonal and social context. Saying must entail doing.

The process of building trust in Chinese society is closely linked to the development of interpersonal relationships (*guanxi*). Researchers Yang and Peng (1999) propose three stages of in the development of relationships related to source of trust, each corresponding to a different type of trust and demonstration of "trustworthiness/sincerity " *xìn* (信)(see figure 2):

Figure 2: The Source of Trust: Stages of Chinese Interpersonal Relationship Development

Relationship Stage	**Source of Trust**	**Required Demonstration of Trustworthiness**	**Trust Characteristic**
Initial Stage (Rituals)	Fulfilling role obligations within an established relationship	Honesty (诚实) (being truthful, following rules)	"Knowing the personal foundation" (知根知底)
Instrumental Stage (Reciprocity)	Adhering to the principles of reciprocity and "*renqing*" (人情)	Sincerity/Good Faith (诚心) (conditional giving, but not selfish)	"Knowing the person and their character" (知人知面)

Relationship Stage	**Source of Trust**	**Required Demonstration of Trustworthiness**	**Trust Characteristic**
Affective Stage (Dedication)	Emotional exchange and selfless dedication	Wholeheartedness/Devotion (诚意) (unconditional giving, even self-sacrifice)	"Knowing the heart and mind" (知己知心)

3.1.c. Comparison Between Chinese and the Western Way of Trust-Building

Based on the research of Yang and Peng (1999), there are obvious differences in the trust building process between the Western and China (Figure 3).

Figure 3: The Different Way of Trust Building Between the West and China

Dimensions	**The Western Model:**	**The Chinese Model:**
Key Factors of Trust Building	Individual Traits / Institutional Guarantee	Interpersonal Relationships / Social Obligations
Target of Trust	Trust can be directed toward an abstract individual (based on	Trust is highly dependent on specific, differential relationships

Dimensions	**The Western Model:**	**The Chinese Model:**
Key Factors of Trust Building	Individual Traits / Institutional Guarantee	Interpersonal Relationships / Social Obligations
	their universal traits) or a system (based on its effective functioning).	(e.g., family, acquaintance, stranger).
Basis of Judgment	Judgment is based on an assessment of the other's universal personality traits (competence, integrity) or confidence in the effectiveness of external institutions.	Judgment is based on the fulfillment of "social obligations" within a specific relationship, such as *renqing* (favor), *mianzi* (face), and ethical responsibilities.
Basis of Relationship	Trust can be established between strangers through institutional endorsement or a rapid assessment of the other's traits.	Trust typically requires a process of interaction, where ongoing fulfillment of obligations gradually transforms a relationship from "stranger" to "acquaintance" or

Dimensions	**The Western Model:**	**The Chinese Model:**
Key Factors of Trust Building	Individual Traits / Institutional Guarantee	Interpersonal Relationships / Social Obligations
		"insider," forming a stable foundation for trust.
Mechanisms of Maintenance	Trust is maintained through legal contracts and external reward-punishment mechanisms that deter breaches.	Trust is maintained through internal mechanisms such as *renqing*, *mianzi*, and moral self-discipline, which sustain the fulfillment of obligations.

In summary, in the Western model, trust can be understood as a form of social capital that is detachable, calculable, and substitutable by institutions. You can trust someone because they have a good credit record (institutional endorsement) or demonstrate professional competence and consistency (personal traits), even if you have no personal connection with them.

In contrast, under the Chinese model proposed by Yang and Peng (1999), trust is more like an emotional and obligatory sediment within a relationship. It must be gradually generated and laid through long-term, specific interpersonal interactions, during which the two parties continuously reaffirm each other's "role within the relationship" and fulfill the "obligations" attached to that role. Institutions and personal traits play a supporting role but cannot replace the core position of "relationship" itself.

3.1.d. Definition of Trust in this Project

In this project, the key actors are Chinese managers and executives who are fulfilling their role in leading multicultural teams. By reviewing both mainstream Western literature on trust and Chinese models of trust-building, and drawing on the ideas of renowned comparative philosopher and sinologist Roger Ames (2026), trust is defined as follows:

Trust is a holistic process in which trustees—in this case, global team leaders willingly contribute to a dynamic, relational process centered on cultivating a situated fiduciary community. Within this process, trust is inseparable from credibility, benevolence, gratitude, and the reciprocal roles of trustor and trustee, all of which are grounded in the primacy of relationality.

Chinese team leaders consider a global team as a fiduciary community. Within this community, leaders initiate the process by trusting their team members. In return, team

members reciprocate that trust. This reciprocal relationship—where trust enhances team effectiveness and successful performance in turn reinforces trust—is conceptualized as a **"virtuous circle of trust"** (Cardona & Wilkinson, 2009).

As a result, two virtuous circles are created

Virtuous Circle	**Dynamic**
Circle 1: leader's Trust ↔ Team Members	Trust between team leader and team members grow stronger and stronger
Circle 2: Trust ↔ Team Effectiveness	Team effectiveness and performance becomes better and better

These two circles reinforce each other, creating a self-reinforcing cycle of increasing trust and improving team performance. This fiduciary community can be considered a form of collective trust (Kramer, 2010), where trust is generalized to members of the community based on shared identity and relational commitment rather than on individualized assessment.

4. Understanding Antecedents of Trust

In trust research and literature, conditions that lead to trust have been considered repeatedly. To understand the process of trust development in this project, four overarching categories of factors are considered.

(1). Trustee factors such as factors associated with the personal characteristics and cultural background of the individual in whom trust is placed, trustee is the person (or group) being trusted.

(2). Trustor factors such as factors related to the personal characteristics or attributes and cultural background of those who trust, Trustor is the person who is willing to be vulnerable to another party. In simple terms, it's the one doing the trusting.

(3). Contextual factors, for instance, situational and environmental, national cultures factors shared between the trustor and trustee at the time of their interaction.

(4). Propensity to trust factors such as one's different life experiences; different personality types; and different cultural backgrounds (for example, as studied by Hofstede, 1980, GLOBE 2004). propensity to trust is a stable, personal traits and factors that influence how likely a person is to trust another party. It shapes how much trust a person has before any information about the specific person or situation is available.

4.1. Antecedents of Trustworthiness

A lot of research has suggested that attributes and actions of the trustor will lead that person to be more or less trusted. The Trustee's attributes and actions that lead to be more trust are trustworthiness; which helps build the foundation for the development of credibility or trust. The trustor decides whether to trust the trustee based on the

trustee's characteristics and attributes, which the following model calls **trustworthiness**.

In the area of organizational trust, researchers Mayer, Davis and Schoorman (1995) in their seminal paper proposed a parsimonious model distinguishing between trust and factors of trustworthiness (Figure 4). In their model and framework, Mayer, Davis and Schoorman (1995:712) defines trust as" the willingness of a party to be vulnerable to the actions of another party based on the expectation that the other will perform a particular action important to the trustor, irrespective of the ability to monitor or control that other party."

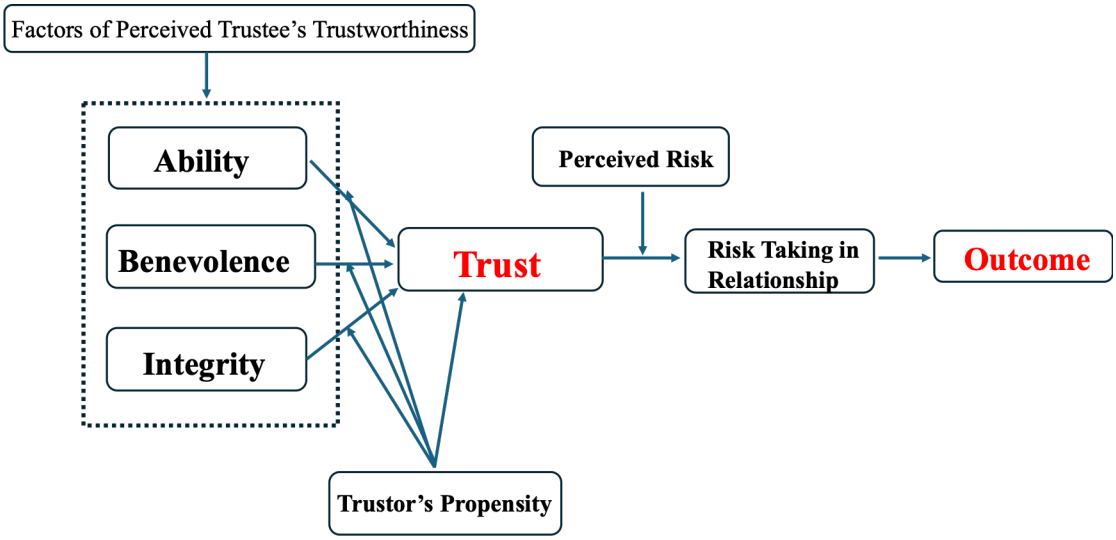
Prior to 1995, scholars from different disciplines were often talking past each other. This model integrated perspectives from psychology, philosophy, economics, and law into a single, coherent framework. It achieved this by clearly distinguishing between trust which emphasizes the willingness to be vulnerable and its antecedents that includes three core factors of trustworthiness —**Ability, Benevolence and Integrity.** The model provided clear, measurable concepts. This allowed researchers to move from abstract discussions to designing empirical studies that could test specific hypotheses about how trust develops. This research project is adopting structure of this model to conduct qualitive research to find out antecedents of trust in global team. The three factors of trustworthiness in the Mayer et al. (1995) model are further discussed in the following.

In the model, Ability is defined as that “group of skills, competencies, and characteristics that enable a party to have influence within some specific domain”. Ability covers terms found in other research such as expertise, competence, and expertness, etc., which highlight the task and situation-specific domain. The ability is a group of skills to do the things that need to be done.

Benevolence is meant that “the extent to which a trustee is believed to want to do good to the trustor, aside from an egocentric profit motive”. Benevolence implies that the trustee feels a particular sense of connection or regard for the trustor. It reflects the trustor’s perception that the trustee has a positive disposition or goodwill toward them. Trustee cares about trustor’s interest and concern.

Integrity means that “the relationship between integrity and trust involves the trustor's perception that the trustee adheres to a set of principles that the trustor finds acceptable”. Both the adherence to and acceptability of the principles are important for trust-building process.

Figure 4: An Integrative Model of Organizational Trust (Mayer et al. 1995)



4.2. Contexts and Situations as Antecedent of Trust-Building

Context shapes which antecedents (e.g., ability, benevolence, integrity, or structural factors) are most important and how quickly or cautiously trust develops. Ignoring context risks oversimplifying the trust-building process, context and situation are key antecedent of trust-building process. The following is some areas that contexts are obviously matter.

1. **Power dynamics**

   In hierarchical situations (e.g., manager-subordinate relationships), trust often depends upon consistency and fairness. In contrast, peer contexts tend to depend more on reciprocity and open communication. When a supervisor has greater access to information about a subordinate and can initiate opportunities to assess the subordinate's ability, benevolence, and integrity—opportunities that the

subordinate lacks—the supervisor's trust in the subordinate is likely to develop more quickly than the reverse. For example, researchers Tan et al. (2024) studied trust within a Chinese company operating in Guinea and found that Chinese expatriate executives emphasized ability and integrity in trust building, whereas Guinean workers valued benevolence more.

2. **Cultural and social context**

In collectivist cultures, group membership and long-term relationships serve as key antecedents of trust. In individualist settings, competence and past performance tend to matter more. Researchers Doney et al. (1998) argue that as business becomes increasingly globalized, it is essential to understand trust from the perspective of national culture. They propose that the very processes people use to decide whether and whom to trust depend heavily on the societal norms and values of their culture.

Similarly, Javidan and Zaheer (2021) conducted focus groups with over 700 managers across the U.S., Latin America, Asia, Europe, and the Middle East. Their findings suggest that trust-building is not a universal process. Although the positive outcomes of trust are consistent globally, the meaning of trust and the criteria used to build it vary significantly across national cultures. Global managers often mistakenly assume that their home-country approach to trust will work elsewhere, leading to misunderstanding and distrust.

3. **Communication Methods**

   Face-to-face situations allow for non-verbal cues and rapid feedback, which support the development of swift trust. In contrast, virtual or remote contexts require clear communication, transparency, and reliability built over time. Researchers Jarvenpaa and Leidner (1999) studied 17 global virtual teams and concluded that virtual teams cannot rely on the spontaneous, cue-rich, relationship-first communication typical of co-located teams. Instead, they need a deliberate, structured, and explicit communication approach that builds swift trust through early enthusiasm, predictable communication patterns, substantive responses, and positive leadership. As the study emphasizes, "It is not the quantity, but the quality and predictability, of communication that is most critical" for trust in virtual teams.

4.3 Propensity to Trust as Antecedent of Trust

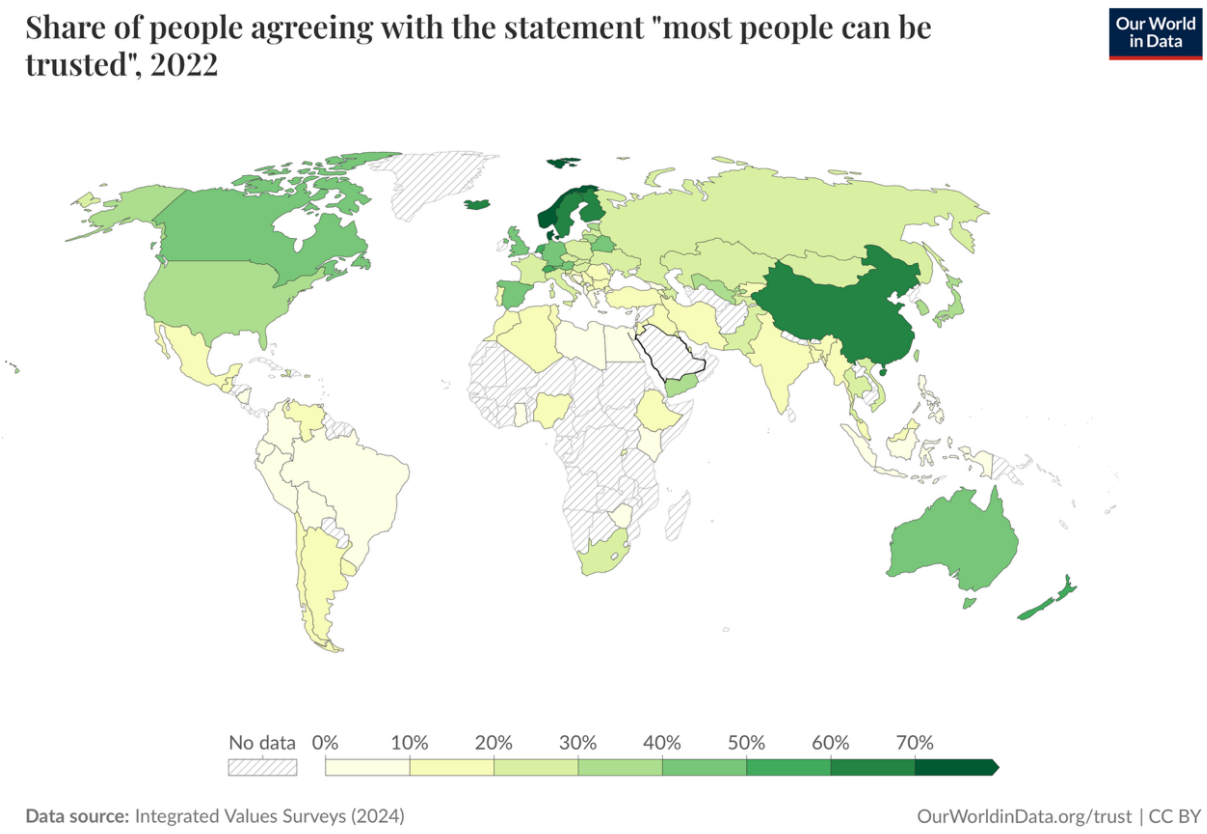
Each person has a different tendency in the trust of others, shaped by their life experiences, personality traits, and the national culture and society they have grown up in. People from different countries also vary in their propensity to trust (see figure 5). The World Values Survey (WorldValuesSurvey.org) asked tens of thousands of people across dozens of countries the following question: “Generally speaking, would you say that most people in your country can be trusted, or that you need to be very careful in dealing with people?” Figure 4 presents a map showing the results. A key aspect of national culture is the degree to which citizens trust their fellow countrymen. In the

map, darker colors indicate a higher percentage of respondents agreeing that most people can be trusted. For instance, 74% of respondents in Denmark expressed trust in their fellow citizens, compared to 72% in Norway, and 63% in both **China** and Sweden. Nordic Europe is generally a region with high levels of trust. In contrast, countries such as Argentina, Brazil, and Chile, along with most of African countries show a large percentage of respondents who report low trust in their fellow citizens.

