Investigating the Links of Interpersonal Trust in Telecom Companies in Poland

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Abstract: The purpose of this paper is to examine if there are links between interpersonal trust and competences, relations and cooperation in Polish telecom companies. It examines what factors affect trust in coworkers and managers in sustainable organizations. The paper surveys a sample of 175 employees of telecom companies in Poland by means of a questionnaire. The results indicate that the competences, relations and cooperation are related to interpersonal trust. Regression analysis showed that the competences and relations predict a significant variance in trust amongst coworkers. Additionally, cooperation contributes to prediction of trust in managers. Given the importance of trust in sustainable organizations, a better comprehension of what factors are related to team confidence provides valuable information for stakeholders. The results provide valuable clues how to improve interpersonal trust in sustainable organizations.

Keywords: interpersonal trust; sustainable organizations; competences; relations; cooperation

1. Introduction

The contemporary company, which aspires to be a sustainable organisation in the long term, should not only make sure it gains profits out of its activity, but also to carry out the sustainable development strategy and to be socially responsible. The sustainable activity of organisations arises from the needs and expectations of the outside environment, as well as of the internal stakeholders. However, it is above all the result of the accurate management and involvement of all staff and managers. Research demonstrates that companies do not adopt sustainability strategies out of public relations motives, but that the adoption of such strategy reflects “substantive changes in business processes” [1,2]. Sustainability is a concept in management of the organisation of the future, because it facilitates flexibility in adapting companies to the constantly changing environmental conditions and it even helps them operate in the times of crisis and chaos.

Sustainability is considered to be a crucial challenge for organisations seeking competitive advantage, but also for organisations facing other kinds of problems such as, for example, talent retention. 70% perceive sustainability as a key element in their management programmes [5]. The organisations which include in their strategy the practices and activities in line with the sustainability idea are called sustainable enterprises [1,4,6]. What distinguishes a sustainable enterprise is, among others, the fact that its dominating capital is a social capital based on good relationships and cooperation between the enterprise and its external and internal environment, including its employees. Building social capital is based principally on trust and thus it is emphasized that trust is one of the main components of sustainable enterprises [7].

Trust is one of the crucial conditions of sustainable management [8]. Many scholars allude to the fact that organizational trust is a crucial element of successful cooperation [9-11]. Organizational trust impacts various areas of management: communication [12], negotiation [13], and leadership [18]. Subsequently, it is an important factor supporting organization functioning. Understanding how trust works in organization is an essential challenge in contemporary economy.
The acknowledged trust model that illustrates the factors affecting trust consists of three basic elements: ability, benevolence and integrity [19]. It has been empirically confirmed that indeed those factors have an impact on trust development [20]. However, most of the studies have been focused mainly on analyzing trust between subordinates and managers [21-24]. It has been noticed that there is not enough studies assessing the trust between co-workers [93]. Therefore, in this study, we want to verify the trust condition both among employees and between employees and leaders. We want to establish what factors affects trust, using the following independent variables: competences, relations and cooperation. The primary goal of this study is to understand which of these factors are related to trust. The research mentioned in this paper aims to verify whether there are links between competences, relation, cooperation with trust. More specifically, we decided to examine whether the higher levels of competences, relation or cooperation are associated with higher level of trust. Thus, we want to provide a guidance on how to improve factors that are related to high trust. Additionally, we want to encourage the development of specific business practices that helps to maintain sustainable organization.

This paper is organized as follows. First we analyse the theoretical background and present the literature on sustainability, trust, and relation of trust and competences, relation and cooperation. Secondly, we outline the mythology used in this study to verify research problems, followed by results. Finally, we discuss the conclusion and practical implication from this research.

