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Examining the Relationships Between Leadership Attributes and Organisational Trust in Companies in Innovative Industries

Abstract

Theoretical background: Trust is an important factor supporting the management of organisations. The most important trust creator is the leader who, through organisational trust-building activities, influences the growth of employee innovation.

Purpose of the article: Adopting the assumption that the manager influences the level of trust allowed us to formulate the aim of the article, which is to identify the relationship between leadership attributes and horizontal and vertical trust supporting the creation of innovation.

Research methods: The aim was achieved by using the survey method, employing CAWI technique. The survey frame was innovative industry companies employing more than 50 people. Based on a random selection method, a research sample of 575 employees working in innovative companies in the pharmaceutical, energy, automotive and IT industries was established.

Main findings: The research identified the impact of leadership attributes on vertical and horizontal trust, in particular establishing positive relationships with other employees, sharing ideas and information, being accountable for the tasks at hand, providing constructive advice, being helpful to other employees, receiving help from colleagues, and an atmosphere of genuine mutual trust between employees and supervisors. The findings provide insights into the application of leadership attributes for building a trust-based organisational culture.

Introduction

The complexity of the functioning of the modern company requires a new approach to its management. Processes typical of the "traditional" organisation such as institutionalisation, formalisation and centralisation no longer sufficiently govern the internal life of the organisation. It is necessary to pay attention to other organisational processes that foster the achievement of organisational goals. One of them is social capital, which enables a more comprehensive analysis of the factors determining the growth in enterprise value (Łobudzki, 2014). This is particularly true in terms of trust which has an impact on tightening interpersonal cooperation within the employee groups and the organisation with the aim of the realization of common interests. It can be defined 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" (Mayer et al., 1995, p. 712).

In the research on trust, it is possible to distinguish the elementary approach and approach of the forms of trust in the description (Emborg et al., 2020). The former concentrates on the attributes of the trustee – usually, goodwill, abilities and honesty – with the aim of establishing why they are worthy of trust (Mayer et al., 1995). The latter approach is based on traditional relations and identification. Trust based on traditional relations is "constant, while also market-oriented, with economic accounts whose value is defined by the results accruing from the creation and maintenance of relation to costs of their maintenance or severance" (Lewicki & Wiethoff, 2000, p. 88). However, trust based on identification is based on identification with the desires and intentions of the other party. "This type of trust exists as the parties may effectively understand and appreciate the needs of the second party" (Lewicki & Wiethoff, 2000, p. 89). Trust based on identification results from common values, common goals, emotional ties, identification with business interests, the fears and intentions of others; while also judgements of systems of values, as well as the ethical and moral nature of the other parties. Thus, we may note that trust represents faith and that the second party shall proceed in an honest and ethical manner.

In innovative enterprises significant meaning is attached to the asymmetry of information, which may distort the process of sharing knowledge. Trust may effectively reduce the asymmetry of information in the process of sharing knowledge as it helps the readiness to share confidential information between partners. Greater levels of trust reduce the negative impact of the asymmetry of information in terms of sharing knowledge, thus increasing the potential of development of an organisation (Jose & Botella, 2014). Nevertheless, it is necessary to underline that the impact of asymmetry on efficiency in various contexts of trust and innovations are of an unstable nature and non-linear paths as the asymmetry is an intricate and non-static phenomenon that is of a timeframe nature (Michalski et al., 2019).

Trust is particularly important in organisations that create innovations, namely those in which risk is undertaken and where requirements relating to tasks are not clearly defined. Organisations that implement innovations cannot be based on a threat, coercion or merely incentives established for employees, but more frequently have to refer to relations based on trust. Trust shall become an important factor in success when it is embedded in the organisational culture. Cultural values may have a direct impact on the erosion or development of trust; hence the culture of an organisation may have an impact on the desire and ability of people with regard to trust. As a result, culture may be perceived and availed of as a tool to unify or divide people, teams and organisations. Business performance may be significantly greater when trust is treated as a cultural feature of an organisation. This is also why there is a need to create culture that develops, strengthens and maintains trust. In a working environment in which the culture of trust is developed, people are willing to share information, admit to mistakes and draw the right conclusions from them, while also undertake difficult tasks (Kelley, 2025). Hence, supporting trust that is embedded in the organisational culture is of key importance for the creation of innovations (Adha, 2024).

The role of trust in terms of creating innovations may be explained from the perspective of the model of the game theory, according to which the key to trust is long-term cooperation, in which the expectation of behaviour from other parties is significant, while the type of company in which the feeling of mutual engagement and sensitivity is totally absent (Acedo & Gomila, 2013). Cooperation is encumbered by the risk of availing of it for personal goals by cooperating partners, who may contribute less than their share or may take more than their share of the benefits. Therefore, voluntary cooperation requires the trust of partners, namely the conviction that it shall not be used for personal purposes. Simultaneously, there may be cases in an organisation that can be described as "cooperation without trust" (Mayer et al., 1995), which encompass forced cooperation, in which a credible threat of penalty eliminates the risk of using it for personal purposes. Hence, in an organisation it is essential to evaluate to what extent trust may be constant between the parties without binding principles and coercion.