Javidan and Zaheer (2021) conclude that the above data suggest these differences largely stem from historical and cultural experiences. In some countries, people have learned that trusting others leads to positive outcomes, and as a result, they have developed a general tendency to be trusting. In other countries, however, the opposite holds true: people have learned that trust can lead to disappointment, loss, or other negative consequences. In such places, it is not uncommon for parents to constantly remind their children not to trust others.

Propensity to trust varies by individual and national culture. China has one of the highest national levels of propensity to trust. Chinese leaders should therefore be aware of their team members' baseline trust tendencies at both the personal and cultural levels.

Figure 5. **Trust Map by World Value Survey**



5. Trust in Leadership and National Cultures

This project is aimed to help Chinese managers and executives lead global teams more effectively by developing trust with their team members. The key is learning how to build trust with team members from different cultural backgrounds. To do that, managers need to understand how national cultures and values affects leadership and management.

4.1. Understanding the Difference of Societal Values and Global Leadership

To better understand the impact of national culture on leadership and trust, this project uses the findings and results from the GLOBE (Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness) research project.

GLOBE is the largest and most prestigious study of its kind in the social sciences. It started in 1994, has continued for over 30 years completing several phases of research, and involves more than 200 researchers from 62 countries. In its early phases alone, the project studied over 17,000 mid-level managers.

5.1.a. Nine Societal Values of the GLOBE Project

The GLOBE project has conducted research based on two main aspects (House et al. 2002).

1. **Shared values**– what people believe ***should be*** done in a society. This comes from an anthropological approach to studying culture.
2. **Common practices** – what people ***actually do*** in daily life, including behaviors, rules, and habits. This comes from a psychological approach, which assumes that shared values show up in real-life actions.

As the research result, GLOBE project has ranked 62 different societies based on 9 cultural dimensions. It then grouped these 62 cultures into 10 regional clusters based on shared history, location, language, religion, and economic conditions.

Project GLOBE successfully found that shared values are linked to real-life behaviors and practices, but the connection is not always simple or direct. Therefore, this project presents the results on **practices** from GLOBE. Based on GLOBE cultural dimension scores, China is a high in-group collective, performance driven, hieratical, uncertainty avoiding society (figure 6 China scores). The societal values scores range from 1 to 7.

The following are the definition of GLOBE project nine Societal Culture Values (House et al. 2004):

- 1. *Uncertainty Avoidance* is defined as "the extent to which members of an organization or society strive to avoid uncertainty by reliance on social norms, rituals, and bureaucratic practices to alleviate the unpredictability of future events". *Higher scores indicate greater uncertainty avoidance.*

- 2. Power *Distance* is defined as "the degree to which members of an organization or society expect and agree that power should be unequally shared". *Higher scores indicate greater power distance.*

- 3. *Collectivism I*: *Societal Collectivism* reflects "the degree to which organizational and societal institutional practices encourage and reward collective distribution of resources and collective action". *Higher scores indicate greater collectivism.*

- 4. *Collectivism II*: *In-Group Collectivism* reflects "the degree to which individuals express pride, loyalty and cohesiveness in their organizations or families". *Higher scores indicate greater collectivism.*

- 5. *Gender Egalitarianism* is "the extent to which an organization or a society minimizes gender role differences and gender discrimination". *Lower score indicates greater male dominance.*

- 6. *Assertiveness* is "the degree to which individuals in organizations or societies are assertive, confrontational, and aggressive in social relationships". *Higher scores indicate greater assertiveness.*

- 7. *Future Orientation* is "the degree to which individuals in organizations or societies engage in future-oriented behaviors such as planning, investing in the future, and delaying gratification". *Higher scores indicate greater future orientation.*

- 8. *Performance Orientation* refers to "the extent to which an organization or society encourages and rewards group members for performance improvement and excellence. This dimension includes the future oriented component of the

dimension called Confucian Dynamism by Hofstede and Bond (1988)". *Higher scores indicate greater performance orientation.*

- 9. *Humane Orientation* is "the degree to which individuals in organizations or societies encourage and reward individuals for being fair, altruistic, friendly, generous, caring, and kind to others. This dimension is similar to the dimension labeled Kind Heartedness by Hofstede and Bond (1988)". *Higher scores indicate greater humane orientation.*

Figure 6. GLOBE China Score and Cultural Clusters Average Scores (Practices)

Country	Power Distance	Uncertainty Avoidance	Institutional Collectivism	In-Group Collectivism	Gender Egalitarianism	Assertiveness	Future Orientation	Performance Orientation	Humane Orientation
China	5.04 High	4.94 High	4.77 High	5.8 High	3.05 Low	3.76 Medium	3.75 Medium	4.45 High	4.36 Medium
Lowest-highest Range	3.89-5.8	2.88-5.37	3.25-5.22	3.35-6.36	2.5-4.08	3.38-4.89	2.88-5.07	3.2-4.94	3.18-5.23

Note: Ranking scale from 1 lowest to 7 highest

The followings are what GLOBE China score interprets:

China has two high collectivism scores, but they mean different things. **High In-Group Collectivism (5.80)** means immense loyalty to one's family and immediate team. This is a particularistic loyalty (e.g., favoring a family member over a more qualified stranger).

High Institutional Collectivism (4.77) means society expects people to be loyal to the larger social system (e.g., the nation or company). This is a universalistic loyalty (e.g., following laws and company policies).

In term of the leadership expectation, China has the combination of high **Power Distance (5.04)** and low **Gender Egalitarianism (3.05)** that clearly indicates that Chinese culture expects leaders to be decisive, directive, and male dominated. Participative or highly egalitarian leadership would be viewed as weak or inappropriate.

In area of the performance driver, China has the **High-Performance Orientation (4.45)**, coupled with moderate **Future Orientation (3.75)**, which explains the practical, results-focused drive seen in Chinese business and society. The focus is on current performance and improvement, with a moderate, but not extreme, long-term strategic view.

In summary, China's culture as measured by GLOBE scores is characterized by strong hierarchy, strong group loyalty (both to family and society), a focus on performance, and a relatively low degree of gender equality.

5.1.b. Twenty-one Primary Leadership Dimensions and Six Global Dimensions

In leadership research, the GLOBE project built on the foundation of the leadership mode-*implicit leadership theory* (ILT) (Lord & Maher 1991) to develop a culturally contingent leadership framework, which is called *culturally endorsed implicit leadership theory (CLT)* to study the relationship between cultural dimensions and leadership styles. As a result, 112 leadership and attributes were generated, which had been grouped into 21 primary leadership dimensions, and which were finally categorized into 6 global leadership dimensions (Figure 7). The CLT research response alternative is as follow: Inhibits or contributes to outstanding leadership, 1. Greatly inhibits, 2. Somewhat inhibits, 3. Slightly inhibits, 4. Has no impact, 5. Contributes slightly, 6. Contributes somewhat, 7. Contribute greatly. The China global CLT dimension scores are shown in figure 9.

Figure 7. Six Global and 21 Primary CLT (culturally endorsed implicit leadership) Dimensions (Dorfman et al. 2012)

Global CLT Dimensions	Primary CLT leadership dimensions
I. *Charismatic/value-based*,	1. Charismatic 1: visionary (I)
	2. Charismatic 2: inspirational(I)
	3. Charismatic 3: self-sacrifice(I)
	4. Integrity(I)
	5. Decisive(I)
	6. Performance oriented(I)
II. *Team oriented*,	7. Team 1: collaborative team orientation (II)
	8. Team 2: team integrator (II)
	9. Diplomatic (II)
	10. Malevolent (reverse scored) (II)
	11. Administratively competent (II)
III. *Self-protective*,	12. Self-centered (III)
	13. Status conscious (III)
	14. Conflict inducer (internally competitive) (III)
	15. Face saver (III)
	16. Procedural (bureaucratic) (III)

Global CLT Dimensions	Primary CLT leadership dimensions
IV. *Participative*,	17. Autocratic (reverse scored) (IV)
	18. Non-participative (reverse scored) (IV)
V. *Humane oriented*,	19. Modesty (V)
	20. Humane orientation (V)
VI. *Autonomous*,	21. Autonomous (VI)

The six global dimensions and their associated primary leadership dimensions are briefly defined as follows:

Charismatic/value-based leadership

A broadly defined leadership dimension that reflects "ability to inspire, to motivate, and to expect high performance outcomes from others based on firmly held core values. The GLOBE charismatic/value-based global leadership dimension includes the following six primary leadership dimensions: (1) visionary, (2) inspirational, (3) self-sacrifice, (4) integrity, (5) decisive and (6) performance oriented".

Team-oriented leadership

A leadership dimension that "emphasizes effective team building and implementation of a common purpose or goal among team members. This global leadership dimension includes the following five primary leadership dimensions: (7) collaborative team

orientation, (8) team integrator, (9) diplomatic, (10) malevolent (reverse scored), and (11) administratively competent".

Self-protective leadership

From a Western perspective, this newly defined global leadership dimension "focuses on ensuring the safety and security of the individual and group through status enhancement and face saving. This leadership dimension includes five primary leadership dimensions labeled (12) self-centered, (13) status conscious, (14) internally competitive, (15) face saver, and (16) bureaucratic".

Participative leadership

This global leadership dimension reflects "the degree to which managers involve others in making and implementing decisions. The GLOBE CLT participative leadership dimension includes two primary leadership dimensions labeled (17) nonparticipative and (18) autocratic (both reverse scored)".

Humane-oriented leadership

This global leadership dimension reflects "supportive and considerate leadership but also includes compassion and generosity. This leadership dimension includes two primary leadership dimensions labeled (19) modesty and (20) humane orientation".

Autonomous leadership

This is a newly defined global leadership dimension that "refers to independent and individualistic leadership attributes. This dimension is measured by a single primary leadership dimension labeled autonomous leadership, consisting of individualistic, independence, autonomous, and unique attributes".

5.1.c. Universally Desirable Leadership Attributes and Dimensions

Another finding of GLOBE project in the first and second phase, 22 leadership qualities of the 112 attributes are universally desirable(see figure 8), on the top of list is "trustworthy, just and honest", which is included in primary leadership dimension of "integrity", besides 3 in Integrity, the rest of 19 attribute are grouped into 4 primary leadership dimensions which are Performance oriented, Visionary, Inspirational, and Team-integrator. The universally desirable leadership attributes and their corresponding primary leadership dimensions are presented in Figure 8 (House et al., 2004).

Figure 8. 22 Universally Desirable Leadership Qualities and Attributes (House et al. 2004)

Universally Desirable Attributes	Corresponding Primary Leadership Dimensions
Trustworthy,	Integrity
Just	Integrity
Honest	Integrity

Foresight	Visionary
Plans ahead	Visionary
Encouraging	Inspirational
Positive	Inspirational
Dynamic	Inspirational
Motive arouser	Inspirational
Confidence builder	Inspirational
Motivational	Inspirational
Dependable	Malevolent (Reverse score)
Intelligent	Malevolent (Reverse score)
Decisive	Decisiveness
Effective bargainer	Diplomatic
Win-win problem solver	Diplomatic
Administrative skilled	Administratively competent
Communicative	Team integrator

Informed	Team integrator
Coordinator	Team integrator
Team builder	Team integrator
Excellent oriented	Performance oriented

5.1.d. Universally Undesirable Leadership Attributes and Dimensions

8 out of 112 leadership attributes in GLOBE project's finding were founded universally undesirable, which are: Loner, Asocial, Noncooperative, Irritable, Nonexplicit, Egocentric, Ruthless and Dictatorial, (Loner and Asocial are grouped in Self-protective primary leadership dimension, Noncooperative and Irritable are loaded on Malevolent primary leadership dimension, Dictatorial is in Autocratic primary leadership dimension). The universally undesirable leadership attributes and their corresponding primary leadership dimensions are presented in the following chart (House et al., 2004).

Universally undesirable Attributes	Corresponding Primary Leadership Attributes
Loner	Self-protective
Asocial	Self-protective
Noncooperative	Malevolent

Irritable	Malevolent
Nonexplicit	Face saver
Dictatorial	Autocratic
Ruthless	Did not include in any factor
Egocentric	Did not include in any factor

5.1.f. Culturally Contingent Primary Leadership Dimensions

Out of 21 primary leadership dimensions, 7 primary leadership dimensions were found to be culturally contingent (Javidan et al. 2010), which it means:

- 1. Status conscious (country scores range from 2.34 to 5.81). This dimension reflects a consciousness of one's own and others' social position holding an elitist belief that some individuals deserve more privileges than others.

- 2. Bureaucratic (formerly labeled procedural) (country scores range from 2.79 to 4.95). This dimension emphasizes following established norms, rules, policies and procedures and habitually follows regular routines.

- 3. Autonomous (country scores range from 2.23 to 4.67). This dimension describes tendencies to act independently without relying on others; may also include self-governing behavior and a preference to work and act separately from others.

- 4. Face saving (country scores range from 2.01 to 4.75). This leadership dimension reflects the tendency to ensure followers are not embarrassed or shamed; maintains good relationships by refraining from making negative comments, instead uses metaphors and examples.

- 5. Humane (country scores range from 3.31 to 5.59). This dimension emphasizes empathy for others by giving time, money, resources, and assistance when needed; shows concern for followers' personal and group welfare.

- 6. Self-sacrificial/risk taking (country scores range from 3.92 to 6.07). This dimension indicates an ability to convince followers to invest their efforts in activities that do not have a high probability of success, to forgo their self-interest, and make personal sacrifices for the goal or vision.

- 7. Internally competitive (formerly labeled conflict inducer; country scores range from 2.92 to 5.04). This dimension reflects the tendency to encourage

competition within a group and may include concealing information in a secretive manner.

In the third phase of the GLOBE project, the research focus shifted to behavioral leadership. This phase involved in-depth interviews and surveys with over 40 CEOs across 24 countries. Ultimately, more than 1,000 CEOs and 5,000 of their direct reports participated in the study.

The findings from this phase revealed that leaders tend to behave in ways that are expected within their respective countries and cultures. Importantly, it is cultural **values**—not cultural **practices**—that predict leadership attributes. Both cultural values and desired leadership attributes reflect an idealized state of how things *should be*, or an ideal endpoint.

Furthermore, a leader's behavior is not directly shaped by national cultural values. Instead, the influence of those values stems from Culturally Endorsed Leadership Theories (CLTs)—culturally shaped leadership expectations. Leadership effectiveness is therefore predicted by two factors: how well a leader's behaviors ***fit*** these expectations, and how strongly those behaviors are demonstrated. For instance, in societies where CLTs emphasize participative leadership among countries in Nordic Europe cluster, leaders who act accordingly are more effective at generating commitment, effort, and team solidarity from their direct reports (Dorfman et al. 2012).