2. Research context

The telecom services sector is among the fastest developing sectors in the modern economy. It is a sector of high technologies with high innovation and considerable investments. Productivity and profitability in the telecom companies are often significantly above the average in the non-financial business economy. Turnover and value added in telecom services steadily increase, in spite of lower tariffs and communication pricing [105]. The telecom services market encompasses both wireless and wireline services. These services are one of the most profitable segments in the IT industry. In 2015 global telecom services produced approximately 1.1 trillion euros in revenues. The great significance and potential in this industry was recorded in Europe, where in 2015 it produced around ¼ of total revenue [104]. The research was conducted in a group of telecom companies providing telecommunication activity in Poland. In Poland the telecommunications sector turnover amounted to approximately 10 billion euros in 2014 [105]. The statistics show that on average in the OECD countries in 2011 people working in the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) sector represented 3,7% of business sector employment [106]. In Poland in 2014 the telecommunications sector employed 48.794 people [107].

Poland has been developing dynamically in recent years. According to Eurostat data the average real GDP growth in Poland in the years 2006-2016 was 3,5% per annum, whereas the average real GDP growth in EU/28 was 0,7% [108]. In 2016 the total value of the telecommunications market in Poland amounted to PLN 39.47 billion zlotys [109] . Percentage of the ICT sector in GDP in Poland in 2015 was 3,14% (including ICT services 2.88% and ICT manufacturing 0,27%) [www6]. The telecommunications services market is developing very rapidly due to the fact that companies are constantly improving the quality of their networks and thus offer better services.

Materials and Methods should be described with sufficient details to allow others to replicate and build on published results. Please note that publication of your manuscript implicates that you must make all materials, data, computer code, and protocols associated with the publication available to readers. Please disclose at the submission stage any restrictions on the availability of materials or information. New methods and protocols should be described in detail while well-established methods can be briefly described and appropriately cited.

Research manuscripts reporting large datasets that are deposited in a publicly available database should specify where the data have been deposited and provide the relevant accession numbers. If the accession numbers have not yet been obtained at the time of submission, please state that they will be provided during review. They must be provided prior to publication.
Interventionary studies involving animals or humans, and other studies require ethical approval. The practice of human resources management help to build sustainable organizations as a community of people, which with time develop structures and behaviours and discover ways in which an entrepreneur becomes a sustainable employer [26].

The concept of sustainability consists in applying the rules of sustainable development and a constructive combining of resources, aims and strategic factors which are indispensable for the existence and development of organizations [27,28]. It should be emphasised that it is the organization itself which determines and identifies the common areas (denominators) in the economic, social and environmental questions, [29], which it wants to achieve. However, it may seem that an effective management of the social responsibility of a company is impossible because of the difficulty in combining varied and sometimes discrepant aims of functioning in an effective development strategy [30].

Organizational sustainability is a ring which encircles (joins) the economic, societal and environmental goals of an organization [31]. Sustainable organisations are capable of surviving and, at the same time, satisfying a triple bottom line of economic, environmental and human performance [32]. This is because sustainable development ensures simultaneous benefits in all these three fields. Much research demonstrates that sustainable enterprises achieve in the long term better results than other companies [1, 2, 33] What makes it possible is the construction of a so-called sustainable business model which maintains equilibrium between the stakeholders’ and shareholders’ interests. At the same time, the enterprise implements management rules based on value and societal responsibility [34].

Organizations which operate in accordance with the sustainability model may be described with the following distinctive features:

- knowledge and trust considered as dominating forms of capital [35],
- focus on teamwork and constant learning [35],
- promotion of a proactive role of organisations in controlling the impact of business on the natural environment, social environment and human resources [36],
- taking into account social relationships (external and internal) in the activities aimed at ensuring long-term organisational effectiveness.

As can be seen from the above, what is emphasised is the significance of human capital as an essential factor necessary to meet the sustainable targets of an organisation [5]. Highlighted is human development as the basis for a sustainable development of companies [38]. Building sustainable organisations is based on focusing on employees’ skills, competences, motivations and behaviour [39]. The practices of human resources management help to build sustainable organizations as a community of people, which with time develop structures and behaviours and discover ways in which an entrepreneur becomes a sustainable employer [40].