In an organisation, trust is the foundation that enables people to work together and is the factor that enables social interactions to emerge in order to create a favourable organisational atmosphere (Nemiro et al., 2008). In studies on trust in organisations, researchers mainly focus on vertical trust (Afsar & Masood, 2018; Khan et al., 2021; Skiba & Wildman, 2019). To a lesser extent, they direct their attention to horizontal trust (e.g. Hasche et al., 2021). Together, horizontal and vertical trust are rarely studied (Kmieciak, 2020). Therefore, there is a need for research on both horizontal and vertical trust alongside each other in order to understand how employees interact with their leaders and team members, which can affect their interactions and effectiveness at work.

Leadership is a key factor in ensuring the right level of trust in an organisation. In other words, the effectiveness of a leader is demonstrated by the level of trust

employees have in their leader. If employees do not trust their leader, it means that the leader is not effective in influencing employees (Lee et al., 2024). It is important to study the impact of leadership on horizontal and vertical trust in organisations, as this will identify areas where the leader can effectively influence their growth. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to provide evidence on the level of vertical (VT) and horizontal trust (HT) in organisations and its relationship with leadership. The author seeks answers to the following questions:

RQ1. What is the level of horizontal and vertical trust in companies in innovative industries?

RQ2. What relationships exist between leadership attributes and horizontal and vertical trust?

In order to explore the relationship between leadership attributes and organisational trust, a quantitative methodology was used. The results of this study may contribute to our understanding of the dynamics of trust in the relationship between employees and between employees and managers. Furthermore, this article develops theoretical and empirical insights on the impact of leadership on the growth of trust in business organisations.

Theoretical background

Organisational trust is a multidimensional concept and is therefore defined in a number of ways in the literature. Ramos et al. (2022) capture organisational trust as a set of interdependent beliefs about ethical standards, trustworthiness in communication, the economic strength of the organisation and its ability to reward employee performance, both financially and professionally. On the other hand, Qin and Men (2023) understand trust as a form of social capital, arguing that some of its benefits include reducing transaction costs in organisations and increasing sociability among employees. In contrast, Yucel (2006) defines it as "expectation of individuals, groups, or organizations from groups or organizations with which they are in mutual interaction that they will make ethical decisions and will develop behaviors that are based on ethical principles" (p. 4). Thus, organisational trust is the belief of an individual or group as a whole that an individual or organisation will make a good faith effort, acting in accordance with its commitment to provide the best results, regardless of where it operates (Utomo et al., 2023).

From an analysis of the various approaches to organisational trust, it becomes apparent that it is a multi-level construct that derives from interactions at the colleague, team, organisational and inter-organisational levels. Its most important elements are the values of trustworthiness, benevolence and honesty.

Organisational trust may be divided into inter-organisational and intra-organisational trust. Inter-organisational trust occurs in relations between an organisation and its external stakeholders. However, inter-organisational trust occurs in

relations between various entities of the organisation, firstly between an employee and his/her direct superior, or other department heads (vertical trust), while secondly between an employee and his/her direct work colleague (horizontal trust) and thirdly between an employee and the organisation (institutional trust) (Lewicka et al., 2017).

The focal point of this study is the proposal of organisational trust formulated by Tan and Lim (2009),who suggested that organisational trust can be considered at two levels: colleagues (horizontal trust) and employees to superiors (vertical trust). In the first case, the researchers defined vertical trust as "an employee's willingness to be vulnerable to the actions of the organization, whose behavior and actions he or she cannot control" (p. 46). This trust is a variable in the relationship between supervisor and subordinate, it works reciprocally and includes both the subordinate's trust in his or her supervisor and *vice versa* (Özyilmaz, 2010). In contrast, trust in colleagues is defined as "the willingness of a person to be vulnerable to the actions of fellow coworkers whose behavior and actions that person cannot control" (Tan & Lim, 2009, p. 46). Sometimes trust is recognised as team trust, i.e. "an emergent and dynamic shared state at the team-level whereby team members believe in one another's competence and are willing to be vulnerable beyond task-related issues" (Feitosa et al., 2020, p. 2). Inter-employee trust is based on the belief that others or other groups shall (a) make every effort to abide by accepted commitments, (b) act with integrity during the negotiations preceding the acceptance of commitments, (c) not take advantage of opportunities to gain advantage over others when the opportunity arises (Cummings & Broomiley, 1996). This approach illustrates the fragility of the long-term validity of trust, if other binding conditions do not exist, e.g. partnership culture based on ethical values. Inter-personal ties are unstable, the more so as they are associated with personal business interests.

Horizontal trust is a useful factor for identifying employees with the organisation, for improving communication, for increasing job satisfaction and for building relationships between employees and organisations. It strengthens employee loyalty to the organisation (Hebo et al., 2022).

One of the key factors influencing the level of organisational trust is leadership. Jiang et al. (2014) defined leadership as the process of a leader guiding the organisational members to practice the plans for changes and moving towards the objective of changes. The leader first establishes direction through an outlined vision and then communicates and encourages employees to overcome obstacles and to collaborate to create innovation (Duffy et al., 2012). In the process of building trust, the choice of leadership style is important. Several leadership styles can be distinguished: transformational leadership, ethical leadership and inclusive leadership.