Therefore, by understanding a country's CLT scores, Chinese leaders can use them as a roadmap to adapt their behavior accordingly and lead effectively in that host country. This more effective leadership, in turn, allows the host country's CLT scores to act as a moderating factor in helping Chinese leaders build trust there.

5.1.g. China CLT and Chinese Leadership Styles

The following is the comparison between China CLT scores and global average range of CLTS, and analysis summary on China Global CLT dimension (see figure 9).

Figure 9. China Global CLT Dimension Scores (House et al. 2004)

	(CLT) Global Leadership Dimension					
	Charismatic/ Value-based	Team Oriented	Participative	Humane Oriented	Autonomous	Self-protective
China Score	5.56	5.57	5.04	5.19	4.07	3.8
Global Average Range	4.5-6.5	4.7-6.2	4.5-6.1	3.8-5.6	2.3-4.7	2.5-4.6

There are three key insights generated from the above China's Global CLT Profile.

1. **The "Team-Charismatic" Core:** China's three highest scores are **Team Oriented (5.57)**, **Charismatic/Value-based (5.56) and Humane-oriented (5.19)**. This means the ideal Chinese leader is both a visionary who inspires others and a team builder who unites the group to drive ultimate performance, at the same time, Chinese leaders are supportive and modest. These three dimensions are seen as equally essential.
2. **The Participative Gap:** The **Participative (5.04)** score is significantly lower than the other positive dimensions and **Self-Protective (3.8)** is rather high, While China values charisma and teamwork, it is much less enthusiastic about democratic, consultative leadership. This directly reflects the high **Power Distance and Collectivism** in Chinese societal culture. Chinese leaders tend to lead in a more authoritarian and status-conscious way.
3. **The "Autonomous" Surprise:** Despite being a highly collectivist society (In-Group Collectivism 5.80), China's **Autonomous (4.07)** score is above the global midpoint. This suggests that outstanding Chinese leaders are expected to have the courage to act independently when needed. Blind conformity is not the ideal; rather, the leader is trusted to exercise independent judgment for the good of the group.

The above China CLT scores and interpretation are somewhat aligned with the unique underpinnings of Chinese management and leadership style, which is summarized as

Paternalistic Leadership (PL) (Farh & Cheng, 2000; Farh et al., 2006). Rooted in Confucianism, Paternalistic Leadership emphasizes the role of discipline and authority in combination with compassion and moral integrity, aiming to maintain role obligations and collective harmony between leaders and followers. Paternalistic leadership is not a unified construct; rather, it consists of three distinct dimensions: **authoritarianism**, **benevolence**, and **morality**.

- **Authoritarianism** refers to a leader's behavior of asserting strong authority and control over subordinates while demanding unquestioned obedience. Chinese leaders often enact these values by establishing centralized structures and adopting a father-like role characterized by a direct and authoritative leadership style.
- **Benevolence** implies that a leader demonstrates individualized, holistic concern for subordinates' personal and familial well-being.
- **Morality** is broadly depicted as a leader's behavior that demonstrates superior moral character and integrity through acting unselfishly and leading by example.

In general, paternalistic leaders take on a father-like role, providing protection and care for their employees' professional and personal lives in exchange for loyalty and compliance.

5.2. Global Mindset as a Solution for Global Leadership

The GLOBE research has also shown that countries do have diverse ways of doing things and different expectation from their leaders. Leaders in global roles face a fundamental challenge: they must influence people who are different from themselves—different cultural backgrounds, worldviews, political systems, regulatory frameworks, and business practices. In the real world, there is a critical shortage of globally ready managers, as HR leaders identified global talent gaps as a primary concern for business expansion to provide a solution to develop globally ready leaders who can lead effectively across culture. Professor Mansour Javidan, who is also one of the key investigators in the GLOBE project, lead a research project on how to develop globally ready managers. They also sought to move beyond the existing body of research, which they found to be largely anecdotal and case-based, by providing rigorous, large-scale empirical data. Finally, they aimed to distill the long and unfocused lists of over 100 leadership qualities into a core, measurable set of attributes—ultimately developing the three-capital model (Intellectual, Psychological, Social see figure 10 and 11) and the Global Mindset Inventory to help managers work effectively with people unlike themselves. The definition of a Global Mindset is:

The set of individual qualities and attributes that help a manager influence individuals, groups and organizations who are from other parts of the world (Javidan & Bowen 2013).

Javidan & Bowen (2013) contend that managers possessing a high level of Global Mindset attributes work more effectively with dissimilar others and demonstrate a greater likelihood of success in global roles. In contrast, managers with low levels of these attributes tend to experience global roles as stressful and frustrating, reducing their chances of success. In short, Global Mindset—defined as the capability to influence others unlike oneself—is critical to global leadership effectiveness. Chinese managers and leaders in global roles must prioritize the development of Global Mindset to lead global teams more effectively.

Figure 10. The Structure of Global Mindset (Javidan & Bowen 2013).



Figure 11. The Description of Global Mindset Three Capitals (Javidan & Bowen 2013).

Capital	Focus	Description
Global Intellectual Capital	Cognitive	What the manager knows about global business, cultures, geography, economics, and politics. It also includes **cognitive complexity**—the ability to digest, interpret, and leverage complex and often contradictory information.
Global Psychological Capital	Affective (Emotional)	The manager's emotional energy, curiosity, passion for diversity, willingness to take risks, and self-assurance when facing unfamiliar or uncomfortable situations.
Global Social Capital	Behavioral	The ability to act in ways that build trusting relationships across cultures, including intercultural empathy, interpersonal impact (negotiation and networking), and diplomacy.

Javidan & Bowen (2013) present two complementary approaches for developing a Global Mindset. The first is to **"find"** it by selecting individuals with attributes linked to higher scores, such as strong second-language proficiency, international living experience, an international graduate degree, or working in functions like finance or marketing and industries like telecommunications. Javidan & Bowen stress that Global Psychological Capital (passion for diversity and self-assurance) is the hardest to develop, so companies should prioritize hiring for it. The second approach is to **"grow"** Global Mindset through leadership development programs and coaching. Growing Intellectual Capital requires moving beyond knowledge acquisition to developing

cognitive complexity via hands-on scenarios and assessment centers. Growing Psychological Capital depends on pairing experiential learning (e.g., global assignments) with pre-, during-, and post-experience coaching to unlock genuine motivation and self-assurance. Growing Social Capital requires building both broad and deep networks that are continuously maintained and tapped for mentoring.

Since ability is a key precursor to trustworthiness, developing a global mindset lays the foundation for effective leadership in cross-cultural environments. Therefore, a global mindset is an essential part of how global leaders build trust.

6. Trust in Organization

Since this project focuses on global teams, and a team is part of an organization, organizational trust serves as a moderating factor for trust within global teams. The following is a review of how organizations build trust.

Since this project focuses on global teams, and a team is part of an organization, the following is a review of how organizations build trust.

Numerous researchers have found that trust is significantly linked to a range of organizational outcomes, including communication quality, performance, citizenship behavior, problem-solving, and cooperation. Beyond these associations, trust has long been regarded as essential to fostering cooperative relationships.

According to Hardin (1996), organizations can be deliberately structured to promote

trustworthiness by designing systems that increase the likelihood that trust will be well placed. Whitener et al. (1998) add that organizations whose cultures embrace risk-taking, inclusiveness, open communication, and genuine appreciation for employees tend to exhibit more trustworthy behaviors—particularly in delegating control, communicating openly, and showing concern—compared to organizations that lack such values. Furthermore, when organizations implement HR policies and procedures that embed procedural justice into performance appraisal and reward systems (e.g., providing regular and timely feedback) and establish mechanisms for employee input into performance evaluations, trustworthiness becomes more likely to emerge. Based on research done by Burke et al. (2007), perceptions of justice in leader action will engender higher levels of subordinate trust due to increased perceptions of integrity and benevolence. Justice related to trust in organization, which is called organizational justice, which has three areas:

1. **Procedural justice**– Policies and procedures are applied consistently.
2. **Distributive justice**– Rewards and promotions are given fairly.
3. **Interactional justice**– People are treated with respect and dignity.

Procedural justice and distributive justice are related to fairness. Employees perceive fairness when leaders listen to different viewpoints, avoid personal biases, and explain their decisions. Fair procedures and fair outcomes reduce uncertainty in the leader-subordinate relationship and increase trust. For example, employees care not only about getting fair raises or promotions, but also about having fair performance reviews. When

leaders act unfairly or inconsistently, trust breaks down because it raises doubts about the leader's integrity and benevolence.

Interactional justice matters too. Even when leaders must deliver bad news (such as demotion or termination), doing so with respect and privacy—rather than public embarrassment—builds trust. This shows both integrity and benevolence. In return, employees who feel treated fairly tend to perform better and have a more positive attitude.

Regarding the relationship between organizational culture and leadership, findings from the GLOBE project confirm that organizational culture and leadership attributes are interconnected (Javidan et al., 2010). Supporting this view, Schein (1992) argued that the organizational life cycle is a key determinant of the connection between leadership and culture. He suggested that in the early stages of the life cycle, leaders play a major role in shaping the organization's culture. However, as the organization matures, its culture increasingly influences the actions and behaviors of its leaders.

Since the inception of economic reforms introduced in the late 1970s, Chinese corporations have been emulating and learning from their Western counterparts with respect to organizational structures and corporate governance (Guthrie 2001).

7. Research Method and Findings

7.1 Methodology

This is a qualitative research project involving interviews with 20 Chinese leaders who have led global teams for at least three years. In each case, at least two team members are non-Chinese. All participants hold positions at director level or above, and 90% hold a master's degree or higher. 20% of them are female. 30% of them are Thunderbird alumni. They are serving in diverse industries from paper manufacturer to financial services, eight of them are serving in Chinese Sate-owned-enterprises (SOE), seven of them are employed by global multinationals and organizations, five of them are working for Chinese private enterprises. All of them speaks at least one foreign language (see appendix 1 for more detailed information about interviewees).

The geographic distribution of the teams led by these participants is as follows: seven leaders manage teams in Europe; three are heads of global operations; two lead teams in the Middle East; two lead teams in Asia, including Japan; two lead teams in the United States; two lead teams in Latin America; and two lead teams in Africa.

The interview process first explores the roles of the leader and team backgrounds, followed by questions on several key topics: their understanding of trust; which attributes and behaviors facilitate or impede trust-building with foreign team members; how they adjust their leadership and communication styles when managing global teams; how they assess the level of trust within their teams; the impact of organizational culture and values on trust; and their advice for other Chinese leaders who are about to lead a global team (see appendix 2 for the interview question).

7.2. Finding on What Trust is and Its Connection to the Trust Concept

The most frequently recurring interview comments regarding what trust is included phrases such as "trust makes you feel safe," "don't need to worry about," and "trust makes you feel it is okay to be vulnerable." These expressions directly reflect a foundational understanding of trust found in the literature: trust reduces the perceived need for monitoring and control**,** which is both an outcome and a benefit of being trusted. When a team member trusts their leader, they experience reduced anxiety and lowered defensive vigilance. This aligns with Mayer et al.'s (1995) influential model, which defines trust as "the willingness of a party to be vulnerable to the actions of another party." The phrase "okay to be vulnerable" is particularly significant, as vulnerability is the very condition that makes trust necessary—and vulnerability is only acceptable when the leader is perceived as honest, fair, and principled.

In a global team with members from diverse cultural backgrounds, a team leader seeking to enhance perceived trustworthiness must—acting as the trustee—take the initiative to develop the three core drivers of trust: **ability, benevolence, and integrity**. During the interviews, nearly all participants expressed willingness to take such initiative to build trusted relationship with their team members, at the same time, most of interview participants mentioned that they treat each team member differently based on their background in global teams. Because team members come from different cultural backgrounds, leaders treat each member differently—with respect, sincerity,

and benevolence—thereby earning credibility and trustworthiness, as a result, within global team, creating a situated *fiduciary community*, which can be understood as a form of collective trust. In return, team members, acting as trustors, reciprocate with gratitude and trust. When leaders receive this reciprocal gratitude and trust, they in turn trust their team members more, creating a dynamic, virtuous cycle of mutual trust and virtuous cycle of trust and team effectiveness.

This trust-building process aligns with the following definition of trust presented in this project:

"A holistic process in which trustees are willing to contribute to a dynamic, relational process centered on cultivating a situated fiduciary community. Within this process, trust is inseparable from credibility, benevolence, gratitude, and the reciprocal roles of trustor and trustee, all of which are grounded in the primacy of relationality."

7.3 Research Findings on Antecedents of Trust

The following are the research findings on what enhances Chinese leaders' perceived trustworthiness, including the three dimensions of ability, benevolence, and integrity (Mayer et al.1995).

Ability

Ability as one of three antecedents of trustworthiness, the followings are the finding of the research related to the ability factor.

National Cultural Knowledge

All interviewees mentioned that acquiring cultural knowledge about the country of each international team member and understanding the cultural differences between Chinese and other cultures, is essential to earning trust from team members. Indeed, this helps avoid cultural taboos and misinterpretation. Learning about another culture's values, customs, and communication styles demonstrates genuine effort, humility, and respect. This openness often encourages reciprocal trust and cooperation.

For example, one interviewee currently working in Europe said: "Most Chinese colleagues tend to think that Europeans are inefficient and not hardworking enough. But when you actually live here, understand their underlying logic, and recognize their need for work-life balance, you will truly grasp why using money as a motivator—especially short-term incentives—simply doesn't work for them. Therefore, a company's incentive system must be aligned with the local culture and value system."

Based on the research findings, leaders who take the initiative to learn about national cultures and create opportunities to bridge cultural differences enable their non-Chinese team members to develop a better understanding of Chinese culture and Chinese ways of leading and communicating. For example, several interviewed leaders designed both work-related and non-work-related cultural bridging programs and initiatives to promote mutual understanding and avoid misunderstandings and conflicts. These

programs and initiatives achieved strong results in building trust between Chinese leaders and their global team members.

One of the key findings regarding impediments to trust-building with global team members is a lack of understanding of local ways of doing things, as well as treating global team members the same way as Chinese staff at home. *Developing national cultural knowledge represents global intellectual capital within the framework of a global mindset.* This finding is important as it meets the expectations of the trust-building framework proposed in this research.

Adjusting Leadership and Communication Styles

Another key finding, emphasized by all interviewees, is that adjusting leadership and communication styles to adapt to different cultural contexts is critical for leading global teams effectively and for building trust with team members from diverse cultural backgrounds.

One leader who has managed global teams in both Japan and the United States commented: "Management styles vary significantly based on cultural differences. For example, with Japanese teams, they tend to prefer micromanaging—they expect you to tell them what to do, with a high level of detail and clear instructions. It's best to clearly outline each step they need to take. In contrast, American teams are relatively independent, strongly dislike micromanaging, and prefer being given enough space."

Another leader, who was expatriated to lead a global team in the U.S., remarked: "In China, I was used to having the final say and making all the decisions myself. But when I arrived in the United States, things changed—the environment was unfamiliar, and the work style was different. So, I took the initiative to adjust myself, proactively learned and gathered insights at the lowest level, and changed my existing style and approach."

Additionally, during the interviews, several impediments to trust-building with team global members were found to be related to this point, comments such as “too rigid and inflexible.” “Unwilling to adapt, stick to the approaches that work well in China.”

