

THE IMPACT OF ORGANIZATIONAL TRUST ON JOB SATISFACTION

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Purpose: Organizational trust is a fundamental construct upon which both interpersonal and business relationships are based. It is an essential element of running a business, closely linked to the management of social capital, which is the foundation of a company's operations. It is worth emphasizing the importance of employee satisfaction, which can significantly contribute to an organization's success. Therefore, the main goal of this article is to determine whether vertical trust can influence perceived satisfaction in the workplace.

Design/methodology/approach: The results presented in this article come from quantitative research. A total of 153 respondents participated in the survey. The research was conducted in Poland in early 2025 using electronic surveys. Statistical analysis was performed using descriptive statistics and correlation indicators.

Findings: Overall, organizational trust and job satisfaction are moderately positively related (0.456). All correlations were statistically significant at $p < 0.001$. The higher the level of confidence, the higher the job satisfaction. Of the examined component variables of organizational trust (OT), fair employee evaluation (0.469) and trust in the decisions made by their leaders (0.424) have the most significant impact on overall job satisfaction.

Research limitations/implications: Small research sample (153 people) uses only a few component variables of organizational trust and satisfaction. This area may be a potential field for continuing research.

Practical implications: The results of the conducted research can be used by management to build lasting relationships based on trust, which can translate into employee satisfaction and, consequently, into the success of the entire organization.

Originality/value: Previous research has demonstrated a relationship between trust levels and job satisfaction. This study expands on this relationship by analyzing the impact of individual components of organizational trust on job satisfaction.

Keywords: organizational trust, intra-organizational relations, job satisfaction.

Category of the paper: research paper.

1. Introduction

Social capital, which is the key to a prosperous enterprise, is increasingly becoming the subject of research. Therefore, the effective operation of the entity is influenced by human resources management. Trust is the basic factor building the entire organization, as it is on it that its functioning is based, and satisfied employees are the basis for the effective operation of the organization. Organizational trust has a significant impact on the achievement of the intended effects and results of a given organization (Schwabe, 2023; Lewicka et al., 2023). Job satisfaction can affect the proactivity or innovativeness of employees, which translates into the overall development of the organization (Biesok Wyród-Wróbel, 2018). So far, organizational trust or job satisfaction have been considered many times by scientists. However, there is a certain research gap in the literature on the subject – there is a lack of in-depth analyses of the relationship between these two variables. In addition, this topic is of a dynamic nature, and the relationship between trust and job satisfaction changes both over time and under the influence of many factors, hence the need for successive research on this phenomenon. It is also worth emphasizing generational changes, which may indicate a constant need to analyze this relationship, which may be especially important for managers, company owners during e.g. employee recruitment, or in order to create an effective, coherent organization. Therefore, the following research question should be asked: can vertical trust affect job satisfaction? The aim of the article will be to determine and assess the relationship between organizational trust, mainly of a vertical nature, and employee satisfaction. Thanks to trust, employees can show greater openness, boldness to point out ambiguities, problems, or admit mistakes. Therefore, vertical trust can contribute to faster and more effective conflict resolution and closer ties between employees and superiors. At the same time, greater cooperation can translate into the effectiveness of the organization's operations and building its competitive advantage, which can also affect the perceived satisfaction with the work performed. Taking into account the above aspects, the following research hypothesis should be put forward: H1: Vertical trust has a positive effect on the sense of job satisfaction. In order to verify the hypothesis, a quantitative study (electronic surveys) was carried out and descriptive statistics were used, as well as the Tau-Kendall correlation coefficient.

This article expands scientific knowledge on job satisfaction as well as organizational trust, and in particular vertical trust. In addition, the results achieved can provide guidance for management to build relationships based on trust.

2. Literature review

2.1. The role of trust in human resource management

In general, trust can be defined as a complex relationship in which the trustor consents to be vulnerable in the hopes that the trustee will be advantageous to them (Andersson, 2024). Organizational trust is defined as the positive expectations that people have regarding the intentions and behaviors of members of the organization based on their roles, relationships, experiences, and interdependencies within the organization. Trust is considered to be the result of interactions among people, which contributes to work performance in the workplace (Kidron, Vinarski-Peretz, 2025). Organizational trust is also viewed as essential for a healthy, satisfied, and engaged workforce (Guzzo et al., 2021). To achieve a competitive advantage, companies are currently striving to enhance the trust of their employees and customers (Ahteela, Vanhala, 2018). Consequently, building a trust mechanism has become a primary goal for the company (Dahiya, 2023).