Among the many leadership styles, ethical leadership is seen as one of the most effective, as it correlates with many benefits and key outcomes for the organisation (Lei et al., 2019). Those displaying ethical leadership promote honesty and integrity among subordinates and manifest ethical behaviour through personal actions and

interpersonal relationships. Several studies show that there is a positive correlation between ethical leadership and trust. Ethical leadership is positively related to trust in the leader and knowledge sharing (Bhatti et al., 2021). Ethical leaders positively influence both employees' cognitive trust in leadership (trust in their leadership abilities and personal qualities) and affective trust in leadership (trust in socio-emotional exchanges and admiration for their leaders) (Bedi et al., 2016; Lei et al., 2019). Ethical leaders' concern for the best interests of the organisation and their honest decision-making results in employees' trust in their leaders (Engelbrecht & Mahembe, 2017). The coherence between a leader's words and actions results in an increased emotional bond, which influences higher levels of employee trust (Igbal et al., 2020).

Transformational leadership is one of the emerging leadership styles that allows employees to exceed expectations and work towards organisational goals, leading to increased employee performance. It is defined as "moving the follower beyond immediate self-interests through idealized influence (charisma), inspiration, intellectual stimulation, or individualized consideration" (Bass, 1999, p. 11). Transformational leaders focus on innovation and strategic thinking (Deng et al., 2022). In addition, they help employees move from short-term to long-term goals, broadening their vision and mission (Maisyura et al., 2022). Transformational leadership embodies credibility, which then increases trust in the leader (Lee et al., 2024). Numerous studies suggest that trust mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and positive work outcomes such as job satisfaction (Yang, 2016), team performance (Braun et al., 2013) and employee behaviour as advocates of organisational change (Islam et al., 2021). Therefore, trust is an important mechanism linking transformational leadership to positive work outcomes.

An alternative style to those discussed above is inclusive leadership, as it focuses on establishing quality relationships with employees, making them more determined to explore their innovation potential. Inclusive leaders are defined as "leaders who exhibit openness, accessibility and availability in their interactions with followers" (Carmeli et al., 2010, p. 250). This leadership includes three dimensions: (1) tolerating employees' views and failures and supporting them when they make mistakes; (2) focusing on training employees and praising achievements rather than showing jealousy; (3) treating employees fairly, taking into account their needs and interests (Qi et al., 2019). A distinctive feature here is that the leader satisfies the psychological needs of employees by responding to their needs, treats them as exceptional employees, appreciates their efforts, and acts with integrity and fairness (Randel et al., 2018). Inclusive leaders focus on improving the quality of relationships with subordinates by being accessible and emphasising a deep sense of interdependence, which in turn creates an environment that fosters innovative ideas (Zafar et al., 2023). Mutual high-quality interaction between inclusive leaders and subordinates influences the level of trust (Yuan et al., 2022). High trust in inclusive leadership helps shape the team atmosphere in organisations (Orekoya, 2024).

To sum up, the cited studies allow us to conclude that leadership is a significant driver of organisational trust, which fosters employee identification with the organisation, communication, productivity, job satisfaction, and relationships between employees and organisations.

Research methods and sample

The aim of the study was to identify the relationship between leadership attributes related to employee leadership, self-construction and trust building and trust between employees and employee trust in the manager. In order to achieve this objective, a survey method was used. The research tool was a standardised survey questionnaire in which questions on trust were developed based on the tool designed by Krot and Lewicka (2016), and questions on leadership based on the tool created by Paliszkiewicz et al. (2015). To survey employees of companies in innovative industries, a CATI (computer-assisted telephone interview) technique was used. In the analysis of the results, the mean and standard deviation test and Kendall rank correlation coefficient were used. The survey was nationwide. The frame of the survey consisted of companies employing more than 50 people. Based on the random selection method, a research sample was constructed consisting of 575 individuals employed in companies in innovative industries, i.e. pharmacy (25.2%), energy (23.3%), automotive (26.4%) and IT (25%). The surveyed employees were white-collar (97.2%) and blue-collar (2.8%) workers, with work experience of 4–8 years (10.3%), 9–13 years (23.8%), 14–18 years (33.7) and 19 or more years (32.2%). Due to random sampling, the survey was performed on a representative sample using the following parameters: margin of error α 4%, confidence interval: 95%.

Results

In companies operating in innovative industries, trust plays an important role. The surveyed employees of such companies rated the level of trust of employees towards the manager higher than that of colleagues towards each other. Comparing the statements – "most employees in the company can be trusted" (3.98) and "I trust my manager" (4.12) – one can see differences in favour of vertical trust.

A detailed analysis of the horizontal trust attributes shows that the most important is the employee's conviction that if they needed a substitute, they were confident they could find someone to help them (Table 1). Other important aspects recognised were sharing ideas and information with other colleagues, employees keeping their promises and the belief that if they shared their work problems with other employees they would receive constructive advice. On the other hand, drawing conclusions and learning something new from negative situations, being helpful to others and not

only looking out for one's own interest, and feeling responsible for the tasks at hand and not having to monitor them were rated lowest.