Viewing a person in the light of the sustainability concept seems to combine contemporary approaches based on the human behaviour patterns. Namely, it is a combination of: knowledge, particular skills, particular talents and attitudes adopted in the workplace and in the process of work [35].

The concept of sustainability is connected with corporate social responsibility. CSR is defined as voluntary actions and commitment aimed at achieving positive social and environmental changes [41]. CSR’s activities attempt to meet the needs of different groups of stakeholders. The concept of
CSR is strongly focused on dialogue and cooperation between an enterprise and its stakeholders [42]. Sustainable organisation should thoughtfully shape its relationships with all the stakeholders in order to achieve long-lasting results; conduct business in compliance with their expectations; dutifully meet the commitments and use transparent business practices [43]. The CSR projects result from a strategic thinking through which companies endeavor to transform threats into opportunities [44]. An example of such threats is the turnover of key employees who have knowledge and skills that are essential for the enterprise to operate.

For that reason high sustainability organisations focus on non-financial tools for building employees’ commitment and motivation [103 p. 23]; while trust and cooperation are crucial for building social capital in these organisations [45].

3.1. Definition of trust

Sustainable organization is based on trust [46]. Moreover, trust is a significant element responsible for achieving competitive advantage [92]. General definition of trust refers to the reciprocal assumption made by an individual in regard of other party action and its consequences [47]. Trust can be understood as a positive attitude that guides behaviour, which is based on person’s attitude concerning cooperative relationship. It refers to confidence in positive consequences of the action of other parties [48]. Organizational trust means obtaining positive expectations towards organization [24].

There are various scientific approaches categorizing trust. The classification by Shapiro, Sheppard, and Cheraskins [49] organized business trust into three categories: deterrence-based trust, knowledge-based trust, and identification-based trust. The analysis conducted on this model argues that this is a hierarchical concept of developing trust: one level of trust can occur/ surface only once the prior one is completed [111]. Another approach was presented by McAllister [50] who introduced two kinds of trust: cognition related and affect-based. This concept states that the cognition-based trust depends on competency and reliability of the other side. The affect-related trust is established on the interpersonal relationship. Additionally, Stranes, Truhon and McCarthy [51] list three form of organizational trust:

- Interorganizational trust – which refers to trust between two organizations;
- Intraorganizational trust – it describes trust between subordinates and managers or workers and organization;
- Interpersonal trust – it concerns trust within relations and interconnections in teams.

Furthermore, Ting [91] distinguishes two types of interpersonal trust within organizations: towards managers and towards fellow employees. This can lead to a conclusion that there are two different aspects of interpersonal organizational trust. The first one refers to whether a subordinate trusts their supervisor. The second one focuses on trust relations between coworkers [52]. Summarizing, interpersonal trust consists out of two dimensions: trust towards managers and trust towards fellow employees. This paper aims to explore both types of interpersonal trust in the business environment.

Additionally, Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman [19] focused on behavioral aspects of trust. In their research they emphasized the factors determining a trust development: competences, benevolence and integrity. According to this model trustworthiness depends on: competence- which concerns the skills and abilities of the other person; benevolence –which reflects the relations and attachment between two sides of the trust process [19,pp. 718]; integrity – is related to behavioural consistency [19,pp. 719]. Understanding the conditions that can impact organizational trust provides information on how to improve organizational effectiveness.

The research framework in this study, based on the previous findings in literature, emphasizes the two aspects of interpersonal trust in organizations: rational trust based on competences of other parties and the relation-oriented one, which focuses on the bonds between involved persons. Rational aspects of trust will be analyzed through competences and self-efficacy, and relation elements of trust will be examined through relations and cooperation. We will study both horizontal (between coworkers) and vertical (between supervisor and subordinate) trust relations. The research problem
focuses on the links between interpersonal trust and competences, relations and cooperation. It has been described in Figure 1.

![Conceptual model](image)

**Figure 1. Conceptual model**

For the purpose of this research trust is defined as a positive expectation toward other party’s actions and behaviors towards an individual. We will examine trust as a phenomenon that affects organizational process. The study will focus on interpersonal aspects of trust in organizations in the hope of providing suggestions for facilitating trust in sustainable organizations.