This finding is significant, as it aligns with the previously reviewed GLOBE framework's Culturally Endorsed Implicit Leadership Theory (CLT) as a moderating factor for Chinese leaders seeking to earn trust from their global team members. The CLT suggests that the "fit" between a leader's behavior and the host country's culture and values enhances leadership effectiveness. *Therefore, the GLOBE CLTs provides Chinese leaders who are about to lead global teams with a global leadership map—guiding how to adapt leadership behaviors and actions within specific national cultures. The ability of Chinese leaders to adapt and shift their leadership styles is identified as a key antecedent of trustworthiness.* Furthermore, this finding meets the expectations of the trust-building framework proposed in this research.

Be Professional

During the interview process, when interviewees were asked about the key antecedents of trustworthiness, the word that comes up most frequently was "(be) professional." This suggests that, as a Chinese leader leading a global team, one must behave in a manner perceived as professional by global team members. Based on the interviews, leaders commented that being professional means meeting the international standards expected of a global manager. It is a comprehensive term that summarizes the basic requirements for functioning effectively as a global manager. Specifically, the call to "be professional" demands that leaders operate competently in their roles in global business contexts, communicate effectively across cultures, and demonstrate respect for team members from diverse background.

As one interviewee remarked: "When I arrived in Canada, I hired a top consulting firm to help me learn how to conduct business professionally here, so as to avoid making mistakes and blunders."

Additionally, during the interviews, several impediments to trust-building with global team members were found to be related to professionalism. Examples include "smoking in non-smoking areas," "poor table manners," and "demanding that staff work during private time without prior agreement." These finding align with the two points mentioned above: a leader of a global team needs to be equipped with cross-cultural knowledge, as well as the skills to adapt to different cross-cultural contexts. *The research finding of "Be professional" can be categorized into three Capitals within the*

framework of Global Mindset model and framework discussed earlier. This finding is important as it meets the expectations of the trust-building framework proposed in this research but in different form.

Benevolence

The followings are related to benevolence factor of antecedent of trustworthiness.

Respect

Respect emerged as another key theme in interviews regarding the antecedents of trustworthiness of Chinese leaders as perceived by global team members. In any global team, uncertainty is inherently high. When a Chinese leader demonstrates respect—by listening actively, acknowledging differing opinions, or showing consideration for local customs and religions—it signals to team members that they can speak openly without fear of being dismissed or punished. Demonstrating respect for team members and diversity cultivates psychological safety within the team, which is a proven precursor to trust. Without respect, global team members may withhold feedback, avoid raising concerns, and ultimately distrust the leader's intentions.

Respect is visible behavior that signals benevolence—that is, genuine care for others. As one interviewee who is working Latin America commented: "I try to use all possible means to show my respect to my team members, such as celebrating local festivals

together, offering the most convenient ways for local staff to observe their religious practices, and celebrating team members' birthdays together."

This finding partially meets the expectations of the trust-building framework proposed in this research. In the original plan, only respect for team members was included. However, the research findings emphasize that leaders must not only respect team members but also show respect for local cultures, customs, and religions.

Support for Personal Development and Care

Support team member's growth is another key point found in the research for Chinese leader to enhance perceived trust worthiness from global team members. Indeed, supporting personal growth is a powerful demonstration of benevolence—the belief that the leader genuinely cares about the team member's well-being and future, not just their immediate output. One of the interviewed leaders commented: **"**This (personal development) is what matters most—creating opportunities for personal growth. The other person will highly value those opportunities." During the interviews, some interview participants mentioned that they go far beyond daily work responsibilities to help team members' families when needed. They also try their best to assist with team members' personal challenges, such as children's schooling and parents' healthcare. These forms of personal care and concern are very powerful in building trusting relationships with local team members as interview participants commented. This

finding exceeds the expectations of the trust-building framework proposed in this research, as the original design did not include such personal care and concern efforts.

Organizational Justice

From the research, several leaders mentioned that salaries need to be competitive and all team members need to be treated fairly. Within a global team, a fair decision-making process needs to be established to ensure that the outcomes of decisions are also fair. As one interviewed leader remarked: "Organizational policies, benefits, compensation, and other related matters must be clearly established in advance, and we must make sure they are fair." The finding underscores the need for Chinese organizations to align with global standards of corporate structure and governance as expected by international employees and key stakeholders.

This finding, which was anticipated prior to the research, was therefore included in the proposed framework. It demonstrates that trust in organization enhances leaders' perceived trustworthiness among global team members. Consequently, building the elements and factors of organizational trust within a global team is crucial for Chinese team leaders seeking to earn trust from their global team members. Additionally, “fairness” is one of universally desirable leadership attributed identified by GLOBE project, so it can be included in the GLOBE CLTs.

Integrity

真诚 (Zhencheng): A Combination of Sincerity and Honesty

Zhencheng (真诚), a term frequently mentioned by interview participants, combines the English concepts of sincerity and honesty. The Chinese meaning of 真诚 has threefold consistency: words match facts or reality; expressed emotions match inner feelings; and the purpose of communication is not to manipulate the other party.

According to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, sincerity is defined as "the quality or state of being sincere; honesty of mind; freedom from hypocrisy," while honesty is defined as "adherence to the facts; fairness and straightforwardness of conduct." Thus, the Chinese term 真诚 is almost equivalent to the combination of sincerity and honesty. As honesty is a universally desirable leadership attribute (Javidan et al., 2010), 真诚 holds similar universal value. Indeed, 真诚 is the foundation of human interaction. Chinese leaders who demonstrate 真诚 are perceived as being honest, sincere, and authentic in both words and actions.

真诚 also enables all the other trust-building factors mentioned above to function effectively. For example, cultural knowledge without 真诚 feels manipulative; respect without 真诚 feels performative; support for personal growth without 真诚 feels transactional; and adaptability without 真诚 feels opportunistic.

When asked how to be perceived as trustworthy by global team members, one leader replied: "Keep your word—you must do what you say, never break promises or fail to deliver. And be 真诚—help others with genuine authenticity." 真诚 must be shown through behaviors that make others feel your good intentions and genuine care.

Most interviewed leaders mentioned that there are many ways to show 真诚; however, 真诚 behaviors need to be culturally appropriate. For instance, "gifting" is acceptable in some cultures, while in others it may be perceived as an intention to bribe. As one interviewed leader who has been working in Africa for many years commented: "There are cultural differences in how 真诚 is expressed. In Africa, the expression of 真诚 tends to be more direct. You need to communicate your concerns simply and directly—for example, avoid empty preaching or vague lecturing." Many interview participants also mentioned that they look for 真诚 in their team members to determine whether they are trustworthy.

The 真诚 attribute was not expected as a key finding in this research. In the original design of the proposed model, the author assumed that sincerity would be included within the benevolence factor. However, the research findings revealed that 真诚 emerged as a distinct integrity attribute.

责任（Zeren）:Responsibility +Accoutability

责任 (Responsibility + accountability) is another term that emerged frequently during the interviews and is considered a crucial leadership attribute for Chinese leaders. Many

interviewees noted that as leaders, they bear the responsibility to proactively build trust with their global team members. One of the interviewees remarked: "I never expect the other person to try to understand me first. Instead, it is my responsibility to take the lead in understanding them first."

Importantly, the Chinese term 责任 encompasses both the English concepts of "responsibility" and "accountability," covering both the process and the outcome of a task. The power of the Chinese term 责任 is that it integrates process and outcome into a single, indivisible concept. For Chinese leaders, to accept 责任 for a task means automatically accepting ownership of both the work along the way and the final result — success or failure. As one of the interviewed leaders remarked:“as the team leader, it is my 责任(responsibility) to take on all consequence of a project.” Many interviewees also said they look for 责任(responsibility) attribute in team members to assess their trustworthiness.

This aligns with the concept reviewed in the Chinese trust-building process, which emphasizes "obligation" or "role" in interpersonal interactions and relationships. This finding partially meets the expectations of the proposed framework. In the original proposal model, only accountability was included, whereas responsibility was not. The Chinese term 责任 (responsibility) encompasses both responsibility and accountability.

7.4 Unexpected Findings of the Research Project

Surprise #1

Before this research, the expectation was that organizational culture, and values would have a clear impact on enhancing a leader's perceived trustworthiness from team members. However, the findings of this research suggest otherwise. Approximately half of the interviewed leaders mentioned that corporate culture and values do not positively affect their ability to earn trust from their global team members. Instead, they emphasized that it is their own behaviors that have a positive impact on building trust.

These leaders recalled that corporate culture and values are only meaningful when demonstrated through leaders' behavior. Therefore, only leaders who embody those cultures and values and showcase them through their actions will benefit from a positive impact on trust-building. When leaders fail to demonstrate those values, the corporate culture and values become effectively invisible.

One interviewed leader who has served in a global pharmaceutical company remarked: "This is a yes-and-no question. Earlier in my career, I might have answered yes, but now I would say no. Because I only remember those values as they were demonstrated in the behaviors of the leaders I recall."

The above finding underscores the critical role of leaders' behavior in leadership effectiveness, in cultivating organizational culture and values, and in building trust with employees. When organizations introduce new cultural values, these initiatives are

ineffective if the values merely appear on a website or in promotional materials without being authentically embodied by leaders themselves.

Surprise #2

One surprising finding from this research is that technical skill is less important than social and global leadership skills when leading a global team. One of the interviewed leaders was initially sent on an expatriate assignment as an HR support manager to assist the business leader in managing an acquired plant in the United States. However, a year later, Chinese headquarters found that the business leader had failed to manage the acquired plant effectively, whereas the HR manager was promoted to lead the plant instead.

The HR manager did not speak English well, had no technical knowledge of the industry, and had to work in a highly challenging and unfamiliar environment. Nevertheless, he is open-minded and possesses a strong willingness to learn. He stated that he was neither fearful nor anxious. He took the initiative to step out of his comfort zone, remained curious, and sought out various ways to solve problems. Leveraging his social skills and leadership style, along with genuine sincerity, he proactively reached out to others and sought suggestions and support. As a result, he earned the trust and respect of his seven American direct reports and led a team of over 300 people. Ultimately, he not only improved performance but also developed new business. He

commented during the interview: "This is my best leadership experience, and the best team I have ever led so far in my career."

The unexpected finding above highlights the critical importance of selecting appropriate leaders for global assignments. Leaders who perform well domestically, relying on strong technical expertise, may fail to replicate their success in global markets. This is because effective global managers and executives require a distinct set of skills and attributes, as demonstrated in the Global Mindset model and framework previously presented in this research. This finding enforces global mindset as the most important ability factor proposed in the model of this research project.

7.5 Summary of the Key Findings

What Trust Is

The interview participant described trust as feeling safe, not worried, and okay to be vulnerable. This matches Mayer et al. (1995): trust reduces the need for monitoring. Vulnerability is only acceptable when a leader is honest and fair. Feeling safe, not worried, okay to be vulnerable and reducing the need for monitoring are outcome and benefit of being trusted.

How Trust Builds

Based on the result of this research, Mayer et al. (1995) model of build trust is applicable even though the emphasis is different. Chinese leaders develop **ability,**

benevolence, and integrity in a cross-cultural context. They learn individual national cultural knowledge and treat each team member differently based on culture—with respect and sincerity. Team members reciprocate with gratitude and trust, creating a dynamic virtuous cycle of mutual trust development. This process aligns with definition of trust presented in this project which stress the process part of trust definition. Since national cultural knowledge and "being professional" both fall within the domain of global mindset, developing a global mindset is therefore the most important ability for Chinese leaders within the ability factor.

Key Antecedents of Trustworthiness

Factor	Key Findings
Ability	Learn national cultures knowledge; adapt leadership style; "be professional" (meet international standards)
Benevolence	Respect for team member and diversity; support personal growth and care; ensure organizational justice
Integrity	真诚（sincerity + honesty); 责任（responsibility + accountability)

Note: Showing respect is not explicitly included as benevolence in Mayer et al.'s (1995) model. Some research, such as Tan et al. (2024), identifies "respect" as a separate antecedent of trust. However, in the cross-cultural context of this study, showing respect for team members and diversity is considered a form of benevolence.

Impediments to Trust

- Lack of local cultural knowledge
- Treating global team members like Chinese staff
- Leading global team as leading domestic Chinees team
- Being rigid and unwilling to adapt
- Blurring boundary on professional and personal
- Poor professional manners (e.g., smoking in non-smoking areas)

Unexpected Findings

1. Corporate culture and value are effective– only leaders embody those values.
2. Technical skills are less important than social skills and global mindset in leading global team and taking global assignments.

Access the Trustworthiness Level of Team Members

Based on the findings of this research, using company engagement surveys and conducting conversations with skip-level staff or team members are the most effective measures for assessing team members' trust in their leaders.

8. Conclusion and Implication

8.1 Discussion and Conclusion

Addressing the research question of what attributes and behaviors facilitate and impede Chinese leaders to build trust with members of global teams, this study conducted in-depth interviews with 20 experienced Chinese global leaders. The research findings

align mostly with the expectations of the prior research design and plan. The followings present the author's perspectives, critiques, and recommendations regarding the findings of this project, as well as the specific areas modified from the original proposed model (see figure 12 and 13), the complete modified proposed model presented in figure 14.

1. Ability Factor: Adding Knowledge of Trust Concepts

In the Ability factor, knowledge of trust concepts and the trust-building process needs to be added for Chinese leaders to effectively build trust with their global team members, which help Chinese managers and executives understand trust-building in global team as a holistic process, especially understanding the differences between Western and Chinese trust-building processes. The Western way is truth-seeking, centering on individual personality and character. The Chinese path, by contrast, is way-seeking, centering on the most appropriate way to navigate relationships. This foundational knowledge is a prerequisite; without it, Chinese leaders will be insufficiently equipped to understand the process of trust-building. Therefore, **these elements will be added to the Ability factor** in the modified model. At the same time, to emphasize the concept of trust presented in this project, *this will simultaneously enable Chinese managers and executives to understand trust-building with global team members as cultivating a fiduciary community.*

2. Ability Factor: Reconsidering "Be Professional"

The author believes that within the Ability factor, the term "be professional" in the findings is not an appropriate description of the ability required for leading a global team. Alternative terms such as "global skill" or "international competence" more accurately capture the necessary capabilities, all of which fall within the domain of the Global Mindset Model and Framework. Therefore, **"be professional" will be removed from the Ability factor**, in the modified proposed model of this project.

3. Integrity Factor: Using Chinese Terms for Unique Cultural Attributes

In the Integrity factor, it is better to use Chinese terms to describe the two attributes **真诚 (sincerity + honesty)** and **责任 (responsibility + accountability)** . These two terms are uniquely important for building trust in Chinese culture. The main objectives of this project are to help Chinese leaders, and interview participants also mentioned that they look for these attributes when trusting their team members. Therefore, **using Chinese terms is more appropriate** for this factor.

4. Integrity Factor: Retaining "Seek Principles Congruence"

In the Integrity factor, the "seek principles congruence" attribute was included in the original design. Although only a few interview participants mentioned that they seek common ground and shared principles—or even common hobbies—to initiate successful trust-building, this attribute still holds value, in addition, according to Mayer et al.'s (1995) model, integrity is defined as the trustee's adherence to a set of principles that the trustor finds acceptable. Consequently, identifying mutually acceptable

principles is a critical element in the trust building process. Therefore, **"seek principles congruence" will be kept in the Integrity factor** in the modified proposed model.

5. Moderating Roles: Adding GLOBE Societal Values and Psychological Safety

In addition to the moderating role of GLOBE Culturally Endorsed Implicit Leadership Theory (CLT), which provides guidance for Chinese leaders to adapt their behaviors to the leadership expectations of host countries, **GLOBE Societal Values** can also provide guidance for Chinese leaders in adapting to the expectations of host societal values, particularly in terms of communication styles. This is because all interview participants commented that "adjusting and adapting leadership and communication styles" is required to earn trust from their global team members. Both frameworks will be incorporated as moderating factors in the modified model. Given that these moderating factors influence Chinese leaders' development of the antecedents of trustworthiness, a connecting arrow will be drawn between the moderating factors and the antecedents of trustworthiness in the modified proposed model.