Table 1. Assessment of horizontal trust (HT) attributes in the surveyed companies

Item	Mean	Type of industry			
		P	E	A	I
HT1 There is an atmosphere of mutual trust between employees in my company	4.00	3.50	4.0	3.96	3.97
HT2 If I had a problem with anything regarding work, I could safely discuss my concerns with colleagues and get advice	4.02	4.07	4.04	4.0	3.97
HT3 If I share my work problems with other employees, I am confident that I will get constructive advice	4.14	4.24	4.13	4.0	4.20
HT4 Most employees keep their promises	4.13	4.15	4.05	4.28	4.20
HT5 If I needed a substitute, I am confident I could find someone to help me	4.19	4.17	4.20	4.16	4.21
HT6 Employees can talk openly about things they dislike or how something should be changed	4.10	4.14	4.11	4.10	4.05
HT7 Employees feel responsible for their tasks and do not need to be monitored	3.96	4.0	4.0	3.88	3.94
HT8 Employees try to be helpful to others most of the time and are not concerned only with their own interest	3.98	4.11	3.93	3.86	4.04
HT9 I am confident that I would receive help from my colleagues	4.13	4.24	4.12	4.03	4.12
HT10 Employees are willing to share ideas and information with other colleagues	4.17	4.15	4.23	4.18	4.07
HT11 I willingly share ideas, knowledge and information with other employees	4.07	4.08	4.17	4.09	4.0
HT12 Employees in my company try to draw conclusions and learn something new even from negative situations	3.83	3.82	3.87	3.80	3.82
HT13 It is preferred in employees to be independent in taking risks, innovative, original	4.03	4.07	4.04	3.96	4.04
HT14 I believe that establishing positive relationships with other employees is important	4.06	4.11	4.04	4.03	4.08
HT15 Most employees in the company can be trusted	3.98	4.01	3.97	3.96	4.0
Total	4.05	4.06	4.05	4.01	4.04

Rating scale: 1 – *I strongly disagree*, 2 – *I disagree*, 3 – *I neither agree nor disagree*, 4 – *I agree*, 5 – *I strongly agree*
Type of industry: P – Pharmaceuticals, E – Energy, A – Automotive, I – IT

Source: Author's own study.

Employees' trust in the manager is an important factor supporting the achievement of organisational goals. Their commitment and level of trust in employees has a significant impact on the creation of knowledge and innovation. At the same time, the manager must be a person who inspires trust in general. Being trusted by employees is the basis for building a culture of trust within a company. The analysis of the respondents' statements shows that they trust the manager highly (Table 2). In the author's other research conducted among 176 of the largest enterprises in Poland, the level of trust was lower (3.15, $SD = 1.324$) (Bylok & Kuceba, 2021). This trust is primarily the result of keeping promises and assessing the employee

fairly. In addition, its level is influenced by loyalty to the supervisor, the conviction that if the employee had problems with anything concerning work, they could safely discuss them with the supervisor and the managers' role as advisors and intellectual partners towards their subordinates.

Table 2. Assessment of vertical trust (VT) attributes in the surveyed companies

Item	Mean	Type of industry			
		P	E	A	I
VT1 I trust my manager	4.12	4.13	4.15	3.97	4.16
VT2 Motivation of employees in the company is high because superiors trust them	4.02	4.00	3.97	3.99	4.13
VT3 In the company, superiors act primarily as advisors and intellectual partners to subordinates	4.08	4.04	4.14	4.02	4.11
VT4 In my company there is an atmosphere of genuine mutual trust between employees and superiors	4.05	4.04	4.02	4.05	4.08
VT5 I believe that my boss makes the right decisions	4.08	4.09	4.02	4.09	4.11
VT6 If I had a problem with anything regarding work, I could safely discuss my concerns with my supervisor	4.10	4.15	4.02	4.09	4.18
VT7 I am loyal to my boss	4.10	4.17	4.07	4.05	4.11
VT8 I believe that my supervisor evaluates employees fairly	4.11	4.18	4.09	4.07	4.09
VT9 My boss is concerned with my needs if they arise	4.04	4.10	4.00	4.01	4.03
VT10 I believe that my supervisor makes the right decisions	3.98	4.00	3.95	3.87	4.02
VT11 Generally in the company, managers keep their promises	4.11	4.01	4.12	4.11	4.18
VT12 I believe that my boss's motives and intentions are good	4.02	3.97	4.07	3.98	4.06
Total	4.07	4.07	4.05	4.02	4.10

Rating scale: 1 – *I strongly disagree*, 2 – *I disagree*, 3 – *I neither agree nor disagree*, 4 – *I agree*, 5 – *I strongly agree*
Type of industry: P – Pharmaceuticals, E – Energy, A – Automotive, I – IT

Source: Author's own study.

Another aim of the study was to identify leadership attributes. In order to measure them, a tool consisting of the following aspects was used: employee management (EM), self-construction (self-awareness) (SL) and trust construction developed (TCD) by Paliszkiewicz et al. (2015). The findings in Table 3 show that the highest rated leadership attribute is building trust, including, in particular, the display of integrity and ethics, transparency in the manager's behaviour, consistency in decision-making and the vocal timbre of the manager, and appropriate communication (verbal, non-verbal, written and visual) with subordinates.

An important attribute of leadership is the self-construction of managers, including self-awareness (knowing one's strengths and weaknesses and being prepared to improve weaknesses), seeking opportunities for continuous learning, seeking and using feedback from others at work, and relying on values and principles to make decisions.