### 3.2. Competences

Generally competency is understood as a predisposition based on one’s knowledge, abilities and attitudes [90]. There are a number of definitions of competences in literature. The first group refers to visible employee’s performance or behaviour [53; 102, 54, 55]. The second group describes competency as a standard or quality indicator [101]. The third group understands this term as an individual’s characteristic [94]. Summarizing, the meaning of competency depends on the research approach.

For the purpose of this study, competency is used as an indicator of reliability in trust building relations. We adopt the view that competency is understood as an ability or knowledge that helps to deal with work related tasks.

There are numerous ways of assessing competences depending on their application [56]. Since competences understood as a work-related ability can be successfully measured using quantitative methods [57], we adapt this approach in our study.

Furthermore, many scholars identified ability or competency as a significant factor that influences organizational trust [19, 22, 58, 48, 96]. Consequently, rational-based trust is established on the reasoning that the other party will be able to fulfill his/her obligations. Subsequently, competency provides information that guides trust-related behaviors. Competency serves as a cognitive display of other persons trustworthiness [22]. Hence, the hypothesis states:

H1: Competency perception is positively related to the interpersonal trust.

### 3.3. Relation and trust

Focusing on the relationship aspect of trust, Colquitt, and Rodell state [59] that relationships among employees are an important trust enhancing element. Furthermore, Tan and Lim [60] implied that benevolence is related with trust rather than ability. The emotional bonds among employees create a platform for trust development [58]. It has been confirmed that emotional aspects of trust are associated with emotions [112]. Therefore, to examine this assumption the second hypothesis has been formulated:
H2: The strength of a relationship is positively related to the interpersonal trust.

3.4. Cooperation and trust

It has been acknowledged that cooperation is associated with trust (99, 100, 14). Cooperative conditions of trust lead to an increase in team confidence [61]. The two-way relation between trust and cooperation has been confirmed [62]. In the context of interpersonal trust, cooperation is perceived as a condition determining trustworthiness. Kanter [63] acknowledged that cooperation is the cornerstone for building team confidence. Moreover, she recognized that cooperation creates a network of connections which helps to establish trust-relationships. Hence, the importance of cooperation in the trust developing model. We assume that high level of cooperation is associated with high level of organizational trust. Thus, the third hypothesis reflects this aspect of trust condition:

H3: The degree of successful cooperation is positively related to the interpersonal trust.

Additionally, the formulated hypothesis will be verified both in the vertical and horizontal relations in organization. Usually those are independent patterns of connections. Therefore, this study examines the links between trust in co-workers and trust in managers. Consequently, we hypothesized the following:

H1a: Competency perception is positively related to the interpersonal trust between co-workers.
H1b: Competency perception is positively related to the interpersonal trust in managers.
H2a: The strength of relationship is positively related to the interpersonal trust between co-workers.
H2b: The strength of relationship is positively related to the interpersonal trust in managers.
H3a: The degree of successful cooperation is positively related to the interpersonal trust between co-workers.
H3b: The degree of successful cooperation is positively related to the interpersonal trust in managers.

4. Method

4.1. Sampling

The empirical research applied in this study was used to analyse the association between trust (dependent variable) and competences, relations and cooperation (independent variables). Data were collected via questionnaire among employees of telecom companies (n=175). The register of telecommunication companies operating in Poland developed by the Office of Electronic Communications was used as a framing sample (it includes all organizations providing telecommunications activity in Poland, which are obliged to register under the Telecommunications Act, 2004). Choosing business enterprises (llc, stock offering companies) we established the research population, and consequently got the research sample n=175. The questionnaire has been distributed via e-mails (108 questionnaires) and in person by author (67 questioners). The respondents’ confidentiality has been assured. The basic introduction to the research topic has been offered in the headline of the survey. Data were entered and coded using Excel.

