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TRUST AS A STRATEGIC ELEMENT IN POSITIVE LEADERSHIP MANAGEMENT: A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW

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Abstract

Trust is a key element in the success of organizations (Vargas and Toro, 2023). The variety of studies on organizational trust reveals—in addition to its importance—the need for an academic effort to systematize, integrate, and compile findings on organizational trust and its measurement instruments. The objective of this study is to analyze relevant research on organizational trust as a strategic element in positive leadership management, focusing on studies published in English and Spanish between 2000 and 2024. This research was based on the methodology of systematic literature reviews (Moher et al., 2015) and the analytical tools proposed by Hart (2018). In total, descriptive and conceptual data were extracted from 45 studies published between 2000 and 2024, following the guidelines established by PRISMA-P. The study highlights the scope of the concept of trust in the workplace and its implications for positive leadership, identifying notions, characteristics, attributes, and effects. Regarding descriptive categories, this study revealed a trend in the literature toward quantitative research in recent years. Regarding the conceptual categories, this study was based on the dimensions of organizational trust proposed by the HERO model (Olvera et al., 2017)—vertical trust and horizontal trust—which were used to classify the articles and extract excerpts for the construction of the narrative evidence. The study will contribute to strengthening knowledge

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about organizational trust and its relationship with positive leadership, with implications for workplace well-being and organizational health.

Keywords: Organizational trust; Positive leadership management; HERO model; Systematic literature review; Positive psychology.

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1. Introduction

Trust has emerged in academic discourse as a key factor in successful organizations. The literature has confirmed that trust in leaders, colleagues, and the organization is positively linked to a state of well-being characterized by commitment, job satisfaction, teamwork, positive emotions, and, ultimately, the organization's climate and success. "A culture of trust is what makes a significant difference" (Zak, 2017). This reflection raises two questions: (i) understanding the scope of the debate and the diversity of perspectives involved in this topic; and (ii) its impact and utility in serving purposes greater than the individual human being: a sense of transcendence.

In this regard, this study aims to provide a comprehensive overview through an analysis of relevant research on organizational trust as a strategic element in positive leadership management and its measurement tools, drawing on studies published in English and Spanish between 2000 and 2024.

2. Theoretical Foundations

At the organizational level, two types of trust are identified: (i) interorganizational trust, or trust between organizations; and (ii) intra-organizational trust—within organizations—defined as "the willingness of employees to be vulnerable to the actions of their organization, without employees having control over these actions and behaviors" (Tan & Lim, 2009, as cited in Olvera et al., 2017, p. 365).

Intraorganizational trust "is a multidimensional variable" (McCauley and Kuhnert, 1992, as cited in Reinders & Barghouti, 2019, p. 112) and, within the framework of the HERO Model, consists of two dimensions: "(1) Vertical trust, defined as the degree to which employees trust the actions of their superiors or the organization in which they work; (2) Horizontal trust, defined as the degree to which employees trust the people they work with, trust what they do, and enjoy working with them" (Olvera et al., 2017, p. 367). "The distinction between these two perspectives is essential for understanding the phenomenon of trust within organizations" (Brower et al., 2017, as cited in Reinders & Barghouti, 2019, p. 112).

The HERO (Healthy *and Resilient Organization*) Model is a theoretical and heuristic model that defines healthy organizations as "those that make systematic, planned, and proactive

efforts to improve employees, organizational processes, and outcomes" (Salanova, 2009, as cited in Acosta et al., 2019, p. 87). Organizational trust is a "key construct" in this model due to its direct impact on the well-being and performance of individuals and the organization—healthy employees—(Olvera et al., 2017, p. 367).