Managing employees as an attribute of leadership is crucial in achieving organisational goals. An analysis of Table 3 shows that the most important are empowering employees to perform their assigned tasks, motivating them to work more effectively and bring out the best in them, and having the ability to listen and others.

Table 3. Attributes of leadership in the surveyed companies

Item	Mean	Type of industry			
		P	E	A	I
EM1 Managers motivate employees to work more effectively and bring out the best in them	4.13	4.17	4.15	4.02	4.09
EM2 Managers empower employees to perform their assigned tasks	4.18	4.07	3.97	3.98	3.99
EM3 Managers are good listeners and have the ability to put others at ease	4.19	4.15	4.07	4.01	4.11
EM4 Interpersonal communication by the manager is essential to stimulate employees to work effectively	4.01	4.16	4.12	4.10	4.12
EM5 Managers have the ability to build and maintain good relationships with subordinates	4.06	4.24	4.13	4.15	4.20
EM6 Managers are not afraid of conflict – managers should see conflict as something "good" and therefore should not avoid conflict	4.06	4.18	4.16	4.20	4.21
Total	4.10	4.16	4.10	4.07	4.12
SL1 When making decisions, the manager relies on principles and values	4.16	4.06	3.91	4.03	4.06
SL2 Manager is self-aware (knows their strengths and weaknesses and is willing to improve the weaknesses)	4.18	4.14	4.09	3.94	4.04
SL3 Manager seeks and uses feedback from others	4.11	4.15	4.05	4.02	4.02
SL4 Manager has knowledge of how to manage their time effectively	4.07	4.12	4.21	4.13	4.17
SL5 Manager seeks opportunities for continuous learning	4.08	4.35	4.08	4.04	4.22
Total	4.12	4.16	4.06	4.03	4.10
TCD1 Manager's skills and competences lead to improved trust in the organisation	4.03	4.17	4.10	4.02	4.23
TCD2 Compassion and empathy demonstrated by the manager build trust among employees	4.13	4.17	405	3.98	4.09
TCD3 Manager's vocal timbre and appropriate communication (verbal, non-verbal, written and visual) build trust among employees	4.19	4.16	4.12	4.08	3.95
TCD4 The attitude of partnership and agreement demonstrated by the manager builds trust	4.11	4.10	4.07	4.06	3.90
TCD5 Consistency in the manager's decision-making creates trust between employees	4.18	4.16	4.20	4.15	4.25
TCD6 Manager's display of integrity and ethics develops and creates trust among people	4.19	4.02	4.12	4.12	4.06
TCD7 Manager's honesty and adherence to rules increase trust among employees	4.08	4.04	4.10	4.13	4.08
TCD8 The attitude of acceptance of others and open-mindedness demonstrated by the manager influence the growth of trust	4.09	4.19	4.15	4.14	4.17
TCD9 Manager's demonstration of reliability develops and creates trust among employees	4.16	4.29	4.17	4.11	4.14
TCD10 Manager's transparency is key to building trust between employees	4.18	3.93	3.89	3.93	4.28
Total	4.13	4.12	4.09	4.07	4.11

Rating scale: 1 – *I strongly disagree*, 2 – *I disagree*, 3 – *I neither agree nor disagree*, 4 – *I agree*, 5 – *I strongly agree*
Type of industry: P – Pharmaceuticals, E – Energy, A – Automotive, I – IT

Source: Author's own study.

In search of an answer to the research question on the relationships occurring between leadership attributes and horizontal and vertical trust, the relationships between leadership attributes and horizontal and vertical trust were statistically analysed. To diagnose these interrelationships, Kendall rank correlation coefficient analysis was used. When investigating the relationship between leadership attributes and horizontal

trust, it was found that trust construction developed attributes (TCD) were most strongly influenced, including primarily the attitude of partnership and agreement demonstrated by the manager, consistency in the manager's decision-making and compassion and empathy demonstrated by the manager (Table 4). Detailed analysis of these relationships indicates that leadership attributes are most positively related to selected indicators of horizontal trust: TCD2 with HT2, TH8, HT14, HT15; TCD4 with HT2, HT9, HT14, HT15; TCD5 with HT2, HT3, HT9, HT14 and TCD9 with VT2, VT3, VT7, VT8, VT13, VT14, VT15; TCD10 with HT2, HT3, HT7, HT8, HT9, HT14, HT15.

Table 4. Kendall rank correlation coefficient between the leadership attributes related to trust construction developed (TCD) and horizontal trust indicators (HT)