According to many researchers dealing with the aspect of trust, it is emphasized that it significantly impacts effective and efficient human resources management in an organization (Paliszkiwicz, 2013). Researchers Shockley-Zalabak and Fraihat emphasize that organizational trust affects the more straightforward implementation of innovative projects and the introduction of changes. When there is organizational trust in the company, the team can observe excellent communication and collaboration, which leads to achieving desired results. On the other hand, the lack of organizational trust causes resistance, reluctance to change, and reluctance to perform tasks. Fear of expressing one's ideas, lack of creativity, or withholding information is common (Bani et al., 2024). Trust is crucial in managing an organization. It makes it easier to achieve your goals. This is essential in teamwork, and its absence can lead to dissatisfaction, communication difficulties, or a frequent desire to change jobs (Tomaszuk, Wsiluk, 2023).

A link between organizational trust and employee action is indicated. A team with high trust performs the assigned tasks with greater commitment, which brings satisfactory results in the strategic management of the unit (Lewicka et al., 2023). It also impacts building a competitive advantage, a kind of social capital that is the foundation of running a business (Okręglicka, Lemańska-Majdzik, 2024). The determinants of organizational trust include: honesty, competence, predictability, and credibility (Schwabe, 2023). An important role in trust is the ability to trust another person (Maicki, 2016). Organizational trust can be understood through three critical dimensions: the ability, benevolence, and integrity of managers/owners. The ability-based trust dimension focuses on the belief in the other party's abilities, skills, and characteristics. The benevolence-based trust dimension is rooted in the notion that the trusted person has good intentions and acts selflessly. Finally, integrity-based trust revolves

around the principles and values that the trustor upholds, indicating that they can rely on the actions and words of the other person (Hameli, Aktaş, 2024).

It is worth noting that organizational trust (OT) can be considered in terms of the management staff's skills, kindness, and impeccable attitude. Through the prism of skills, it is understood as faith in another person, in their qualifications and professional competencies. Kindness, on the other hand, indicates having good intentions. On the other hand, the impeccable attitude of the management suggests the maintenance of sound principles and values (Hameli, Aktaş, 2024).

Effective running of an organization should be based on trust, which must be constantly maintained and developed in order not to lose it (Stelmaszczyk, 2010). The level of trust also reduces the costs associated with hiring employees, because trusted employees do not need to be checked often, and errors occur less frequently when performing their work (Gyórfy, 2018). Therefore, trust in human resources management undoubtedly plays a key role.

People who are integral to the organization may trust their managers but not their co-workers. Hence, vertical trust (between the supervisor and the employee) and horizontal trust (between employees in a similar professional situation) are distinguished (Kmieciak, 2021).

It is indicated that vertical trust is crucial, i.e., trust between the employee and the supervisor (Lewicka, 2013). The literature suggests that greater efficiency and work productivity are observed in a high-quality relationship between the employee and the supervisor. It is also emphasized that employees who trust their supervisors are more willing to accept introduced changes or be influenced by team leaders. In addition, in an organization with trust at the vertical level, employees are more proactive, take their own initiative more often, and introduce positive value to the organization (Guinot, Chiva, 2019). Vertical trust is crucial for satisfying the need for self-fulfillment, which is at the top of Maslow's pyramid. Namely, when an employee feels motivated to act and the relations between them and their superior are positive, their sense of value and perceived satisfaction increase, directly impacting the quality of work performed and professional fulfillment (Hampton, 2019).

2.2. The role of leaders in enhancing job satisfaction

Satisfaction is a key variable in employees' overall perception of the workplace (Cao et al., 2025). It is a positive feeling resulting from the nature of the work performed and the assessment of its conditions. (Indrayani et al., 2024). The concept of satisfaction can also be defined as the difference between the employee's expectations and what they actually experience in the workplace (Białas, Litwin, 2013). Satisfaction comprises many factors, including opportunities for development, career advancement, well-being, and motivation (Duarte et al., 2024).