There were 34.86% (61) women and 65.14%(114) men in the sample. 84%(147) persons declared they were members of Telecom organizations, 13,14% (23) IT and 2,86% (5) from others. The number of the companies respondents questioned varied; enterprises with 251 and more employees - 77,14% (135), 13,14% (23) organizations where 51-250 persons were employees and 7,43% (13) with 11 to 50 persons employed. More than a half of respondents had over 10 years professional experience 60% (105), 22,86% (40) 1 to 5 years, 13,71% (24) between 6 to 10 years and 3,43% (6) less than a year. The following employees’ positions has been represented: director 5,14% (9), manager 18,29% (32), specialist 67,43% (118), expert 3,43% (6), analyst 1,71% (3), assistant 0,57% (1) and 3,43% (6) were
qualified as others. 67.43% (118) of respondents had a Master’s degree, 17.71% (31) Bachelor’s degree, Engineer’s degree 11.43% (20), 1.14% (2) got high school diploma, while 2.29% (4) questionnaires were left blank.

4.2. Measures

There were 4 items in this questionnaire: trust, competences, relations, cooperation. Each item consists of statements that were based on indicators. All items in the questionnaire were rated on a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 „strongly disagree”, 5 „strongly agree”). Likert scale is the appropriate tool to measure the trust within an organization [65-67, 98]. The respondents were asked to refer to the team they currently work with when answering questions. The Cronbach’s alpha for items in this measure was: trust 0.76, competences 0.87, relations 0.84, cooperation 0.94. The indicators have been operationalized according to the conceptualization presented in table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Theoretical background</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal Trust</td>
<td>Trusting Supervisor</td>
<td>Ermisch, Gambetta, Laurie, Siedler, Uhrig, 2009; Oh, Park, 2011; Wu, Lin, Hsu, Yeh, 2009;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trusting Coworkers</td>
<td>Moye, Henkin, 2006; Rotter, 1967</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competences</td>
<td>Team Competences</td>
<td>Margerison, 2001; Meyer, Brüning, Nyhuis, 2015; Waters, Sourfe, 1983; Knoll, Gill, 2010; Robotham, Jubb, 1996;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relations</td>
<td>Team Relations</td>
<td>Wiese, Botha, van Heerden 2015; Tierney, 1999; Forret, Love, 2008; Hornsey, Hogg, 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperation</td>
<td>Team Cooperation</td>
<td>Nonose, Kanno, Furuta 2014; Sun, Qi, 2004;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Team Cohesion</td>
<td>Grossman, Rosch, Mazer, Salas, 2015; Knott, Geyer, Sidman, Wiese, 2011; 2007 Team Cohesion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. Results

Trust among respondents has been generally high. However, the average trust in coworkers (M=4.04) was higher than the average trust towards managers (M=3.69). Whereas the average generalized trust (M=3.96) was lower average trust declared to fellow employees, but higher than the average trust towards managers. Table X provides the percentage of responses to questions relating to interpersonal trust. The generalized trust was used as an indicator for a person’s individual attitude towards others and helps to estimate the results. 65% of respondents trust coworkers (24% „strongly agree” and 40% “rather agrees”). Only 3,43% (disagree 2,86% and strongly disagree 0,57%) disagree with the statements relating to trusting coworkers. This indicates that trust in fellow employees is very high (higher than generalized trust). In comparison 12% declared that they don’t trust their leader (3,43% rather disagree and 8,57% strongly disagree with the statement referring to trusting the leader).
Table 2. Interpersonal trust

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Profile of responses</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trust coworkers</td>
<td>4,04</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust leader</td>
<td>3,70</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generalized trust</td>
<td>3,96</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: 5 - Strongly Agree, 4 - Rather Agree, 3 - Neither agree nor disagree, 2 - Rather disagree, 1 - Strongly disagree

Source: own elaboration

In conclusion, it illustrates that in the research sample there is a high level of trust among employees. It also implies the greater distrust (four times more) towards managers than towards peer employees.