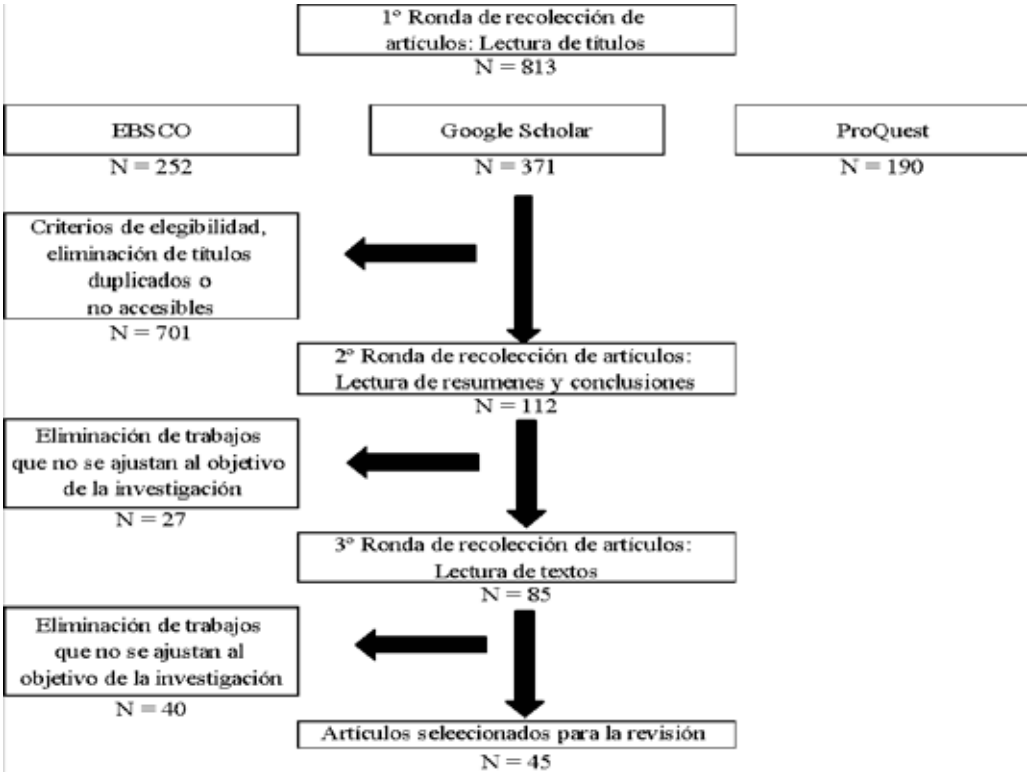
Leadership contributes significantly to team behavior and its environment (Rodríguez & Veloso, 2013). Positive leadership is based on the "application of positive behavioral principles that emerge from disciplines such as positive psychology (Seligman et al., 2005) and positive organizational psychology (Cameron et al., 2003)" (as cited in Blanch et al., 2016, p. 173). In this regard, strategies that support positive leadership will contribute to the collective and individual well-being of employees both within and outside the organizational setting (Puertas, 2012).

3. Method

In line with the objectives of this research proposal, "systematic literature reviews" (Moher et al., 2015) have been selected as the method for organizing and processing information. This research was structured according to the stages proposed by Moher et al. (2015), the creators of *the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis Protocols* (PRISMA-P), which are outlined below:

(1) *Article eligibility criteria.* (a) Publication type: only peer-reviewed publications were selected; (b) Research topic: articles addressing organizational trust as a strategic element in the management of positive leaders; (c) Publication context: studies from various countries were collected; (d) Research design: Empirical studies with quantitative, qualitative, or mixed-methods designs were selected, and reflective pieces were excluded; (e) Publication date: Studies published between 2000 and 2024 were collected; (i) Language : Articles in English and Spanish. (2) *Search of information sources.* Three information sources were used to collect eligible studies: EBSCO, Google Scholar, and ProQuest. (3) *Selection and evaluation of publications.* The process was carried out in three rounds, as detailed in Table 1.

Table 1. Process for selecting and evaluating publications



Source: Author's own work.

(4) *Two-level data extraction into descriptive and conceptual categories.* Data were collected for two types of analysis: descriptive and conceptual. For the descriptive categories, data were modeled based on year of publication, research design, and publication context. For the conceptual categories, following Hart (2018), a theoretical model was adopted to serve as a framework for classifying the studies: vertical trust and horizontal trust (Olvera et al., 2017, pp. 366–367).

4. Results

4.1. Descriptive Categories

A surge in publications in recent years and the predominance of quantitative research. We compiled published works (peer-reviewed publications) from 2000 to 2024, of which 64.44%

of the publications correspond to the 2021–2024 period, while the 2005–2020 period accounts for only 35.55%, and no publications were found for the 2000–2004 period.

In terms of research design, 66.7% are articles using quantitative methodologies. Cross-analyzing these two variables reveals the following: studies conducted during the 2005–2020 period were primarily qualitative, whereas in the last 4 years (2021–2024), the bulk of the research was quantitative in nature.

Table 2. Percentage Trends in Publications and Research Design

Period	Research Quantitative		Studies Qualitative		Research Mixed-Methods		Total
	No. of Articles	%	No. of Articles	%	No. of Articles	%	
2000–2004	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0.0
2005–2008	0	0.0	2	4.4	0	0.0	4.4
2009–2012	2	4.4	1	2.2	0	0.0	6.7
2013–2016	3	6.7	2	4.4	0	0.0	11.1
2017–2020	5	11.1	1	2.2	0	0.0	13.3
2021–2024	20	44.4	8	17.8	1	2.2	64.4
	30	66.7	14	31.1	1	2.2	

Source: Author's own calculations.