Effective communication and openness throughout the organization are essential, especially during change. This is where leaders play a significant role and should greatly support employees. It is emphasized that positive relationships between leaders and employees result

in greater commitment to their work and general openness among employees (Robinson et al., 2004). Trust in one's superior can affect the productivity and effectiveness of the entire organization (Özdemir et al., 2024).

Team and organization leaders should have the appropriate skills, which include: listening, delegating tasks, mentoring, coaching, effective conflict resolution, building a sense of belonging, and unity with the enterprise. A leader should have the skills to strengthen bonds, constantly creating and maintaining trust (Turaga, 2013). Additionally, the features that a leader should have are primarily: creativity, knowledge, experience, the ability to learn quickly, good communication, and building positive relationships. A supervisor should inspire others (Gadomska-Lila, 2017). This person should also be open to diversity and empathy, which will help build employee trust (Rzepka, Bańkowski, 2024). It is also emphasized that the supervisor's role is to provide a friendly atmosphere, opportunities for development, and rapid resolution of conflicts so that they do not have the chance to create a threat to relationships in the organization (Głowienka, 2021). Business management staff who cannot inspire trust may have difficulty running and developing the organization (Rudzewicz, 2016). Having a vision and clearly defined goals for the organization is essential for success. However, the people who carry out these tasks determine the enterprise's success. Therefore, superiors must focus primarily on building the best possible mutual relations and bonds with employees.

It is the role of leaders that is crucial in building job satisfaction. Employees who feel appreciated and supported are more motivated to work. Regular conversations, discussing the results of tasks performed, indicate interest, which increases the sense of belonging, and can also translate into understanding the needs of both the supervisor and the employee (Bartkowiak, 2011). Leaders play a key role in shaping the overall organizational culture, translating the company's values and mission into specific actions that define employees' everyday experiences. Their attitude and decisions directly impact the commitment, openness of the team, and work efficiency. The role of leaders is crucial here because they are the people who create organizations and their actions. The work performed translates into the organization's success, achieving the intended goals and profits (Kruk, 2024).

2.3. The influence of trust in superiors on job satisfaction

Trust is a critical element of the functioning of an organization, as it affects interpersonal relationships, cooperation in general, and the results achieved by a given unit. (Haridas et al., 2022). Many studies indicate the relationship between trust in the workplace, increased employee productivity, reduced willingness to change jobs, and higher satisfaction with the duties performed (Zak, 2017). Trust refers to the employee's perception of their relationship with the work environment, the organization, and people. This image evolves through accumulated experiences and interactions in a given organization (Dirks, Ferrin, 2001). Vertical trust significantly impacts the organizational support perceived by employees and the appreciation of their work effort (Ozyilmaz et al., 2018).

Trust in superiors results in openness and good communication, which is also an element of satisfaction (Colquitt et al., 2013). A superior who inspires trust can build a workplace in which employees feel appreciated, because then they show greater job satisfaction (Yang, Mossholder, 2010). Vertical trust causes employees to tend to show greater satisfaction because they have a friendly and safe work environment. It is assumed that trust is not a mediating factor in cooperation between the superior, his support, and employee satisfaction (Gopalan et al., 2023).

Scientists increasingly consider building good relationships, referring to the "soft" areas of human resources management (Białas et al., 2021). This may be due to the changing expectations of employees and supervisors. It should be emphasized that young generations entering the labor market are more focused on work and balance, i.e., not only on work but also on private life and pursuing their hobbies. Previous studies have shown that a high level of trust in an organization positively correlates with job satisfaction. Employees who had higher trust more often declared satisfaction with their profession (Biesok et al., 2017). It should be emphasized that vertical trust plays an essential role in the employee's emotional attachment, stress reduction, and job satisfaction (Wnuk, 2020). However, it will also be beneficial to examine this phenomenon in terms of the impact of the components of vertical trust on the components of satisfaction. Expectations and approaches to work are constantly changing, so it is worth monitoring the needs of employees to manage human capital even better.