Burke et al. (2007) shows that psychological safety will moderate the relationship between the antecedents to trust and trust in leadership. Psychological safety plays a team moderating factor role in trust building process. Psychological safety makes trust-building easier. When team members feel safe to speak up, share ideas, and make mistakes without fear of being punished, trust in their leader grows more quickly.

In a psychologically safe environment, the positive effects of a leader's ability, benevolence, and integrity are even stronger. Team members are more willing to trust a leader who shows these qualities when they also feel safe.

Additionally, when a leader is missing some trust-building qualities, psychological safety can help make up for that gap. If team members feel safe, they may still trust a leader even if the leader is not perfect in every way.

6. The Part of Findings that Are Uniquely to Chinese Managers

In the ability factor, knowledge of Chinese trust concepts and the trust-building process is unique to Chinese managers. The way trust is built in Chinese society is quite distinctive: it is obligation- and role-based, deeply rooted in traditional Chinese cultural values. As Guthrie (2001) emphasizes, even though Chinese firms have successfully imitated their counterparts in many respects, Chinese managers continue to be deeply shaped by their "old habits" and cultural traditions.

In the benevolence factor, Chinese leaders are relatively unique in going far beyond daily work responsibilities to help team members' families and personal challenges, such as children's schooling and parents' healthcare. These behaviors align with the benevolence dimension of Chinese paternalistic leadership, which emphasizes offering

both professional and personal care and concern to employees, as well as align with China's high score in In-group Collectivism in GLOBE Project Societal Values.

In the integrity factor, both Chinese terms 真诚(sincerity + honesty) and 责任 (responsibility + accountability) are uniquely to Chinese managers, these two attributes are very important quality for Chinese to initiate trust-building process with their team members.

7. This project investigates what attributes and behaviors enhance Chinese leaders' perceived trustworthiness among team members from diverse cultural backgrounds. According to Dirks (2000), team members' trust in their leader significantly improves team performance. House et al. (2014) further argued that while trustworthiness is universally required for CEO effectiveness, the behavioral pathways to building that trust are culturally specific. Therefore, Chinese team leaders who learn effective ways to build trust with their global team members will significantly increase overall team effectiveness and performance.

8. Beyond trustworthiness, two additional antecedents of trust are particularly relevant in global team contexts: **situational factors** and **propensity to trust**.

a. Situational Factors

Besides cultural context that we have discussed thoroughly, situational factors also include power dynamics and communication methods. **Power dynamics** play a

significant role. Chinese leaders who lead global teams typically hold more formal power than their team members. Therefore, Chinese leaders need to be mindful of how this power asymmetry shapes trust dynamics. Specifically, Chinese leaders tend to assess their team members' trustworthiness primarily through the lenses of **ability** and **integrity**. In contrast, team members tend to evaluate their leaders' trustworthiness primarily through the lens of **benevolence**—that is, whether the leader genuinely cares about their well-being.

Communication methods also shape the effectiveness of trust-building. Different communication channels—such as face-to-face interaction versus online communication—have different capacities for conveying trustworthiness. Face-to-face communication allows for richer social cues, emotional expression, and immediate feedback, which can accelerate trust development. Online or virtual communication, while necessary for global teams, may require additional effort to build and maintain trust due to reduced non-verbal cues and potential time-zone delays.

b. Propensity to Trust

Propensity to trust refers to an individual's general willingness to trust others. This tendency varies not only from person to person but also from country to country. Research indicates that China has one of the highest levels of propensity to trust among nations. Consequently, Chinese leaders must be aware of the propensity to trust levels of their team members, considering both individual differences and the national cultural

backgrounds from which their team members come. A team member from a low-trust culture may require more consistent demonstration of trustworthiness before extending trust, whereas a team member from a high-trust culture may be more willing to offer trust initially.

9. Regarding trust in organizations, beyond the findings discussed under "organizational justice" within the benevolence factor—which primarily address competitive salary and fairness in decision-making—several additional elements need to be considered. These include organizational policies toward the local community and sustainability**,** procedural justice which means fairness in processes)**,** open and transparent decision-making processes**,** interactional justice which mainly includes treating people with respect and dignity. All these elements play a significant role in trust-building among global team members. Therefore, at the organizational level, Chinese leaders must pay attention to these elements both when leading global teams and when assisting their organizations in building these structures. Doing so will enhance their perceived trustworthiness among team members and key stakeholders.

A separate organizational-level factor—trust in the values and culture of the organization—is conceptualized as a moderating factor in trust-building for Chinese team leaders. The critical finding is that organizational values and culture only have a positive impact on trust-building when leaders actively embody those values and culture.

10. Modifications made. Drawing from the conclusions, critiques, and suggestions discussed above, the modifications to the trustworthiness elements of the original proposed model are presented below (figure 12). A complete overview of all modifications is provided in Figure 13, the changes are in red font, while the fully modified proposed model is presented in Figure 14.

Figure 12. Modifications to the Original Proposed Model and Plan

Factor	Original Plan	After Modification
Ability	1. Global mindset 2. Shift leadership styles 3. Team leadership	1. Concept of trust 2. Global mindset 3. Adjust leadership and communication styles
Benevolence	1. Show concern & respect 2. Coach & develop 3. Sustained supportive context 4. Organizational justice	1. Demonstrate respect for members & diversity 2. Personal development and care *3.* Organizational justice
Integrity	1. Accountability 2. Seek principles congruence 3. Personal virtue & self-discipline	1. Seek principles congruence 2. 真诚 (Sincerity + honesty) 3. 责任 (Responsibility + accountability)
Organizational Culture	Direct moderating effect on trust	No direct effect; leaders' behavior matters more

Figure 13. **The Difference Between the Original and Modified Proposed Model**

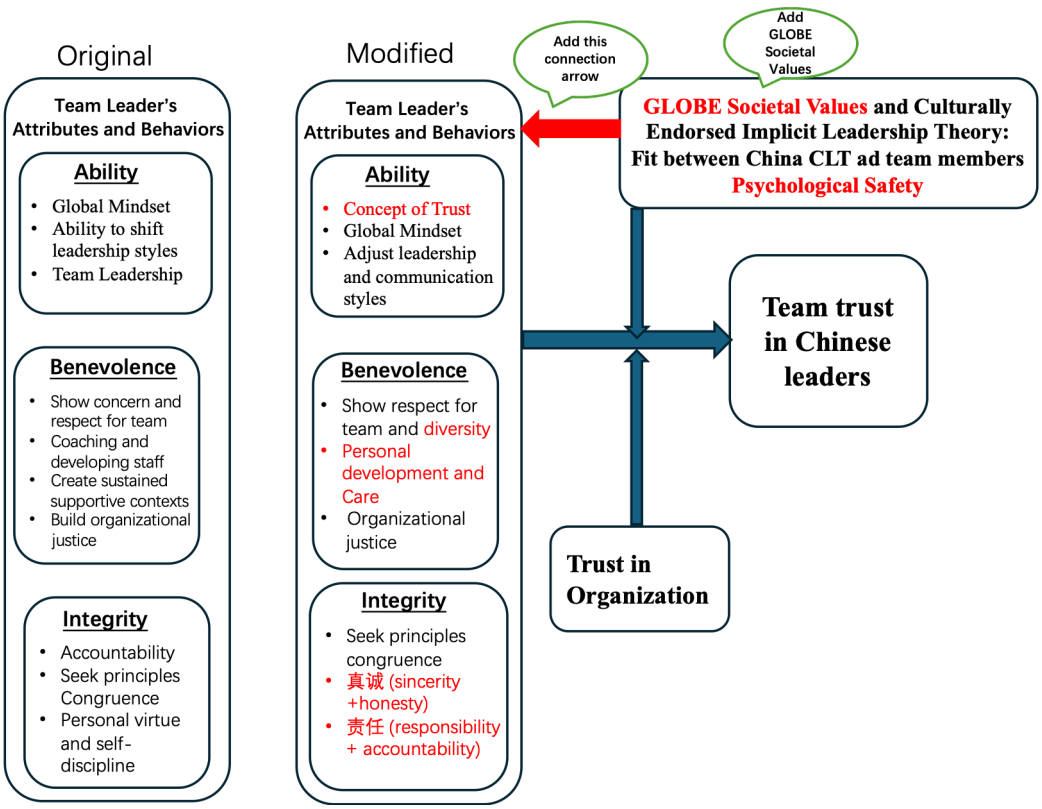
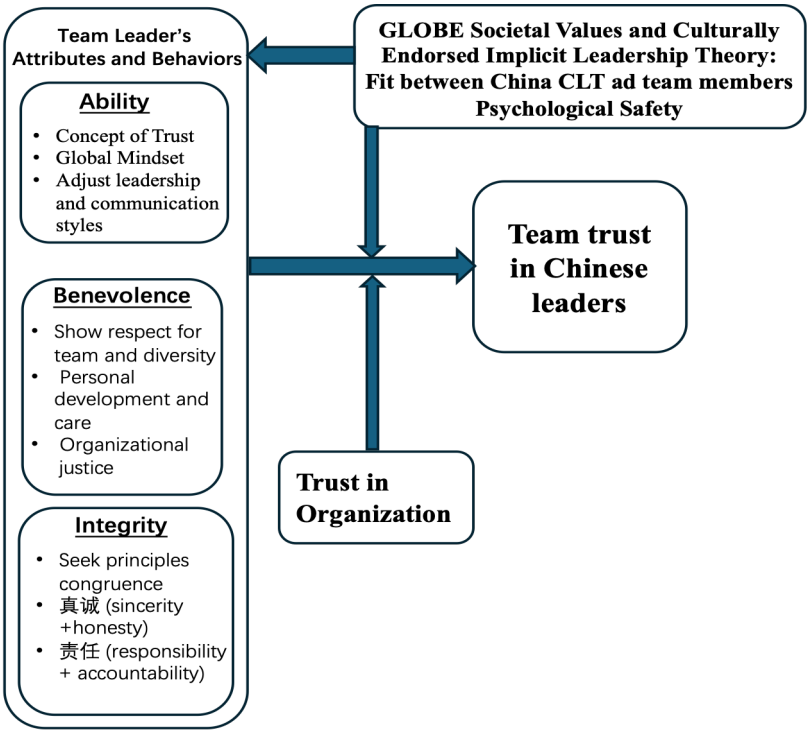


Figure 14. **The modified proposed model of Trust in Leadership for Chinese Global Team**



8.2. Implication on Creating a Training Program

Drawing from the findings of this research and the modified trust-building model and framework, the following actions and behaviors are identified as facilitators for Chinese leaders seeking to build high-trust, high-performance global teams. A chart has been developed to illustrate the specific actions Chinese leaders can take to build trust with their global team members and enhance global team performance (see Figure 15).

Part One: Attributes and Behaviors that Enhance Perceived Trustworthiness

Ability Factor

1. To learn and understand conception of trust, process of trust-building and concept of psychological safety

2. To develop global mindset

3. Adapt leadership and communication styles based on expectation of the host countries

benevolence

1. To show respect for team member and diversity

2. To provide personal development and care

3. To create process and system for organizational justice

Integrity Factor

1. To seek principles congruence, finding common ground and commonality

2. To be 真诚 (sincerity + honesty)

3. To bear 责任 (reasonability + accountability)

Other Related Factors

1. To understand Situation factors (power dynamic and communication methods)

2. Propensity to trust

Part Two: Learn and Understand the Research Result of GLOBE Project

1. To learn and apply universally desirable leadership attributes and behaviors,

2. To avoid universally undesirable leadership attributes and behavior

3. To recognize contingent leadership attributes and adapt behavior to what is desirable in each culture.

4. To apply data of GLOBE Societal Values to find leadership expectation of host countries

5. To apply data of Culturally Endorsed Implicit Leadership Theory (CLT) to locate CLT of host countries and adapt leadership attributes and behaviors appropriately.

Part Three: Building Organizational Justice and Culture

1. To understand the function of organizational justice and culture

2. To build organizational justice and embody organizational culture and values to enhance trust with team members

Part Four: Assessing Team Members' Trust Level Toward Their Leaders

1. Engage supervisors in skip-level conversations with team members to determine the trust level of each team member toward leaders

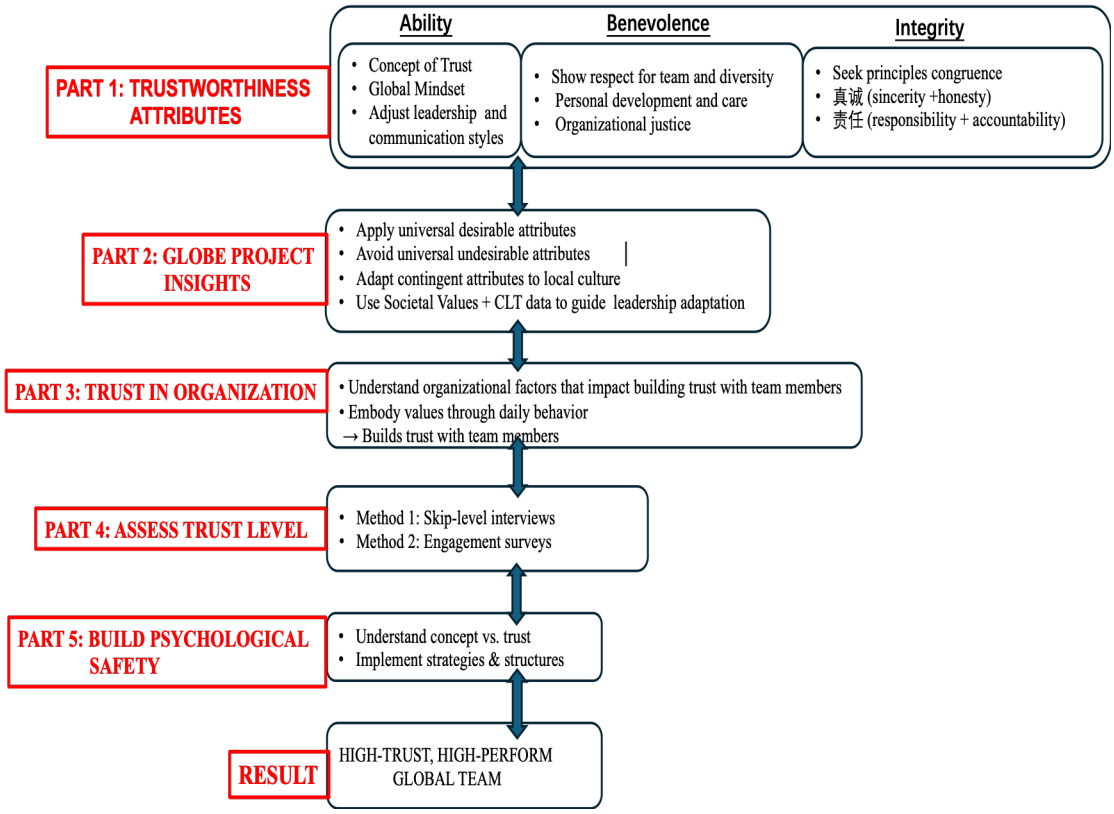
2. To create and use engagement survey to identify how much each team member trusts their leader.

Part Five: Build Psychological Safety in Global Team

1. To review psychological concept and its difference with trust

2. To implement strategy and structure to build psychological safety and build a virtuous circle of trust and psychological safety.