The Americas and Europe show the greatest research focus on this topic. 55.6% of the articles were published in the Americas and 31.1% in Europe.

Table 3. Percentage distribution of publications by region and research design (place of publication)

Period	Research Quantitative		Research Qualitative		Research Mixed-Methods		Total
	No. of Articles	%	No. of Articles	%	No. of Articles	%	
Americas	15	33.3	10	22.2	0	0.0	55.6
Europe	9	20.0	4	8.9	1	2.2	31.1
Asia	6	13.3	0	0.0	0	0.0	13.3
Africa	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0.0
	30	66.7	14	31.1	1	2.2	

Source: Author's own calculations.

Table 4. Percentage distribution of publications by region and research design (study population)

Period	Research Quantitative		Research Qualitative		Research Mixed-Methods		Total
	No. of Articles	%	No. of Articles	%	No. of Articles	%	
Americas	9	20.0	10	22.2	0	0.0	42.2
Europe	10	22.2	4	8.9	1	2.2	33.3
Asia	9	20.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	20.0
Africa	2	4.4	0	0.0	0	0.0	4.4
	30	66.7	14	31.1	1	2.2	

Source: Author's own calculations.

4.2. Conceptual Categories

The focus of the articles' content: vertical trust. The content map (Hart, 2018), used as the organizational framework for the studies, allowed for the structuring of information and the establishment of relationships between data, arguments, and evidence, leading to the development of a narrative synthesis that serves as a conceptual framework for organizational trust, reflecting the predominance of the study of vertical trust, which accounted for 79.13% of the analyzed excerpts.

Table 5. Content Map of the Literature

<table>
<tr><td rowspan="4">Selected Articles</td><td colspan="4">Vertical Trust</td><td colspan="4">Horizontal Trust</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Definition,
Hasan et al., (2023);

Beliefs and Expectations,
Vásquez et al., (2021), Neveu and Kakavand, (2019);

Vulnerability and Voluntariness,
Vargas & Toro (2022);

Benefits and Risks,
Okręglicka et al., (2024), Blasco and Blasco (2013);

Temporality and Instrumentality,
Zak (2017), Borum (2010);

Ethical and axiological dimension,
Mondragón and Rosales (2016); Hasan et al. (2023);

Leadership,
Martins & Costa (2016), Perilla & Gómez (2017), Reina et al. (2018); Zak (2017);

Effects,
Da Costa et al., (2014), Onoriode and Samuel (2023), Dia (2024), Bustamante et al. (2023), Zanabazar et al. (2024), Nabilla et al. (2023), Tosun and Özkan (2023), Reisdorf et al. (2024), Chiang-Vega et al. (2021).</td><td colspan="4">Definition,
Acosta et al., (2019), Jones et al., (2023);

Exchange relationships,
Bonau (2024), Mondragón and Rosales (2006), Hong et al. (2023);

Organizational social environment,
Dia (2024), Bonau (2024);

Positive emotions,
Martínez et al. (2022), Torrealba et al. (2024), Puertas (2012);

Effects,
Bustamante et al., (2023), Onoriode and Samuel (2023), Chiang-Vega et al., (2021).</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Articles</td><td colspan="2">Excerpts</td><td colspan="2">Article</td><td colspan="2">Excerpts</td></tr>
<tr><td>Number</td><td>Percentage</td><td>Number</td><td>Percentage</td><td>Number</td><td>Percentage</td><td>Number</td><td>Percentage</td></tr>
<tr><td>34</td><td>75.55%</td><td>110</td><td>79.13%</td><td>11</td><td>24.44%</td><td>29</td><td>20.86%</td></tr>
</table>

Source: Compiled by the author.

4.3. Narrative Evidence

4.3.1. Vertical Organizational Trust

"Trust is a fundamental concept that encompasses various dimensions of the organization, as it lays the foundation for interactions that significantly shape overall performance" (Hasan et al., 2023, p. 6). Trust thus serves as a sort of "cornerstone" in the ecosystem of relationships between employees and employers (Okręglicka & Lemańska-Majdzik, 2024). To understand the scope of this approach, it is important to distinguish between two types of vertical organizational trust—"trust in the supervisor and trust in the organization" (McEvily et al., 2003, as cited in Omar, 2011, p. 131)—and to examine the attributes that define their nature.