3. Methods

The results presented in this article come from quantitative research. A total of 153 respondents took part in the survey, of which 77.6% were women and 22.4% were men. In addition, 57.1% of respondents were aged 18-25, 35.1% were aged 26-45 and 7.8% were respondents aged 46-60. The survey was attended by 54.2% of people with higher education, 39.9% with secondary education and 5.9% with vocational education. The research was carried out in Poland at the beginning of 2025, using electronic surveys. The sample was randomly selected, and the respondents answered using a five-point Likert scale according to their own subjective feelings. The results obtained were verified and then subjected to statistical analysis. Taking into account the main objective of the article, i.e. to examine the impact of organizational trust (mainly vertical trust) on employee satisfaction, the following research hypothesis has been put forward:

H1: Vertical trust correlates positively with the sense of job satisfaction.

Based on the literature, questions regarding vertical trust and job satisfaction were built and placed in the questionnaire. The respondents assessed the variables studied on a 5-point scale according to their subjective feelings. The following coding of component variables was

adopted, which constitute the organizational trust variable (OT) and the job satisfaction variable (WS):

- OT1. I trust the decisions my supervisor makes.
- OT2. Supervisors evaluate employee performance fairly.
- OT3. Supervisors set a model for building positive relationships.
- OT4. Supervisors discuss the results of my work with me.
- WS1. I feel satisfied with the work I do.
- WS2. I feel appreciated.
- WS3. The company provides development opportunities.

The study used statistical analysis methods such as descriptive statistics and the Kendall's Tau correlation coefficient, which is used to describe the correlation between ordinal variables.

4. Results

The following figures present descriptive statistics for the questions asked in the survey. The first figure shows the organizational trust (OT) variable, which is the average of four component variables.

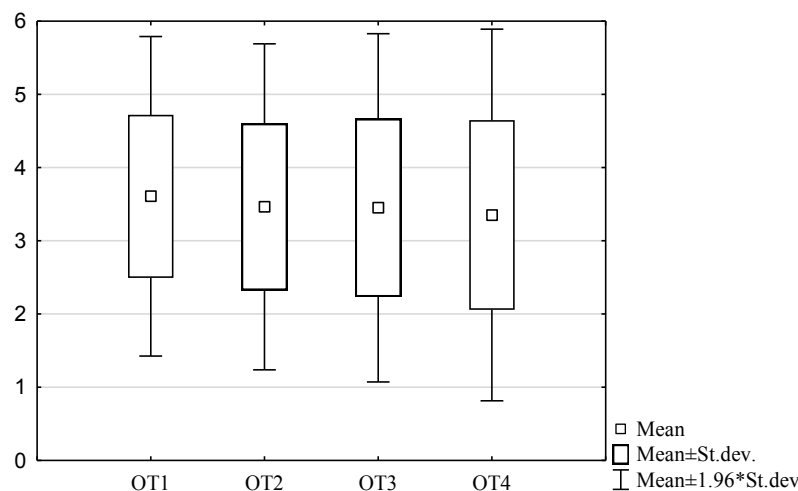


Figure 1. Box plot for the organizational trust variable.

Source: Own study based on survey results.

It can be stated that the respondents generally have a favorable opinion of their superiors. The respondents show the most significant trust in the decisions made by the leaders and declare that the leaders set a model for building positive relationships with their attitude. On the other hand, the discussion of the work results and the sense of justice in the workplace is assessed slightly worse. This may suggest that it is in these areas that the leaders should focus more on increasing employee satisfaction, which may translate into the organization's overall prosperity.

Table 1.

Descriptive statistics and Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient for the organizational trust variable

Variable	n	Mean	Median	Q1	Q3	St. dev.	Skewness	Kurtosis	Cronbach's alpha
OT1	153	3.608	4.000	3.000	4.000	1.114	-0.536	-0.424	0.921
OT2	153	3.464	4.000	3.000	4.000	1.136	-0.361	-0.560	
OT3	153	3.451	4.000	3.000	4.000	1.214	-0.432	-0.736	
OT4	153	3.353	4.000	3.000	4.000	1.295	-0.462	-0.827	
OT	153	3.469	3.750	2.750	4.250	1.071	-0.510	-0.376	

Source: Own study based on survey results.