Verification of hypotheses

Both H1a and H1b were strongly supported. Their moderate positive correlation between trust in co-workers and level of team’s competences evaluation (r=0.438, p=0.000) and trust in manager and competences (r=0.298, p=0.000) was found. The result of correlation analysis is presented in Table 3. It implies that the competences are related positively to the organizational interpersonal trust.

Table 3. Intercorrelation matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Competences</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Cooperation</td>
<td>.800*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Relations</td>
<td>.720*</td>
<td>.730*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Generalized trust</td>
<td>0,107</td>
<td>0,084</td>
<td>0,094</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Trust to co-workers</td>
<td>.468*</td>
<td>.535*</td>
<td>.499*</td>
<td>.425*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Trust to manager</td>
<td>.431*</td>
<td>.480*</td>
<td>.389*</td>
<td>.185*</td>
<td>.624*</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: * p<0.05; ** p<0.01

Source: own elaboration

To further explore these relations the one-way ANOVA analysis was conducted. To examine the links between trust in co-workers and competences level, the three groups of trust in co-workers have been distinguished: low trust level (M=3,21, SD=1,07), medium trust level (M=4,12, SD=0,73), and high trust level (M=4,5, SD=0,55). There was a significant difference in mean competences evaluation (F(2,172)=24,91, p<0.001) between the different levels of trust. Those with low level of trust in peers have the lowest average level of trust. Those with the highest level of trust were characterized by the highest competences assessment level. Post hoc t-test comparisons using the Bonferroni correction, with adjusted alpha ((α-adjusted=.05/3) 0,016) per test) confirmed that there were statistically significant differences in competences between low trust group (M=3,21, SD=1,07) and high trust group (M=4,5, SD=0,55), t(37)=-5,88, p=0.000. The verification describes statistically significant differences between competences in medium and high trust groups (t(99)=3,38,p=0,000), as well as low and medium (t(34)=4,25,p=0,000). Hence, this supports the H1a hypothesis.

To analyze whether there were statistically important differences in relations between competences and trust in manager, the one-way ANOVA analysis was conducted on three groups:
low trust (M=3.78, SD=0.98), medium trust (M=4.11, SD=0.78), and high trust (M=4.48, SD=0.57). There
was a significant effect of competences on trust in manager (F(2,172)=7.96, p<0.001). Further post hoc
test using altered alpha value (0.016), confirmed that the significant differences between low trust
(M=3.78, SD=0.98), and high trust group (M=4.48, SD=0.57) in mean competences (t(90)=4.36,
p<0.001). These results indicate that competences level affects trust in manager in organization. In
consequence, it supports the H1b hypothesis.

There was a positive correlation between trust in co-workers and relationship (r=0.499, p<0.000).
Additionally, emotional bonds were positively correlated to trusting fellow employees (r=0.419,
p<0.000). These results demonstrate the links between relations and interpersonal trust in co-workers.
The one-way ANOVA analysis indicates that there is a significant difference between trust in co-
workers depending on relations (F(2,172)=23.174, p<0.001). Post hoc t-test with Bonferroni correction
(t_{altered}=0.05/3) 0.016, back up this result (t(41)=-6.15, p<0.000) The high trust group (M=4.35, SD=0.65)
was characterized by higher level of average relation in comparison to low trust group (M=2.96,
SD=0.2). The relationship varied among low and medium trust groups as well (t(37)=-4.59, p=0.000)
and medium and high (t(98)=2.93, p=0.002). It provides further support for H2a hypothesis.

The correlation between trusting manager and relationship (r=0.389, p<0.000) vouches that the
confidence in a manager is connected to the relationship in the organization. Additional one-way
ANOVA analysis suggested significant difference between trust in managers and average relations
(F(2,172)=8.11, p<0.001). It has been confirmed by the series of post hoc t-tests (t_{altered}=0.05/3) 0.016,
t(89)=-3.87, p<0.001, since relations were significantly different in low trust (M=3.54, SD=1.14) and
hightrust (M=4.30, SD=0.72) groups. Moreover, relations were different for low and medium (M=4,
SD=0.79) groups. It supports the H2b hypothesis.