Figure 15. Actionable Framework for Chinese Leaders to Build High-trust and High-perform Global Team



Based on the above action plan and findings of this research, a training program can be developed to help Chinese managers and executives build high trust with their team members and create high-performing global teams by combination of building trust and creating psychological safety. The detailed training program layout is as follows:

Program Tile:

How to Build Trust with team members in Global Team

Program Overview:

This six-module training program, titled "How to Build Trust with Team Members in Global Teams," is designed for Chinese managers and executives leading or preparing to lead global teams. The program equips participants with the knowledge, skills, and practical strategies to build trust through ability, benevolence, and integrity and create psychological safety. By combining these two approaches, participants learn to initiate two self-reinforcing "virtuous circles of trust"—where trust enhances team effectiveness and successful performance reinforces trust—leading to increasing trust and improving team performance over time. The program covers trust definitions, antecedents of trust, GLOBE leadership insights, organizational culture, trust assessment methods, and psychological safety strategies across six integrated modules.

Program targeted audience:

Chinese managers and executives who are or going to lead global teams

Program Objectives

To equip Chinese managers and executives with the knowledge, models and frameworks, skills, and practical strategies necessary to build, maintain, and assess trust with global team members and key stakeholders from diverse cultural backgrounds, based on empirical research findings and established trust-building frameworks. As a result, team members' trust toward their leaders will initiate two "virtuous circles of trust," which reinforce each other to create a self-reinforcing cycle of increasing trust and improving team performance in global teams.

Program Module Design Layout:

Module One: Understanding the Definition of Trust and Process of Trust-building

Part One: Key Definitions of Trust

Part Two: Cross-Cultural Understanding of Trust and Trust Application

Module Two: Understanding Antecedents of Trust

Part One: Concept of The Three Antecedents of Trustworthiness

Part Two: Ability Factor

Part Three: Benevolence Factor

Part Three: Benevolence Factor

Part Four: Integrity

Part Five: Other Factors – Situation and Propensity to Trust

Module Three: Mapping Effective Global Leadership

Part One: Understand the History and Research Result of GLOBE Project

Part Two: How to Use GLOBE CLT Data to Adapt Leadership Style

Module Four: Building Trust in Organization

Part One: Understand the Concept of Organizational Justice and Culture

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Module One: Understanding the Definition of Trust and Process of Trust-building

Module Overview

This module introduces the concept of trust, its development process, and the cultural differences in how trust is understood and practiced. It provides Chinese managers and executives with a clear foundation for building trust with global team members and stakeholders. At the same time, to familiarize participants with Mayer et al.'s (1995) Integrated Model of Organizational Trust, and the Modified Trust-building Model of this project.

Module Objective

By the end of this module, participants will be able to:

1. Define trust from both Western and Chinese perspectives.
2. Explain why vulnerability is necessary for trust and how to demonstrate appropriate vulnerability in cross-cultural contexts.
3. Understand what a "fiduciary community" is and how to cultivate a global team as one across cultural boundaries.
4. Recognize the dynamic, reciprocal nature of trustor-trustee relationships.
5. Apply these concepts to their own global leadership contexts.

Module One Content

Part One: Key Definitions of Trust

The module begins with **Mayer et al.'s (1995) influential definition**, which states that trust is:

"The willingness of a party to be vulnerable to the actions of another party."

This definition emphasizes that trust is fundamentally about accepting risk. Without vulnerability, trust becomes unnecessary. When a team member trusts their leader, they are willing to place themselves in a position where they could be harmed or disappointed, based on the expectation that the leader will act competently, fairly, and benevolently.

The module then presents the **definition of trust adopted in this research project**:

"A holistic process in which trustees are willing to contribute to a dynamic, relational process centered on cultivating a situated fiduciary community. Within this process, trust is inseparable from credibility, benevolence, gratitude, and the reciprocal roles of trustor and trustee, all of which are grounded in the primacy of relationality."

This definition expands upon Mayer et al.'s model in several important ways:

- **Holistic process** – Trust is not a static state but an ongoing, evolving dynamic.
- **Situated fiduciary community** – Trust is built within specific relational and cultural contexts, not through universal formulas.
- **Reciprocal roles** – The trustor (one who extends trust) and trustee (one who is trusted) are not fixed positions; they shift and interact throughout the relationship.
- **Primacy of relationality**– Relationships are not secondary to trust; they are the very foundation upon which trust is built.

Part Two: Cross-Cultural Understanding of Trust and Trust Application

A critical component of this module is helping Chinese managers understand the **differences between Western and Chinese trust literature**, as reviewed in the project's literature review.

Western Perspective	**Chinese Perspective**
Trust is often cognitive based	Trust is often affective and relationship-based
Trust can be built quickly through contracts and systems	Trust requires long-term relationship cultivation (*guanxi*)

Western Perspective	Chinese Perspective
Vulnerability is a necessary condition for trust	Vulnerability is acceptable within established relationships

The module places special emphasis on understanding two critical concepts within a cross-cultural context:

A. Being Vulnerable

In Western trust literature, vulnerability is seen as a necessary condition for trust. Trust only matters when there is risk. However, for many Chinese leaders, openly admitting vulnerability may feel counter-cultural, as traditional Chinese leadership emphasizes authority, competence, and face preservation (*mianzi*). This module helps Chinese leaders understand that:

- Demonstrating appropriate vulnerability (e.g., admitting a mistake, asking for help) can actually build trust, not undermine authority.
- Different cultures have different thresholds for what constitutes appropriate vulnerability.
- Global team members from Western cultures may expect leaders to show some vulnerability as a sign of authenticity.

B. Creating a Fiduciary Community in Global Team

A fiduciary community is a relational space where members trust that others will act in good faith, with benevolence, care and loyalty. This concept is highly compatible with Chinese values of relational harmony and collective obligation. However, the challenge lies in creating such a community across cultural boundaries. This module helps Chinese leaders understand that:

- A fiduciary community cannot be created through top-down directives in all cultures; it must be cultivated through consistent, reciprocal trust-building behaviors.
- Building a cross-cultural fiduciary community requires intentional effort to bridge cultural differences in trust expectations.

The module also examines the **intricate interplay of roles and relationships between trustor and trustee** throughout the trust-building process. Key insights include:

- **Trust is not one-way.** The leader begins as the trustee (the one being trusted by team members), but as the leader demonstrates trustworthiness, the leader also becomes a trustor (extending trust to team members).
- **Roles are reciprocal and dynamic.** When a leader trusts a team member, that team member is more likely to trust the leader in return, creating a virtuous cycle.

Module Two: Understanding Antecedents of Trust

Module Overview

This module introduces in detail Mayer et al.'s (1995) "Integrated Model of Organizational Trust" to equip Chinese managers and executives with knowledge of the concept and antecedents of trustworthiness, which comprise three factors: **Ability, Benevolence, and Integrity**. In addition to presenting this theoretical framework, the module shares key findings from this research project on how Chinese global leaders have actually practiced trust-building with their global team members across these three domains. At the present in detail the modified trust-building model of this project.

Module Objective

By the end of this module, participants will be able to:

1. Understand the three antecedents of trustworthiness—Ability, Benevolence, and Integrity—as defined by Mayer et al. (1995).
2. Apply the research findings on how Chinese global leaders have successfully practiced trust-building in each domain.
3. Develop a global mindset as the foundational ability for all global leadership behaviors.
4. Demonstrate respect for diverse backgrounds, customs, and religions as a core benevolence practice.

5. Show sincerity and responsibility as essential integrity practices for earning trust from global team members.
6. Avoid common impediments to trust-building identified in this research, such as rigidity, lack of cultural knowledge, and failure to adapt.

Module Two Content

Part One: Concept of The Three Antecedents of Trustworthiness

Before examining each factor in detail, it is useful to understand how the three antecedents work together:

Antecedent	Core Question	Definition
Ability	Can the leader do the job?	The leader's skills, competencies, and knowledge in a specific domain
Benevolence	Does the leader care about me?	The leader's genuine concern for the well-being of team members
Integrity	Is the leader honest and fair and share the same principles with me?	The leader's adherence to principles, values, and promises

Trust is most likely to develop when team members perceive their leader as high in all three dimensions. A leader who is highly capable but lacks benevolence may be seen as competent but cold. A leader who is benevolent but lacks integrity may be seen as

well-intentioned but unreliable. A leader who has integrity and benevolence but lacks ability will not be trusted to deliver results.

Part Two: Ability Factor

What Is Ability? Ability refers to the leader's knowledge, skills, and competencies relevant to their role. In a global team context, technical expertise alone is insufficient. Global leaders must possess a broader set of capabilities that enable them to navigate cultural complexity, communicate across boundaries, and adapt to diverse expectations.

Research Findings on Ability

Based on the findings of this research project, the most important capabilities for Chinese global leaders in the Ability domain are as follows:

1. Learning National Cultural Knowledge

Chinese leaders must proactively study the values, customs, communication styles, and business practices of each team member's home country. This knowledge serves multiple trust-building functions:

- **Avoiding cultural taboos**– Prevents unintentional offense that could damage trust.
- **Preventing misinterpretations**– Reduces the likelihood that actions or words will be misunderstood.

- **Demonstrating genuine respect**– Shows team members that the leader values their culture enough to learn about it.
- **Encouraging reciprocal trust** – When leaders make this effort, team members are more likely to trust in return.

2. Learning How to Adjust/shift Leadership and Communication Styles

The second most important ability is learning how to shift leadership styles to adapt to local expectations. As the GLOBE framework suggests, leadership effectiveness depends on the "fit" between a leader's behavior and the host culture's expectations. The followings are some examples of preferred leadership style in some cultures.

Cultural Context	**Preferred Leadership Style**
Japan	Detailed instructions, clear guidance, preference for structure
United States	Autonomy, independence, dislike of micromanagement
Northern Europe	Participative, consensus-oriented, egalitarian
High power-distance cultures	Directive, authoritative, clear hierarchy

Chinese leaders who fail to adapt—who remain "too rigid and inflexible" or "stick to approaches that work well in China"—are perceived as less trustworthy by global team members.

3. Developing a Global Mindset (The Most Important Ability)

In this domain, **global mindset** is the most important ability and foundation for all other global leadership behaviors, including learning national culture discussed earlier above. Based on the Global Mindset Inventory (GMI) framework discussed earlier, global mindset comprises three dimensions:

Dimension	Definition	Application for Chinese Leaders
Intellectual Capital	Knowledge of global business and cultural differences	Learning national cultures, understanding local business practices
Psychological Capital	Emotional openness, curiosity, and resilience	Being comfortable with ambiguity, stepping outside comfort zones
Social Capital	Relational skills and behavioral flexibility	Adapting communication styles, building authentic cross-cultural relationships

Global mindset enables Chinese leaders to learn national cultures, adapt leadership styles, communicate appropriately with key global stakeholders, and demonstrate authenticity in their trust-building efforts. Thus, equipping Chinese managers and executives with a global mindset is one of the key objectives of this module.

In the modified model of this project, the ability factor has been modified to include knowledge on definition of trust, global mindset and adjust leadership and communication style.

Impediments to Avoid in the Ability Domain

Based on the research findings, the following behaviors impede trust-building in the ability factor:

- Lack of local cultural knowledge
- Treating global team members, the same as Chinese staff at home
- Being unwilling to adapt leadership styles
- Failing to demonstrate professional behavior (e.g., poor manners, demanding after-hours work without agreement)

Part Three: Benevolence Factor

What Is Benevolence? Benevolence refers to the leader's genuine concern for the well-being of team members. It answers the question: *"Does the leader care about me as a person, not just as a worker? "*Benevolence is demonstrated through actions that show kindness, consideration, and a willingness to help beyond what is strictly required by the role.

The following is Research Findings of this Research on Benevolence

Based on the research findings, the most important practices for Chinese global leaders in the Benevolence domain are as follows:

1. Showing Respect for People from Different Backgrounds and Diversity

The most important practice in the Benevolence domain is **showing respect for people from different backgrounds**, including their cultural customs and religious practices. Respect signals genuine care and creates psychological safety within the team.

Examples of demonstrating respect include:

Action	Why It Builds Trust
Celebrating local festivals together	Shows willingness to participate in team members' cultural traditions
Accommodating religious observances	Demonstrates respect for deeply held personal beliefs
Acknowledging differing opinions without dismissal	Creates psychological safety for open communication
Listening actively to concerns	Signals that team members' voices matter

Note on Respect as an Antecedent: Showing respect is not explicitly included as benevolence in Mayer et al.'s (1995) original model. Some research, such as Tan et al. (2024), identifies "respect" as a separate antecedent of trust. However, in the cross-cultural context of this study, showing respect for diversity is conceptualized as a form of benevolence.

2. Providing Personal Development and Care for Team Members

The second key practice is **providing personal development and Care for team members**. Supporting personal and professional growth demonstrates that the leader genuinely cares about team members' well-being and future, not merely their immediate output, also provide personal care for their personal challenge as needed.

This includes:

- **Coaching** – Providing guidance and feedback to help team members improve
- **Mentoring** – Sharing knowledge and experience to support career development

- **Creating opportunities for career advancement** – Actively helping team members grow

3. Ensuring Organizational Justice

Although not a direct behavioral practice, organizational justice is an important contextual factor in benevolence. Leaders must ensure that:

- Salaries are competitive and equitable
- Decision-making processes are fair and transparent
- Local community polices and sustainability strategy are properly implemented
- Outcomes are distributed fairly based on contribution

Fairness is also identified by the GLOBE project as a universally desirable leadership attribute.

Impediments to Avoid in the Benevolence Domain

- Failing to show respect for local customs and religious practices
- Treating all team members identically without cultural sensitivity
- Showing favoritism toward in-group members (e.g., Chinese team members)
- Neglecting team members' personal development needs

Part Four: Integrity Factor

What Is Integrity? Integrity refers to the leader's adherence to principles, values, and promises. It answers the question: *"Is the leader honest, fair, and reliable?"* Integrity

is demonstrated through consistency between words and actions, keeping promises, and acting ethically even when no one is watching.

The Following is Research Findings on Integrity

Based on the research findings and modification, the most important practices for Chinese global leaders in the Integrity domain are as follows:

1. Seek Principles Congruence

Chinese managers and executives must first **follow the values and systems that are locally cherished**. This means:

- Understanding and aligning with the ethical standards of the host country
- Complying with local legal frameworks and professional norms
- Avoiding the imposition of Chinese practices where they conflict with local expectations

This is not about abandoning Chinese values but about demonstrating integrity by respecting the legitimate expectations of the local context, it is about to find common ground and commonality to build mutual understanding and trust.

2. Showing 真诚 (Sincerity + Honesty)

Chinese term 真诚 (Sincerity + Honesty) means combination of the English concepts of sincerity and honesty which has threefold consistency: words match facts or reality;

expressed emotions match inner feelings; and the purpose of communication is not to manipulate the other party. Indeed, 真诚 is the foundation of human interaction. Chinese leaders who demonstrate 真诚 are perceived as being honest, sincere, and authentic in both words and actions.

真诚 also enables all the other trust-building factors mentioned above to function effectively. For example, cultural knowledge without 真诚 feels manipulative; respect without 真诚 feels performative; support for personal growth without 真诚 feels transactional; and adaptability without 真诚 feels opportunistic. Honesty is a universally desirable leadership attribute identified by the GLOBE project. 真诚 must be demonstrated through behaviors that allow others to feel good intentions and genuine concern. However, sincere behaviors need to be culturally appropriate. For example, "gifting" is acceptable in some cultures but may be perceived as bribery in others.

Important Note: Many interview participants also mentioned that they look for 真诚 in their team members to determine whether those members are trustworthy. Sincerity is therefore a mutual expectation, not merely a leader attribute.