Based on the results obtained, it can be seen that the respondents demonstrate a moderately high level of trust in their superiors. The average results of the individual indicators (from 3.353 to 3.608) on a five-point scale suggest that the assessments are close to their upper limit, indicating a positive attitude of most respondents. Medians equal to 4 confirm that at least half of the respondents assess the trust component variables as high. Negative skewness values indicate that the OT component variables are shifted towards higher assessments. However, it should be mentioned that there is a small number of extreme answers, which is indicated by the negative kurtosis value. The reliability of the research tool for the OT variable is high, which is confirmed by the Cronbach's alpha value of 0.921.

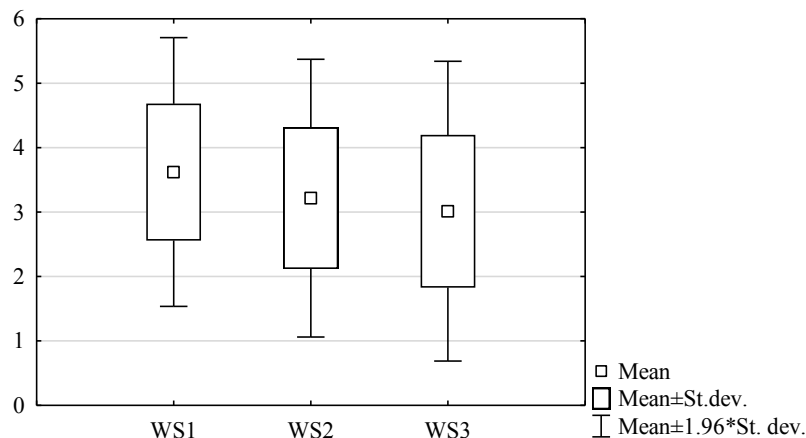


Figure 2. Box plot for the work satisfaction variable.

Source: Own study based on survey results.

It can be stated that the majority of respondents feel satisfied with their work. At the same time, respondents indicate slightly lower values regarding their superiors' appreciation of their work. The respondents also assess development opportunities in a given company as lower. Although these two component variables (WS2, WS3) are rated lower on a 5-point Likert scale, overall job satisfaction is rated relatively high (average 3.6).

Table 2.

Descriptive statistics and Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient for the work satisfaction variable

Variable	n	Mean	Median	Q1	Q3	St. dev.	Skewness	Kurtosis	Cronbach's alpha
WS1	153	3.621	4.000	3.000	4.000	1.064	-0.587	-0.229	0.818
WS2	153	3.216	3.000	2.000	4.000	1.100	-0.168	-0.646	
WS3	153	3.013	3,000	2.000	4,000	1.186	-0.121	-0.659	
WS	153	3.283	3.333	2.667	4.000	0.957	-0.327	-0.555	

Source: Own study based on survey results.

It is worth noting that the component variables are consistent and are a good measure of satisfaction, as the results are reliable (0.818 - Cronbach's alpha). The overall satisfaction index allows us to state that the respondents show moderate satisfaction with the work performed (average 3.283), and the negative skewness (-0.327) confirms that more people indicated higher than average satisfaction. However, it should be remembered that employees more often declare a lower level of feeling appreciated by leaders, and that the company does not provide them with many development opportunities.

Table 3.

Kendall's tau correlation between organizational trust and work satisfaction ($p < 0.001$)

	WS1	WS2	WS3	WS
OT1	0.403	0.481	0.270	0.424
OT2	0.412	0.557	0.304	0.469
OT3	0.359	0.452	0.299	0.401
OT4	0.340	0.430	0.329	0.397
OT	0.396	0.514	0.323	0.456

Source: Own study based on survey results.