There was moderate significant correlation between cooperation and trust in co-workers
(r=0.486, p=0.000) and group cohesion (r=0.535, p=0.000). The one-way ANOVA variance analysis
indicated that cooperation is significantly different for low, medium and high trust groups (F(2,172)
=21.398, p<0.001). The series of post hoc t-test with Bonferroni correction and adjusted alpha,
emphasizes that cooperation was much more positively evaluated in a group, which was
characterized by high trust between co-workers (M=4.26, SD=0.79) than in low trust group (M=2.82,
SD=1.21) t(42)=-5.51, p<0.001. Cooperation was a significant factor that distinguishes trust in fellow
employees between low and medium (M=3.88, SD=0.88) groups (t(37)=-3.61, p<0.001), as well as
medium and high (t(89)=3.45, p<0.001). Statistically important was the difference between average
cooperation and low and medium trust (t(37)=-3.61, p=0.000). By illustrating the positive links between
cooperation and trust in peers, this calculation supports H3a hypothesis.

The H3b hypothesis was also confirmed. The moderate significant correlation was discovered
between trusting the manager and cooperation (r=0.431, p=0.000). Moreover, the cohesion was also
correlated to trusting supervisor (r=0.480 p=0.000). Further examination of this relation was conducted
using one-way ANOVA analysis. The test (F(2,172)=10.65, p<0.001) established that average
cooperation is different in low, medium and high trust groups. Those who trust manager the least
(M=3.37, SD=1.15) were characterized by the lowest level of cooperation. In contrast, those trusting
their supervisor the most (M=4.30, SD=0.76) have the highest cooperation scores. Further series of
post hoc t-tests with adjusted alpha value (0.0167) revealed that high and low level of trust in manager
was statistically connected to cooperation (t(87)=-4.61, p<0.001). Similarly, cooperation levels
significantly differ in medium and low trust groups (t(68)=2.32, p=0.011). Average cooperation varies
in low and medium trust groups (t(105)=3.01, p=.001). This provided further support for H3b
hypothesis.

The generalized trust, used as an indicator of an average individual trust level was not
significantly correlated to any variable.

In pursuance of establishing the determinants of interpersonal trust the linear multiplied
Regression analysis was conducted. In H1a, H2a, H3a we proposed that trust in coworkers is
predicted by competences, relations and trust. Findings from statistical analysis suggest that combined competences, relation and cooperation account for statistically significant proportion of variance in trust in co-workers $F(3,171)=25.62851$, $p<0.001$ and accounted for 31 per cent of the variance in trust in co-workers with adj. $R^2$ of 0.31. The Beta weight for cooperation was not statistically significant ($\beta=0.151$, $t=1.558159$, $p=0.12$). This indicates that only competences ($\beta=0.215$, $t=2.785$, $p=0.005$) and relations ($\beta=0.287$, $t=3.119$, $p=0.005$) contributed to the variance in trusting co-workers.

A multiply linear regression was calculated to examine the relations between competences, relations and cooperation and trust in managers. Results from analysis indicate that together those factors explain 20 per cent of the variance in trust in managers ($F(3,171)=14.655$, $p<0.001$) with adj. $R^2=0.204$. The cooperation was the only component that predict the trust in managers ($\beta=0.295$, $t=2.820$, $p=0.005$).

6. Discussion

The research hypotheses were formulated to show that interpersonal trust is partly connected by two main factors. The first condition involves a cognitive process of rationally analyzing second agent trustworthiness based on his/her abilities. The second factor refers to an emotional perception of the state of the relationship between co-workers based on relations and cooperation in teams. In our research, both cognitive and emotional aspects of interpersonal trust were examined to provide understanding of the specific patterns that are associated with an increased level of organizational trust.