	TCD1	TCD2	TCD3	TCD4	TCD5	TCD6	TCD7	TCD8	TCD9	TCD10
HT1	0.033	0.075[3]	0.016	0.079	0.093[1]	0.045	0.064[3]	0.095[2]	0.080[2]	0.094[2]
HT2	0.118[1]	0.419[1]	0.079[3]	0.428[1]	0.415[1]	0.053	0.095[2]	0.048	0.560[1]	0.571[1]
HT3	0.097[2]	0.330[1]	0.052[3]	0.386[1]	0.373[1]	0.039	0.021	0.001	0.514[1]	0.580[1]
HT4	0.015	0.066[3]	0.071[3]	0.049	0.010	0.052	0.053[3]	0.075[3]	0.070[3]	0.080[2]
HT5	0.052	0.051[3]	0.082[2]	0.052[3]	0.014	0.050	0.081[2]	0.056[3]	0.054	0.061[3]
HT6	0.024	0.029	0.078[2]	0.386[1]	0.08	0.047	0.065[3]	0.092[2]	0.020	0.018
HT7	0.079[3]	0.358[1]	0.036	0.422[1]	0.246[1]	0.024	0.084[2]	0.001	0.449[1]	0.441[1]
HT8	0.085[2]	0.411[1]	0.072[3]	0.278[1]	0.332[1]	0.047	0.015	0.039	0.544[1]	0.463[1]
HT9	0.107[1]	0.383[1]	0.103[1]	0.461[1]	0.384[2]	0.02	0.062[3]	0.022	0.096[3]	0.574[1]
HT10	0.053	0.050	0.061[3]	0.074[3]	0.041	0.074[3]	0.074[3]	0.058[3]	0.085[2]	0.0633
HT11	0.008	0.068[3]	0.111[1]	0.060[3]	0.060[3]	0.037	0.117[1]	0.079[3]	0.066[3]	0.062[3]
HT12	0.049	0.002	0.081[2]	0.067[3]	0.012	0.075[3]	0.065[3]	0.028	0.032	0.031
HT13	0.064[3]	0.018	0.067[3]	0.029	0.050	0.083[2]	0.098[2]	0.053	0.428[1]	0.029
HT14	0.106[1]	0.464[1]	0.051[3]	0.440[1]	0.361[1]	0.064[3]	0.070[3]	0.041	0.522[1]	0.476[1]
HT15	0.095[2]	0.492[1]	0.070[3]	0.458[1]	0.358[1]	0.065[3]	0.035	0.028	0.461[1]	0.548[1]

[1]$p < 0.001$, [2]$p < 0.01$, [3]$p < 0.05$

Source: Author's own study.

Some interesting observations are provided by the analysis of the relationships between leadership attributes related to employee management (EM) and self-construction leader (SL) and horizontal trust indicators (HT) (Table 5). Stronger relationships were observed between SL attributes than EM attributes. Among the SL attributes, most conducive to horizontal trust are a manager's principled and value-based decision-making, awareness of one's strengths and weaknesses and willingness to improve weaknesses, and seeking and using feedback from employees. The strongest positive correlations were observed for SL1 and HT2, HT3, HT7, HT8, HT9; SL2 and HT2, HT3, HT7, HT8, HT9 and SL3 and HT2, HT3, HT7, HT8 and HT9.

In contrast, of the leadership attributes related to people management, the most influential to horizontal trust are the manager's ability to build and maintain good relationships with subordinates and the necessity of interpersonal communication to stimulate employees to work effectively. The most significant positive correlations were identified for EM4 and HT2, HT3, HT7, HT8 HT9, HT10 and SL5 and HT2, HT3, HT9, HT10, HT11.

In conclusion, leadership qualities most strongly influence such horizontal trust attributes as being able to safely talk about one's concerns with colleagues, being confident of receiving help from colleagues, feeling responsible for the tasks at hand, being helpful to others and not looking out only for one's own interest.

Table 5. Kendall rank correlation coefficient between the leadership attributes related to employee management (EM) and leader self-construction (SL) and horizontal trust indicators (HT)

	EM1	EM2	EM3	EM4	EM5	EM6	SL1	SL2	SL3	SL4	SL5
HT1	0.047	0.090[2]	0.072[3]	0.042	0.110[1]	0.074[3]	0.090[2]	0.084[2]	0.051[3]	0.047	0.040
HT2	0.0613	0.055[3]	0.049	0.462[1]	0.417[1]	0.0982	0.477[1]	0.425[1]	0.530[1]	0.110[1]	0.145[1]
HT3	0.057	0.031	0.043	0.394[1]	0.479[1]	0.106[1]	0.395[1]	0.348[1]	0.425[1]	0.120[1]	0.131[1]
HT4	0.0513	0.063[3]	0.049	0.030	0.051[3]	0.058[3]	0.076[2]	0.023	0.059[3]	0.042	0.043
HT5	0.027	0.031	0.022	0.024	0.056[3]	0.040	0.075[2]	0.041	0.068[3]	0.051[3]	0.047
HT6	0.051[3]	0.044	0.046	0.006	0.055[3]	0.017	0.057[3]	0.028	0.019	0.014	0.011
HT7	0.069[3]	0.082[2]	0.091[2]	0.327[1]	0.049	0.031	0.439[1]	0.428[1]	0.507[1]	0.077[2]	0.062[3]
HT8	0.045	0.030	0.022	0.326[1]	0.067[3]	0.096[2]	0.457[1]	0.345[1]	0.419[1]	0.097[2]	0.106[1]
HT9	0.051[3]	0.044	0.053[3]	0.374[1]	0.467[1]	0.081[2]	0.514[1]	0.441[1]	0.547[1]	0.128[1]	0.138[1]
HT10	0.059[3]	0.069[3]	0.051[3]	0.376[1]	0.457[1]	0.077[2]	0.041	0.018	0.057[3]	0.044	0.089[2]
HT11	0.049	0.085[2]	0.054[3]	0.083	0.497[1]	0.06	0.059[3]	0.0593	0.083[2]	0.043	0.061[3]
HT12	0.042	0.065	0.017	0.103[1]	0.109[1]	0.051[3]	0.032	0.021	0.056[3]	0.058[3]	0.067[3]
HT13	0.076[3]	0.087[2]	0.074[3]	0.051	0.094[2]	0.078[2]	0.029	0.045	0.036	0.073[3]	0.078[2]
HT14	0.074[3]	0.098[2]	0.066	0.036	0.053[3]	0.026	0.337[1]	0.450[1]	0.380[1]	0.059[3]	0.101[1]
HT15	0.055[3]	0.044	0.051[3]	0.536[1]	0.024	0.059[3]	0.348[1]	0.404[1]	0.490[1]	0.070[3]	0.096[3]