3. Demonstrating 责任(Responsibility + Accountability)

Responsibility is the Chinese term 责任, which encompasses both the English concepts of "responsibility" (process) and "accountability" (outcome). This integration is significant because it removes any distinction between owning the process and owning the result.

For Chinese leaders, demonstrating responsibility means:

- Taking full ownership of tasks entrusted to them
- Accepting consequences for both success and failure
- Proactively building trust rather than expecting others to understand them first

Impediments to Avoid in the Integrity Domain

- Failing to keep promises or deliver on commitments
- Demonstrating sincerity in culturally inappropriate ways
- Avoiding responsibility or accountability for failures
- Acting in ways that contradict locally cherished values and systems

Part Five: Other Factors – Situations and Propensity to Trust

Beyond trustworthiness, two additional antecedents of trust are relevant in trust-building in global teams: **situational factors** and **propensity to trust**.

Situational factors include power dynamics and communication methods. Chinese leaders hold more formal power than their team members and must be mindful of this asymmetry. While leaders assess team members' trustworthiness through **ability** and **integrity**, team members assess leaders' trustworthiness through **benevolence**. Additionally, communication channels matter: face-to-face interaction typically builds

trust more effectively than online communication due to richer social cues and immediate feedback.

Propensity to trust varies by individual and national culture. China has one of the highest national levels of propensity to trust. Chinese leaders should therefore be aware of their team members' baseline trust tendencies at both the personal and cultural levels.

Module Three: Mapping Effective Global Leadership

Module Overview

The objective of this module is to help Chinese managers and executives better understand the moderating role of effective leadership played in the trust-building process, thus, help participants their own leadership styles by introducing the **GLOBE Project findings** and the **Chinese Paternalistic Leadership Model**. This module shares insights on what leadership attributes are universally desirable or undesirable, as well as the pros and cons of Chinese leadership styles. It also helps Chinese leaders learn how to use GLOBE Culturally Endorsed Implicit Leadership Theory (CLT) data to identify each country's preferred leadership style, enabling them to adapt their leadership behaviors to meet local expectations and drive leadership effectiveness. The result of this module provides practical guidance for Chinese leaders on how to shift and adapt their leadership styles to meet the expectations of host countries.

Module Objective

By the end of this module, participants will be able to:

1. Understand the GLOBE Project framework and its nine societal values.
2. Identify universally desirable and undesirable leadership attributes.
3. Describe China's own CLT profile and the Paternalistic Leadership model.
4. Access and interpret CLT data for any country where they lead global teams.
5. Adapt their leadership behaviors to meet the expectations of host countries while maintaining authenticity.
6. Apply these insights to build trust more effectively with global team members from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Module Three Content

Part One: Understand the History and Research Result of GLOBE Project

To familiarize Chinese managers and executives with the history and research results of the GLOBE Project. The GLOBE Project provides two major contributions relevant to Chinese global leaders:

1. **Nine Societal Values** – Cultural dimensions that describe how different societies operate
2. **Culturally Endorsed Implicit Leadership Theory (CLT)** – Leadership attributes and behaviors that are valued or rejected across cultures, learn *the leadership attributes that are universally desirable and undesirable.*

Chinese Paternalistic Leadership Model is built based on the work of Farh and Cheng (2000) and Farh et al. (2006), Chinese Paternalistic Leadership is rooted in Confucianism and emphasizes the role of discipline and authority in combination with compassion and moral integrity. Its goal is to maintain role obligations and collective harmony between leaders and followers.

Key Insight for Chinese Leaders: Paternalistic leadership is highly effective in Chinese cultural contexts but may require significant adaptation when leading global teams. The authoritarian dimension is particularly challenging in low power-distance cultures (e.g., Denmark, Israel, New Zealand), where team members expect participative decision-making and may resent authoritative directives.

Part Two: How to Use GLOBE CLT Data to Adapt Leadership Style

How to find each country's preferred leadership style? Every country participating in the GLOBE Project has a unique CLT profile—a set of scores on the six global leadership dimensions. Chinese leaders can use these profiles to understand what leadership style is most effective in a given host country.

Step-by-Step Process:

1. **Identify the host country's CLT scores** for each of the six global leadership dimensions
2. **Compare** the host country's scores with China's own CLT profile

3. **Identify gaps** where the host country's expectations differ significantly from Chinese leadership norms
4. **Adapt behaviors** to align with the host country's expectations while maintaining authenticity

Module Four: Building Trust in Organization

Module Overview

This module focuses on the role of organizational factors—particularly organizational justice and organizational culture—in the trust-building process within global teams. It begins by introducing the concept of organizational justice and its three dimensions, followed by a discussion of organizational culture and its levels based on Schein's (1992) framework. The module then presents an unexpected finding from this research: organizational values only work when leaders embody them. Finally, it examines the broader roles that organizational factors play in facilitating or impeding trust-building for Chinese leaders managing global teams.

Module Objective:

By the end of this module, participants will be able to:

1. Understand the three dimensions of organizational justice and how each builds trust.

2. Identify the three levels of organizational culture based on Schein's (1992) model.
3. Recognize the unexpected finding that organizational values only work when leaders embody them.
4. Explain why leader embodiment is essential for translating values into trust.
5. Apply practical strategies for embodying organizational values in global team contexts.

Module Four Content

Part One: Understanding the Concept of Organizational Justice and Culture

1.1 Organizational Justice

Organizational justice refers to employees' perceptions of fairness within an organization. It is a critical organizational factor that influences trust in leadership. When team members perceive that they are treated fairly, they are more likely to trust their leaders and commit to organizational goals.

Three Dimensions of Organizational Justice

Dimension	**Definition**	**Key Question**
Distributive Justice	Fairness of outcomes or resource allocation	"Is the outcome I received fair given my contribution?"

Dimension	Definition	Key Question
Procedural Justice	Fairness of the processes used to determine outcomes	"Were the decision-making processes fair and transparent?"
Interactional Justice	Fairness of interpersonal treatment during decision-making	"Was I treated with respect and dignity?"

Organizational Just ice and Trust

Research has consistently shown that organizational justice is a strong predictor of trust in leadership:

- **Distributive justice** builds trust by demonstrating that leaders value equitable outcomes.
- **Procedural justice** builds trust by showing that decisions are made consistently and without bias.
- **Interactional justice** builds trust through respectful, dignified treatment.

As one interviewed leader in this research remarked:

"Organizational policies, benefits, compensation, and other related matters must be clearly established in advance, and we must make sure they are fair."

Fairness is also identified by the GLOBE project as a **universally desirable leadership attribute**, meaning it facilitates trust across all cultures.

1.2 Organizational Culture

Defining Organizational Culture

Organizational culture refers to the shared values, beliefs, assumptions, and norms that shape how members of an organization think, feel, and behave. It is often described as "the way we do things around here."

Schein's Three Levels of Organizational Culture

Based on Edgar Schein's (1992) influential model, organizational culture operates at three levels of depth:

Level	Description	Examples
Artifacts	Visible, tangible expressions of culture	Office layout, dress code, rituals, stories, jargon
Espoused Values	Stated strategies, goals, and philosophies	Mission statements, value posters, CEO speeches
Basic Underlying Assumptions	Unconscious, taken-for-granted beliefs	Beliefs about human nature, relationships, reality

Key Insight for Leaders: The deepest level—basic underlying assumptions—is the most powerful driver of behavior but also the hardest to change. Leaders who only address artifacts and espoused values without engaging underlying assumptions will find their culture initiatives ineffective.

How Organizational Culture Supports Trust

When effectively implemented, organizational culture and values can enhance trust-building in several ways:

Mechanism	How It Builds Trust
Provides behavioral guidance	Clear values tell team members what is expected, reducing uncertainty
Creates predictability	Consistent application of values makes leader behavior predictable
Signals commitment	Values like "integrity" and "respect" signal commitment to ethical behavior
Facilitates psychological safety	Values like "inclusion" create safe environments for speaking up

Part Two: The Unexpected Finding of This Research

2.1. The Finding: Values Only Work When Leaders Embody Them

Based on the findings of this research, approximately **half of the interviewed leaders** stated that corporate culture and values do **not** positively affect their ability to earn trust from global team members. Instead, they emphasized that it is their **own behaviors** that have a positive impact on trust-building.

As one interviewed leader who had served in a global pharmaceutical company remarked:

"This is a yes-and-no question. Earlier in my career, I might have answered yes, but now I would say no. Because I only remember those values as they were demonstrated in the behaviors of the leaders I recall."

2.2. Why Leader Embodiment Is Essential

Organizational values are abstract concepts. They have no power until they are translated into concrete, observable behaviors. Leaders are the primary translators of organizational values because:

Reason	Explanation
Leaders are role models	Team members look to leaders to understand what behaviors are rewarded and punished
Leaders control consequences	Leaders decide who is promoted, recognized, or sanctioned
Leaders interpret values	Leaders determine what a value like "integrity" means in specific situations
Leaders are visible	Leader behavior is more observable than policies or mission statements

2.3. The Consequences of Leader-Value Gaps

When leaders fail to embody organizational values, the consequences are severe:

Leader Behavior	Team Member Perception	Trust Impact
Preach values but violate them	Hypocrisy	Severe trust damage

Leader Behavior	Team Member Perception	Trust Impact
Ignore values	Values are irrelevant	Trust remains neutral or declines
Selectively enforce values	Unfairness	Trust erodes, especially among out-group members
Cannot recall stated values	Values are meaningless	Trust diminishes; cynicism increases

2.4. The Chinese Context: Alignment with Confucian Role-Modeling

This finding aligns well with traditional Chinese expectations of leadership. Confucian philosophy emphasizes **role-modeling** and **moral example** as the foundation of effective governance.

Thus, requiring Chinese leaders to embody organizational values is not a foreign imposition but rather an extension of deeply held cultural expectations. The difference is that in a global team, the audience is culturally diverse, and the values being embodied are organizational rather than purely personal or familial.

Part Three: The Roles of Organizational Factors in Trust-Building Process

3.1 Organizational Justice as an Enabler of Trust

Organizational justice plays a direct role in facilitating trust between Chinese leaders and their global team members.

Justice Dimension	How It Facilitates Trust	Practical Application
Distributive	Team members trust that rewards match contributions	Ensure compensation is competitive and equitable
Procedural	Team members trust that decisions are made fairly	Establish clear, transparent decision-making processes
Interactional	Team members trust that they will be treated with dignity	Communicate respectfully, especially during difficult decisions

3.2. Organizational Culture as a Moderating Factor

Organizational culture does not directly build trust. Instead, it plays a **moderating role**: it shapes the context within which leader behaviors are interpreted and evaluated.

3.3 When Organizational Factors Become Impediments

Organizational factors can also impede trust-building when:

Impediment	Explanation
Unfair systems	Perceived injustice undermines trust regardless of leader behavior
Values that are not embodied	Hypocritical organizations breed cynicism
Culture that conflicts with local norms	Organizational culture that contradicts host country expectations create friction
Lack of psychological safety	Teams were speaking up is punished cannot develop trust

3.4. Based on the research findings, Chinese leaders should:

Recommendation	Action
Embody organizational values	Internalize, demonstrate, and hold others accountable to values
Ensure fair systems	Establish transparent processes for rewards, promotions, and decisions
Align culture with local expectations	Understand host country cultural norms and adapt organizational practices accordingly
Build psychological safety	Create environments where team members feel safe speaking up
Model values consistently	Demonstrate values through daily behavior, not just in official communications

Module Five: Access Team Members' Trust Level to Leader in Global Team

Module Overview

This module provides Chinese managers and executives with practical strategies and actionable insights to assess team members' trust level in their leaders within global teams. Based on the findings of this research, using company engagement surveys and conducting conversations with skip-level staff or team members are the most effective measures for assessing team members' trust in their leaders. A clear understanding of

team members' trust in their leaders is essential for creating an effective 'virtuous circle of trust.

Understanding team members' trust level to leaders will help better create "virtuous circle of trust".

By the end of this module, Chinese leaders will be equipped with practical tools to diagnose trust levels, identify trust gaps, and take corrective action to strengthen trust with their global team members,

Module Objectives

1. By the end of this module, participants will be able to:

    1. Understand the Importance of Assessing Trust
    2. Apply Two Primary Assessment Methods
    3. Diagnose Trust Gaps and Take Corrective Action
    4. Maintaining the "virtuous circle of trust"

Module Five Content

Part One: Why Assess Trust?

Trust is not a static state; it is dynamic and can fluctuate based on leadership behaviors, team interactions, and organizational changes. Regular assessment of trust levels is essential because:

Reason	Explanation
Trust is invisible	Leaders cannot assume team members trust them just because there is no open conflict
Trust varies by individual	Different team members may have different levels of trust in the same leader
Trust erodes silently	Trust can decline gradually without obvious warning signs
Trust enables performance	Without trust, team members withhold effort, avoid risk-taking, and disengage
Trust requires maintenance	Like any relationship, trust must be actively maintained and repaired when damaged

Key Insight: Chinese leaders who proactively assess trust demonstrate **benevolence** (they care enough to check) and **integrity** (they are willing to hear honest feedback).

Part Two: Two Most Effective Assessment Methods – Research Findings

Based on the findings of this research, the following two methods are the most effective for assessing team members' trust in their leaders within global teams.

Method 1: Company Engagement Surveys

Engagement surveys, when properly designed, can include specific questions that measure trust in leadership. Some companies have already created engagement surveys to assess employees' trust levels toward their leaders. For companies that do not yet have an engagement survey, they can create one to initiate the assessment process. The following questions and practice can serve as a starting point:

Example Trust-Related Survey Questions:

Question	Trust Dimension Assessed
"My leader acts with integrity."	Integrity
"My leader genuinely cares about my well-being."	Benevolence
"My leader has the competence to lead our team effectively."	Ability
"I trust my leader to make fair decisions."	Integrity + Benevolence

Best Practices for Using Engagement Surveys:

Practice	Why It Matters
Ensure anonymity	Team members are more honest when responses cannot be traced back to them
Include both quantitative and qualitative questions	Numbers show trends; comments provide context
Share results transparently	Demonstrates respect and commitment to improvement
Act on feedback	Trust erodes further if team members see no action taken

Method 2: Skip-level Conversations

Skip-level conversations are one-on-one meetings between a leader and team members who are two or more levels below them (not their direct reports). For Chinese leaders who lead global teams, the recommended practice is to invite their own supervisors to have conversations with their team members. This helps assess how much team

members trust their leaders. The following practice and guidelines can serve as a starting point:

Why Skip-Level Conversations Are Effective:

Reason	Explanation
Reduces fear of retaliation	Team members are less afraid to be honest with their leader's boss
Bypasses filtering	Direct reports sometimes filter or soften bad news; skip-level conversations go directly to the source
Shows genuine care	Leaders who invest time in skip-level conversations demonstrate benevolence
Provides unfiltered insights	Frontline team members often have the clearest view of trust issues

Guidelines for Effective Skip-Level Conversations:

Guideline	Description
Explain the purpose	Be transparent: "I'm here to learn how I can better support you and the team."
Ensure psychological safety	Assure team members that honest feedback will not lead to negative consequences
Listen more than you speak	Aim for 80% listening, 20% speaking
Ask open-ended questions	Avoid yes/no questions; ask "What could I do differently to support you?"
Do not defend yourself	When hearing criticism, thank the team member rather than explaining or justifying
Follow up	Share what you heard and what actions you will take

Sample Skip-Level Conversation Questions:

- *"On a scale of 1 to 10, how much do you trust the leadership of this team?"*
- *"What could I or other leaders do to build more trust with you and your colleagues?"*
- *"Is there anything that is currently making you hesitant to speak up or share your ideas?"*
- *"What is one thing we should stop, start, or continue doing to improve trust with your leader?"*

Module Six: Combining Trust and Psychological Safety to Build High-Performance Global Team

Module Overview:

This module synthesizes all content covered in the previous five modules and integrates the concept of **psychological safety** as a critical complement to trust. While previous modules focused on building Chinese leaders' perceived trustworthiness through ability, benevolence, and integrity, this module introduces psychological safety as the team-level climate that enables trust to flourish. By combining trust and psychological safety, Chinese leaders can create the conditions for high-performance global teams—where team members not only trust their leader but also feel safe to take interpersonal risks, speak up, admit mistakes, and collaborate effectively across cultural boundaries. Based on the result of Google Aristotle project psychological safety is **the essential foundation that enables all other aspects of high performance in teams,** plus, Edmondson (1999) emphasizes that **psychological safety is foundational for trust in teams**. Trust both at the individual and team level is one of the strongest known antecedents to psychological safety (Frazier et al. 2017). The mutual trust between team leaders and team members in global teams will cultivates high-quality relationships—

characterized by shared goals, shared knowledge, and mutual respect, all key components of trust—foster psychological safety. In return, psychological safety reciprocates by reinforcing trust, thus creating a self-enforcing trust-psychological safety virtuous circle. As a result, the global team becomes increasingly high-trust and high-performing.