The verification of H1a hypothesis has implications for the importance of strengthening the cognitive aspect of interpersonal trust. Competences are correlated with trust in fellow employees. These findings align with [22, 58]. However, our results are focused on a specific sector. The presented study analyzes the telecoms sector and helps to examine its unique characteristics. The telecom employees trust towards their co-workers is associated with the team’s competences. Similarly, the examination of H1b hypothesis points to the fact that the recognition of competences affects trust in managers. This corresponds with the literature on trust antecedents [23]. The further analysis indicates that perception of abilities is an important factor related to trust. This is a significant finding, which emphasizes the role of competences in organizational confidence.

H2a hypothesis suggests that emotional conditions related to trust play an important role in building trustworthiness. The analyses provide an insight illustrating that those employees who have good interpersonal relations and emotional bonds have a higher level of trust. Furthermore, our research supports previous studies indicating the connection between trust and interpersonal relations [58].

Additionally, emotional aspect of trusting the supervisor is also confirmed (H2b). It is in alignment with earlier findings [21]. The main contribution of this study indicates that the interpersonal relationship is strongly connected with organizational trust. Furthermore, the increased positive interaction will facilitate interpersonal trust.

The examination of H3 hypothesis provides support for links between cooperation and trust. Cooperation is correlated with organizational confidence. This corresponds with both theoretical assumptions [88] and practical studies [83, 97]. It demonstrates the importance of good cooperative patterns that are enhancing organizational trust. The interpersonal trust relationship model is illustrated in Figure 2.
Overall, the study confirmed results of McAllister [50] who recognized cognitive and affective fundamentals of trust. Our findings support that in order to strengthen organizational confidence both ability and competences as well as relations and cooperation should be improved. According to these results, the organizational practices that facilitate trust should emphasize both cognitive and emotional aspects of trustworthiness. Developing competences, creating opportunities for interaction and improving cooperation are core elements of organizational interpersonal trust.

More precisely, our study assessed what factors determine interpersonal trust in organizations. Consistent with our hypotheses, we found that trust in co-workers is related to competences and relations. However, cooperation was not a significant predictor of trust in fellow peers in organizations and additionally building work-related ability and skills help to improve the interpersonal trust between co-workers. On the contrary, in order to build trust in managers, one should stress the need for successful cooperation which determines the trust in supervisors. Thus, it seems that it is important for employees to demonstrate proficiency to be considered trustworthy. Furthermore, positive group interaction leads to improved group trust. The managers should focus on maintaining successful cooperation to build own credibility. The core components for building organizational confidence are competence, relations (for co-workers) and cooperation (for managers).

Practical implications from our study indicate the significance of cognitive and affective factors in trust building. One of the most important conclusions of this study is that it provides evidence of the importance of creating trust-enhancing organizations by improving employees’ competences and additionally providing space for binding activities that will nurture interpersonal relations. Employees’ trust is associated with ability and relationship. Hence by providing adequate support (such as training and integration opportunities) one is able to improve interpersonal trust in organizations.

In conclusion, our findings implicate that interpersonal trust in sustainable organizations is associated with cognitive and affective factors. Since trust is a core element of sustainable development [89], implementation of practices that enhance team confidence improves the way organizations function. Additionally, understanding various aspects influencing interpersonal trust in sustainable organizations helps to reinforce the development of organizational trust. There are two basic strategies that can help to improve trust: firstly, strengthening competences and abilities; secondly, building mutual relationships and improving cooperation. According to our results, it is especially important to develop and subsequently maintain positive trust-oriented bonds between
employees and managers. Sustainable management includes encouraging confidence and improving
the quality of social aspects of work by strengthening trust. Our study provides a guidance, which
specifies core aspects of establishing interpersonal trust in sustainable organizations.
Further research could be conducted in different countries to provide cross-cultural
comparisons. Moreover, future analysis can explore more aspects of interpersonal trust. Furthermore,
the analysis only considers three conditions related to trust. Further exploration of additional
elements affecting interpersonal trust is required. Even though we acknowledge some limitation of
this research, we support our claim that competences, relations and cooperation affect interpersonal
trust.

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