[1]$p < 0.001$, [2]$p < 0.01$, [3]$p < 0.05$

Source: Author's own study.

The next research step analysed the relationship between leadership attributes and vertical trust. The analysis of Table 6 shows that leadership attributes related to building trust, i.e. consistency in decision-making, keeping promises, interest in employees' needs and the dependence of employees' motivation on managers' trust in them, have a significant impact on employees' trust in the manager. The most significant positive correlation was observed between TB2 and VT1, VT7, VT8, VT9; TB4 and VT1, VT7, VT8, VT9, VT10; TB5 and VT1, VT7, VT8, VT9, VT10; TB9 and VT6, VT7, VT8, VT9 and TB10 and VT1, VT6, VT7, VT8, VT9, VT12.

Table 6. Kendall rank correlation coefficient between the leadership attributes related to trust construction developed (TCD) and vertical trust indicators (VT)

	TB1	TB2	TB3	TB4	TB5	TB6	TB7	TB8	TB9	TB10
VT1	0.118[1]	0.437[1]	0.094[2]	0.446[1]	0.395[1]	0.016	0.065[3]	0.050	0.05	0.548[1]
VT2	0.040	0.045	0.072[3]	0.025	0.075	0.015	0.039	0.051	0.067[3]	0.083[2]
VT3	0.037	0.032	0.069[3]	0.030	0.040	0.040	0.032	0.025	0.007	0.037
VT4	0.026	0.019	0.040	0.023	0.48	0.042	0.053[3]	0.037	0.010	0.036
VT5	0.022	0.040	0.015	0.012	0.45	0.040	0.096[2]	0.076[2]	0.038	0.050
VT6	0.001	0.081[2]	0.082[2]	0.037	0.055[3]	0.041	0.078[2]	0.047	0.452[1]	0.566[1]
VT7	0.087[2]	0.563[1]	0.094[2]	0.498[1]	0.441[1]	0.076[3]	0.062[3]	0.035	0.511[1]	0.603[1]

	TB1	TB2	TB3	TB4	TB5	TB6	TB7	TB8	TB9	TB10
VT8	0.098^2	0.514^1	0.096^2	0.542^1	0.393^1	0.014	0.02	0.006	0.491^1	0.558^1
VT9	0.076^2	0.409^1	0.076^2	0.424^1	0.324^1	0.038	0.01	0.049	0.509^1	0.541^1
VT10	0.078^2	0.363^1	0.096^2	0.417^1	0.419^1	0.006	0.092^2	0.023	0.104^1	0.112^1
VT11	0.072^3	0.102^1	0.079^2	0.050	0.102^1	0.040	0.043	0.030	0.076^2	0.086^2
VT12	0.056^3	0.319^1	0.083^2	0.045	0.105^1	0.010	0.053	0.038	0.365^1	0.499^1

$^1 p < 0.001$, $^2 p < 0.01$, $^3 p < 0.05$

Source: Author's own study.

Attributes related to employee management (EM) and leader self-construction (SL), were the next groups of leadership attributes that were analysed in terms of their relationship with vertical trust (Table 7). The indicators of leader self-construction, i.e. relying on principles and values in decision-making, manager self-awareness, i.e. knowing one's strengths and weaknesses and seeking and using feedback from employees, had the strongest impact on vertical trust. The strongest positive correlations were identified between attributes related to leader self-construction and vertical trust indicators, i.e. SL1 and VT1, VT7, VT8, ZVT9 , VT10; SL2 and VT1, VT7, VT8, VT9, VT10 and SL3 AND VT1, VT7, VT8, VT9, VT10.

In contrast, for attributes related to people management, the strongest influences on vertical trust related to interpersonal communication used to stimulate employees to work effectively and the ability to build and maintain good relationships with subordinates. The strongest relationships were identified between EM4 and VT1, VT2, VT7, VT8, VT9, VT10; and EM5 and VT1, VT2, VT7, VT8, VT9, VT10.

In conclusion, leadership qualities most strongly influence vertical trust attributes such as loyalty to the supervisor, fair evaluation of employees, interest in employees' needs, accurate decision-making.