In general, it can be stated that organizational trust and job satisfaction are positively dependent with moderate intensity (0.456). All correlations were statistically significant at the level of $p < 0.001$. The higher the level of trust, the higher the job satisfaction. Of the examined component variables of organizational trust (OT), fair evaluation of employees and trust in decisions made by their leaders are most strongly related to overall job satisfaction. It should be pointed out that building positive relationships and discussing the results of work leaders perform with employees is less correlated with overall job satisfaction. Therefore, it can be concluded that other factors may determine job satisfaction to a greater extent.

5. Discussion

According to the conducted research, people who declared a high level of trust also felt high satisfaction with their work, and people with a low level of trust declared lower job satisfaction (Biesok, 2013). Thus, even then, a certain relationship between the declared trust and the satisfaction felt was detected. It was emphasized that job satisfaction has a significant impact

on employee productivity (Budiono, 2024). In addition, it has been noted that building trust also plays a special role in shaping the dimensions of leadership (Bylok, 2025). Thus, organizational trust and job satisfaction are a frequent topic of researchers' considerations, but in the conducted research it has been expanded by examining how organizational trust affects overall job satisfaction, taking into account the variables that build organizational trust and the variable components that build overall satisfaction. The conducted research confirmed a positive relationship between organizational trust and job satisfaction. Namely, it was pointed out that the main influence on job satisfaction is exerted by a variable component of organizational trust, which is fair evaluation of employees by their leaders. On the other hand, the weakest relationship between job satisfaction was shown by the OT4 component variable concerning the discussion of work results by the supervisor. However, this variable can affect employee trust in leaders. It is also worth mentioning that when employees feel satisfied with their work, they identify more with the company's goals, put up less resistance to change, or show greater commitment, they are more loyal (Białas, Litwin, 2013). Therefore, it is undoubtedly an important area of research, which can be extended to include the OT and WS component variables, in order to better examine which factors are most interdependent and which of them have the greatest impact on job satisfaction. The research conducted (Tomaszuk, Wasiluk, 2023) also pointed out the importance of cultural differences in building organizational trust, which should be taken into account by managers in managing an international team. Namely, it should be pointed out that the conducted research may be a kind of guideline for the management in building relationships based on organizational trust, and in particular on vertical trust. At the same time, it should be emphasized that the practical application of these conclusions may be conditioned by cultural or organizational differences, so in the future it would be worth considering this aspect, as well as expanding the research, for example, by in-depth interviews with managers, or by conducting specific case study analyses.

6. Conclusion

Organizational trust is still an interesting phenomenon in human resources management. It can be pointed out that it is essential for the functioning of an entity, because all the organization's activities are based on it. Employees who show greater trust in their superiors declare satisfaction and contentment with their work. This issue is significant because a satisfied employee can show greater work efficiency. Their general feelings and emotional state can manifest in maintaining a higher quality of fulfilled duties. Therefore, this area can be a challenge for future research.

The article's main goal was achieved by examining the relationship between organizational trust and job satisfaction. The hypothesis put forward can be confirmed because organizational trust positively correlates with overall satisfaction in the workplace. The greater the trust, the greater the satisfaction with the work performed. The analyzed OT component variables indicate that justice is key in building organizational trust. It is mainly on the development of this aspect that leaders and superiors should focus to create a harmonious, trusting team. Thanks to this, the entire organization can gain a competitive advantage, because the higher the trust, the higher the satisfaction with the work performed, which in turn translates into greater efficiency, effectiveness, and quality of work among employees. It should also be emphasized that trust in the decisions made by the superior is a crucial element in building overall job satisfaction. Namely, leaders should consider them carefully so as not to disappoint employees' trust. Discussing the results of work by superiors with employees does not have a high impact on overall satisfaction with their performance. However, the research also shows that discussing the work results impacts employees' perception of the company's development opportunities. This factor, in turn, may already impact satisfaction with the profession performed.

At the same time, it is important to highlight the limitations of the study, such as the small research sample (153 people), where 57.5% are people aged 18-25. The use of only a few variables of organizational trust and satisfaction will also be a limitation. This area may be a potential field for continuing research in this area. In the future, the research can be developed by determining the impact of trust on job satisfaction based on regression models and indicating the factors mediating this relationship. In future research, it is also worth taking into account the cultural differences that occur.

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