Module Objective

Upon completion of this module, Chinese managers and executives who are leading or preparing to lead global teams will be able to:

1. Review and integrate all trust-building attributes and behaviors covered in previous modules (Ability, Benevolence, Integrity, GLOBE insights, corporate values embodiment, trust assessment).
2. Understand the concept of psychological safety and its benefits for global team performance.
3. Distinguish clearly between trust (interpersonal, leader-focused) and psychological safety (team climate, risk-taking focused).
4. Explain why both trust and psychological safety are necessary—but neither alone is sufficient—for high-performance global teams.
5. Learn and apply practical strategies to create psychological safety in culturally diverse global teams.

Module Content

Part One: Review of Previous Trust-Building Content

Before introducing psychological safety, this module briefly reviews the key trust-building attributes and behaviors covered in Modules One through Five:

Module	Key Content
Module One	Definition of trust (Mayer et al., 1995); trust as a holistic, relational, reciprocal process; fiduciary community.
Module Two	Three antecedents of trustworthiness: Ability, Benevolence, Integrity; research findings on each
Module Three	GLOBE Project insights; universally desirable/undesirable attributes; culturally contingent leadership; adapting to host country expectations.
Module Four	Implement organizational justice in both personal and organizational level, Embodying corporate values; organizational culture and trust.
Module Five	Assessing team members' trust level via skip-level conversations and engagement surveys.

Key Takeaway from Review: Trust is built through deliberate, culturally sensitive behaviors across Ability, Benevolence, and Integrity. Even though, being trustworthy is the universal requirement for CEO effectiveness (House et al. 2014), based on the result of Google's **Project Aristotle** research proved that how a team interacts matters far more than who is on it—and psychological safety is the essential foundation that enables all other aspects of high performance in teams.

Part Two: What Is Psychological Safety and Why it Matters?

Psychological safety is defined as:

"A shared belief that the team is safe for interpersonal risk-taking." – Amy Edmondson

In a psychologically safe environment, team members feel that they can:

Behavior	Description
Speak up	Share ideas, concerns, or questions without fear of embarrassment
Admit mistakes	Acknowledge errors openly without fear of punishment
Ask for help	Seek assistance when needed without appearing incompetent
Challenge ideas	Disagree respectfully with colleagues or leaders
Offer feedback	Provide constructive criticism without fear of retaliation

The Origin of Google’s Project Aristotle

Google's **Project Aristotle**, led by Julia Rozovsky, studied hundreds of Google teams to identify what makes teams effective. After analyzing dozens of variables—team composition, leadership styles, personality types, communication patterns—the research found that **psychological safety** was the single most important factor distinguishing high-performing teams from low-performing teams, it is the essential foundation that enables all other aspects of high performance in team. The project's name was a tribute to Aristotle's quote: *"The whole is greater than the sum of its parts."*

Key Insight: Who is on the team matters less than how the team works together. Psychological safety enables team members to bring their full selves to work and contribute without fear. For Chinese leaders, learning how to lead a global team is

essential and critical since China is high on *In-Group Collectivism dimension of GLOBE Societal valves.*

Why Psychological Safety Matters

Benefit of Psychological Safety	**Explanation**
More idea sharing	Team members contribute diverse perspectives without fear
Fewer errors	Mistakes are openly discussed and learned from
Higher learning	Team members ask questions and seek help when needed
Better decision-making	Diverse views are heard before decisions are made
Greater innovation	Team members propose novel ideas without fear of ridicule

Part Three: Trust vs. Psychological Safety – A Critical Distinction

Key Differences Between Trust and Psychological Safety

Dimension	**Trust**	**Psychological Safety**
Focus	Interpersonal (person to person)	Team climate (shared environment)
Direction	Specific (I trust you)	General (the team feels safe)
Risk type	Relying on another's character/actions	Taking interpersonal risks (speaking up)
Vulnerability	Willingness to be vulnerable	Willingness to appear ignorant or wrong
Reciprocity	Often reciprocal (I trust you, you trust me)	Collective (shared perception among team members)

Can Psychological Safety Exist Without Trust?

Yes. Consider this example:

A team member may feel **psychologically safe** to speak up and challenge a decision because the team norms encourage open debate. However, they may not yet **trust** the leader personally because the leader is new, has not yet demonstrated integrity, or has not built a track record of keeping promises.

Conversely, a team member may **trust** their leader deeply but still feel **psychologically unsafe** to speak up if the broader team culture punishes dissent or if they fear how other team members might react.

Psychological safety will moderate the relationship between the antecedents to trust and trust in leadership. Psychological safety can make trust-building easier. When team members feel safe to speak up, share ideas, and make mistakes without fear of being punished, trust in their leader grows more quickly.

In a psychologically safe environment, the positive effects of a leader's ability, benevolence, and integrity are even stronger. Team members are more willing to trust a leader who shows these qualities when they also feel safe.

Additionally, when a leader is missing some trust-building qualities, psychological safety can help make up for that gap. If team members feel safe, they may still trust a leader even if the leader is not perfect in every way.

Part Four: Practical Strategies to Build Psychological Safety in Global Teams

Based on research and best practices, the following strategies are effective for building psychological safety in culturally diverse global teams.

Strategy 1: Leader Modeling of Vulnerability

Action	**Example**
Admit your own mistakes publicly	"I made an error in that report. Here's what I learned."
Ask for help when you don't have answers	"I don't know the answer to that. Can someone help?"
Acknowledge uncertainty	"This is a complex situation. I'm not certain, but here's my thinking."

Why it works: When leaders model vulnerability, they signal that taking interpersonal risks is safe and acceptable.

Strategy 2: Set Clear Team Norms for Interaction

Norm	**Example**
No blame for honest mistakes	"We learn from failures; we don't punish them."
Respectful disagreement is expected	"We want to hear different perspectives before deciding."
Everyone speaks; everyone listens	"In meetings, we use round-robin to hear from everyone."

Why it works: Clear norms reduce uncertainty about what behaviors are acceptable, especially important in cross-cultural teams.

Strategy 3: Use Structured Meeting Formats

Format	Purpose
Round-robin check-ins	Ensure every team member speaks at least once
"What went wrong?" debriefs	Normalize discussing failures as learning opportunities
Pre-mortem exercises	Before a project, ask: "What could fail? Let's discuss openly."
Anonymous input tools	Allow team members to share concerns without identifying themselves

Why it works: Structured formats lower the social risk of speaking up, especially for team members from high power-distance cultures.

Strategy 4: Framing Work as Learning, Not Performing

Framing	Instead of...	Say...
Mistakes are learning	"That was a failure."	"What can we learn from this?"
Questions are welcome	"You should know this."	"Great question. Let's explore it together."
Uncertainty is normal	"You should be certain."	"This is ambiguous; let's figure it out as a team."

Why it works: When the goal is learning rather than flawless performance, team members feel safer taking risks.

Strategy 5: Actively Invite Input from Quiet Voices

Action	Example
Call on quieter team members	"Wu Bin, what are your thoughts on this?"
Acknowledge cultural differences in communication	"I know in some cultures speaking up feels uncomfortable. Your perspective matters to me."
Use written channels for input	"Please share your thoughts in the chat or via email if you prefer."

Why it works: In many cultures (including Chinese), speaking up unprompted may feel disrespectful. Active invitation lowers that barrier.

Strategy 6: Respond Gratefully to Feedback

Action	Instead of...	Say...
When receiving criticism	Getting defensive or explaining	"Thank you for telling me. I appreciate your honesty."
When someone admits a mistake	Punishing or criticizing	"Thank you for raising this. How can we fix it together?"
When someone asks a question	Dismissing or ridiculing	"That's a good question. Let me think about it."

Why it works: Team members constantly test whether it is safe to speak up. A leader's response to feedback—positive or negative—teaches the team what is safe.

Some Strategies for Chinese Leaders to Implement Psychological Safety

Typical Chinese Leadership Norms	Recommended Adaptation for Global Teams
Hierarchy discourages junior members from speaking up	Actively invite input from all team members regardless of rank

Typical Chinese Leadership Norms	Recommended Adaptation for Global Teams
Saving face may prevent admitting mistakes	Model vulnerability by admitting your own mistakes
Harmony may be prioritized over honest disagreement	Distinguish between respectful disagreement and destructive conflict
Leader is expected to have all answers	Encourage team members to bring problems and solutions

9. Limitation

This research investigates what Chinese leaders do to facilitate or impede their perceived trustworthiness from members of global teams. However, the study was only able to conduct interviews with the Chinese leaders themselves. If the study had also included the perspectives of the Chinese leaders' direct reports—or even their supervisors—the findings would have been more thorough, complete, and powerful. This limitation presents an opportunity for both the author and other researchers to conduct follow-up studies in the future.

Appendix 1. Interviewee's Background Sheet

Pseudonym	Gender	Company Background and Industry	Position	Education Background	Country(ies) Worked and lived	Years of Leading Global Team	Languages Spoken
KJ	M	A Chinese paper manufacturer with over 2000 employees	General Manager	Masters	United States	3 years	Chinese and English
ML	F	A Top US Pharmaceutical company	Head of HR	US MBA	Japan, US and Singapore, Philipines	8 years	Chinese and English
YW	F	A Large US Insurance Company	Head of HR Asia	T-bird	US, China (Hong Kong), Brazil,	5 Years	Chinse and English
SZ	M	Government Agency of Switzerland	Head of China	French MBA	Switzerland and France	12 years	Chinese, English and French
DZ	M	A Large European Pharmaceutical Co.	CFO Asia	T-bird	US, China Hong Kong	15 years	Chinese and English
WXF	M	a large Chinese Telecom Co.	Direct of Sales	B.A	Nigeria, Kenya, Philippine, Laos	17 years	Chinese English
LFZ	M	A Large SOE High Speed Train manufacturer	Area Head of Latin Americas	Masters	Iran, Israel, Saudi Arabia, Dubai, Columbia, Brazil	20 years	Chinse and English
LH	M	One of largest SOEs of Diesel Engine Co.	President of International Operations	MIT Ph.D.	US, Italy, Mexico, Germany, France	16 years	Chinese and English
SJQ	M	One of largest Real Estate Services Co.	President of International Operations	T-bird	US, Japan, Singapore	15 years	Chinese and English
WCQ	M	A large French Auto part Co.	Direct of Research	Masters	France, Germany, Italy, Portugual	12 years	Chinese and English
QL	M	A top Chinese financial co.	Director of HR	Masters	Britain	6 years	Chinese and English
WYX	M	A large Swiss auto part co.	Head of Asia	T-bird	US, Switzerland	17 years	Chinese, English and German
MZ	M	A Sweden Advertising firm	Partner	T-bird	US, Sweden, Denmark	15 years	Chinese, English and Swedish
GW	M	A Chinese Auto parts firm with sales over 15B RMB	Director of operations	Masters in Germany	Germany, Poland, Nederland, Belgien	10 years	Chinese, German and English
VL	F	A Top Chinese Technology Co.,	HR Director for Europe	DBA in Hong Kong	Spain, and Canada	8 years	Chinese, English and Spanish
LZ	M	A top Chinese SOE mining firm	GM of a subsidiary in Africa	Masters	Kenya, Zambia, Congo	12 years	Chinese and English
CL	F	A top Chinese SOE mining firm	Deputy Director of commutation	Masters	Congo, Ethiopia	3 years	Chinese and English
XSZ	M	A top Chinese SOE high speed train firm	Reginal Head	Masters	Australia, Saudi, Bolivia, Serbia, US	18 years	Chinese and English
XSD	M	A top Chinese SOE Power Equipment co.	Deputy GM of Middle East subsidiary	Masters	Saudi, Iran, Egypt	9 years	Chinese and English
MJW	M	A mid size green technology co.	Founder	T-bird	US, Thailand	21 years	Chinese and English

Appendix 2. Interview Questions

Interview Questions

Section One: Background Information

A: Demography of Global Team

1. Describe your current global team structure, including geographic distribution, cultural backgrounds, and reporting lines, number of team, how many are Chinese and non-Chinese from what country
2. How long have you been leading the team?

B: Information about the Leader/Interviewee

3. Years of experience leading Chinese team and global team
4. Years of serving the organization
5. Do you speak another foreign language? How many countries have you traveled to?

C: Information about The Organization that the Team Leader Serves

6. What industry is it in? how big is it size? how many countries it has operations?

Section Two: Meaning of Trust

7. What does "trust" mean to you in the context of leading a global team? How do you know when trust exists?
8. In your opinion, what consists of trustworthiness?
9. How does trust mean in Chinese culture?
10. Based on your experience, how do your non-Chinese colleagues or team member define trust?
11. In your experience, how important is it for a global team to have trust in their leader? And why?

Section Three: Antecedents of Trust in Global Team Leaders

A: General Questions

12. What specific behaviors or practices have you found most effective in establishing trust with team members from different cultural backgrounds?
13. Are there any differences between leading a Chinese team and a global team in term of building trust?
14. Can you share an example when you successfully built trust with a non-Chinese team member or subgroup? What specifically contributed to this success?

B: Specific questions: Leadership attributes' impact of level of trust in the leader

15. How important is it for a leader to know about another country's history, culture and social system?
16. How important is it for you to change your communication styles and leadership styles to build trust across different cultural contexts? And why?
17. In your experience and opinion, how important do you think it is for a global team leader to show caring and concern for team members?
18. In building trust with your team members, how important do you think for a global team leader to pay attention to needs of your team members in term of development and support? How do you address those needs?
19. How important is it to be consistent in your actions and words to build trust with your team?
20. Have you encountered situations where cultural differences specifically hindered trust development? What were the key factors?
21. What behaviors or practice have you used that won't work in building trust with your foreign team members?
22. What aspects of your Chinese leadership background or style have been misinterpreted or created challenges in building trust with global team members?
23. How do you assess the level of trust within your global team?

Section Four: Chinese Leadership Style

24. In your opinion, what is the typical Chinese leadership style?
25. Does Chinese leadership style work well in other cultures? Why?
26. Normally how do you shift your style in building trust with other Cultures?

Section Four: Trust in Organization

27. Do you agree that your company has very high level of trust throughout this organization.
28. In your company, subordinates have a great deal of trust in managers.
29. Do you agree that someone in your company makes a promise, others within the organization will almost always trust that the person will do his or her best to keep the promise.
30. Do you agree that managers in your company trust their subordinates to make good decisions.

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