Table 7. Kendall rank correlation coefficient between leadership attributes related to employee management (EM) and leader self-construction (SL) and vertical trust indicators (VT)

	EM1	EM2	EM3	EM4	EM5	EM6	SL1	SL2	SL3	SL4	SL5
VT1	0.051^3	0.067^3	0.052^3	0.510^1	0.568^1	0.081^2	0.421^1	0.413^1	0.377^1	0.118^1	0.112
VT2	0.073^3	0.077^2	0.084^2	0.484^1	0.495^1	0.068^1	0.038	0.054^1	0.001	0.001	0.007
VT3	0.060^3	0.083^2	0.093^2	0.033	0.051^3	0.057^3	0.069^3	0.087^2	0.049	0.019	0.028
VT4	0.094^2	0.101^1	0.079^2	0.021	0.056^3	0.031	0.042	0.052^3	0.002	0.009	0.009
VT5	0.080^2	0.118^1	0.125^1	0.016	0.049	0.015	0.029	0.030	0.001	0.010	0.011
VT6	0.093^2	0.134^1	0.125^1	0.028	0.067^3	0.048	0.063^3	0.046	0.030	0.001	0.001
VT7	0.074^3	0.087^2	0.089^2	0.504^1	0.519^1	0.102^1	0.381^1	0.412^1	0.462^1	0.077^2	0.095^2
VT8	0.073^3	0.063^3	0.071^3	0.423^1	0.559^1	0.094^2	0.463^1	0.370^1	0.439^1	0.089^2	0.125^1
VT9	0.067^2	0.047	0.049	0.398^1	0.497^1	0.052^3	0.393^1	0.408^1	0.387^1	0.105^1	0.126^1
VT10	0.034	0.033	0.035	0.441^1	0.396^1	0.068^3	0.366^1	0.342^1	0.390^1	0.062^3	0.092^2
VT11	0.081^2	0.088^2	0.090^2	0.129^1	0.046	0.052^3	0.045	0.097^2	0.084^2	0.052^3	0.061^3
VT12	0.066^3	0.072^3	0.053^3	0.099^2	0.019	0.026	0.039	0.074^3	0.077^2	0.085^2	0.068^1

$^1 p < 0.001$, $^2 p < 0.01$, $^3 p < 0.05$

Source: Author's own study.

Discussion and conclusions

Trust is an important factor in enhancing the innovativeness of enterprises, as it enables the effective use of the potential of employees and managers to create knowledge and new innovations. In particular, it is important in companies in innovative industries. Leadership is vital in building trust. This study shows the relationship between leadership and intra-organisational trust. Previous research has mostly identified the relationship of different leadership styles with trust, e.g. the impact of transformational leadership (Braun et al., 2013) or inclusive leadership (Oh et al., 2023) on organisational trust. In contrast, there is a lack of research on the impact of leadership attributes related to people management, leader self-construction and building trust on horizontal and vertical trust. The results of this study indicate an above-average level of organisational trust in companies in innovative industries, with vertical trust achieving the highest value, in particular its attributes: keeping promises and fair evaluation of the employee, loyalty to the supervisor, managers acting as advisors and intellectual partners to subordinates and the conviction that if an employee had problems with anything regarding work, they could safely talk to their supervisor about it. On the other hand, in the case of horizontal trust, the highest rating was given to the employee's conviction that if they needed a substitute, they were confident they could find someone to help them, the sharing of ideas and information with other colleagues, employees keeping their promises and the employee's conviction that if they shared their work problems with other employees they would get constructive advice. These create a favourable environment for employees to take innovative action.

The results of the research on the degree of occurrence of leadership attributes in companies of innovative industries indicate a high level. Among the components of leadership, the attributes related to building trust, i.e. exhibiting integrity and ethics, transparency in the manager's behaviour, consistency in decision-making and appropriate communication (verbal, non-verbal, written and visual) with subordinates, were rated highest. This is followed by the manager's self-construction, including self-awareness (knowing one's strengths and weaknesses and being prepared to improve weaknesses), seeking opportunities for continuous learning, seeking and using feedback from others at work, and relying on values and principles to make decisions. They create a conducive environment for cooperation in work teams, which is essential for accomplishing tasks.

Analysis of Kendall's rank correlation coefficients between leadership attributes and horizontal and vertical trust indices revealed that attributes related to building trust had the strongest impact, followed by attributes of leader self-construction and people management. It was shown that attributes related to building trust had a stronger effect on trust between employees than between employees and managers. This was particularly true for attributes related to building trust, i.e. the confidence to receive help from colleagues, a sense of responsibility for tasks, being helpful to

others and not only caring about one's own interest. A stronger effect on trust between employees was also observed for attributes related to the leader's self-construction and people management.

Findings on the impact of leadership attributes on horizontal and vertical trust have shown a close relationship to inclusive leadership. Inclusive leaders who serve as role models strengthen the identification of employee team members, provide psychological empowerment and behavioural outcomes (e.g. creativity, work performance, reduced turnover) (Randel et al., 2018).

The author of this article would like to point out the limitations of using the results of research on the relationship between leadership and horizontal and vertical trust. Firstly, the research was conducted with the aid of the survey method that was aimed at outlining the intricate problematic issues of the impact of leadership on organisational trust and constitutes a starting point for further research on its role in creating an organisational innovative environment in modern enterprises. Secondly, the proposed variables for researching organisational trust should be expanded to include variables of both a psychological and cultural nature. The identification of variables and determinants that have an impact on the behaviour of people in relations based on trust would expand knowledge of the nature of trust in an organisation. Thirdly, it is necessary to expand the index of the leadership features that stimulate organisational trust as they could differ depending on their context and varying criteria of evaluation.

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