Below, we will discuss the characteristics or attributes that constitute vertical trust and that were identified and examined in this review:

Beliefs or expectations. Organizational trust "develops when employees believe in the organizations to which they belong, despite limited familiarity, interdependence, and interaction with the people who make up the organization" (Omar, 2011, as cited in Vásquez et al., 2021, p. 5). Also referred to as the "psychological contract" (Neveu and Kakavand, 2019; Aqil et al., 2023; Jones et al., 2023; Zanabazar et al., 2024)

Vulnerability. Spaemann (2005), a German philosopher, draws from the German phrase "to trust someone" the defining element of trust: "to surrender oneself to someone," highlighting the sense of "vulnerability" that this relationship between parties implies (as cited in Vargas and Toro, 2023, p. 5).

Voluntariness. Mayer et al. (1995) note that it is the "willingness of one party to be vulnerable to the actions of another party based on expectations that the other will perform a particular action" (as cited in Vargas and Toro, 2022, p. 5). Along these same lines, and more precisely, Lin (2009) points to "the willingness of employees to be vulnerable to the actions of their organization, without the employees having control over these actions and behaviors" (as cited in Vásquez et al., 2021, p. 5).

Benefit. Voluntariness is based on the expectation that the other party will act positively—that is, that this relationship "will work in one's best interest and not to one's disadvantage" (Ismail et al., 2023, p. 270). This is the source of motivation aimed at stimulating the individual's behavior and conduct in carrying out the assigned task or responsibility (Okręglicka & Lemańska, 2023).

Risk. The literature indicates that perceived risk comprises two components: (i) uncertainty, referring to the subjective perception of an unfavorable outcome; and (ii) consequences, the final result consisting of a loss or an unsatisfactory outcome (Cunningham, 1967, as cited in Blasco & Blasco, 2013). However, this is a factor that fluctuates as the relationship progresses. The literature repeatedly emphasizes how complex and sensitive it can be to maintain levels

of trust. Thus, Connell and Mannion (2006) highlight the importance of "repeated actions over extended periods of time in order to achieve gradual progress," thereby avoiding undesirable attitudes and behaviors resulting from increased perceived risk (as cited in Martins & Costa, 2016, p. 47).

Temporality. Zak (2007) states that there are "experiments conducted around the world that have shown that humans have a natural inclination to trust others" (p. 4). However, this is not a permanent reality. This propensity to trust at the beginning of a relationship, known as rapid or initial trust, "arises without a history of prior interaction between the parties" (Blasco and Blasco, 2013, p. 64). This form of trust "is said to be based on first impressions or cognitive cues" (Brewer, 1981, as cited in Blasco & Blasco, 2013, p. 64) or, as Borum (2010) points out, on "situational or contextual factors" (p. 16). This involves discussing trust within a "stages model" in which the affective component becomes more significant as the relationship progresses (Borum, 2010, p. 17). The literature associates "shared experiences, closeness, and cooperative efforts" as drivers of the "bond or connection between the parties that seals their trust" (Borum, 2010, p. 17).

Instrumentality. Organizational trust "must be instrumental" to the successful functioning of any organization, in order to achieve its objectives (Vargas & Toro, 2023, p. 6). However, this instrumentality must be permeated by and governed by positive axiological elements.

The literature has consistently referred to the "mediating role" of trust to encompass the instrumental nature of this concept in the service of these positive axiological elements. This systematic review identified 21 articles that support this assertion. They are: Dia (2024); Hasan et al. (2023); Yuwono et al. (2023); Neveu and Kakavand (2019); Rua and Costa (2016); Vásquez et al. (2021); Zanabar et al. (2024); Bonau (2024); Hong et al. (2023); Aqil et al. (2023); Ismail et al. (2023); Tosun & Özkan (2023); Jones et al. (2023); Addai et al. (2023); Acosta et al. (2011); Montero et al. (2021); Reinders & Barghouti (2019); Perilla and Gómez (2017); Omar (2011); and Da Costa et al. (2014). In short, Acosta et al. (2019) summarize this approach very well by stating that "research on the relationship between trust in organizational processes indicates that it plays a mediating role between the practices and resources that organizations implement, employee well-being, and positive organizational outcomes" (p. 86).

Ethical dimension. In the interactions that constitute the source of organizational trust, "there is a moral obligation and responsibility on the part of individuals—that is, an ethical dimension that guides behavior toward the achievement of goals, both for the organization and for individuals" (Braber, 1983, as cited in Mondragón & Rosales, 2006, p. 151). Indeed, this dimension serves as a "regulator of social relations" within organizations (Mondragón & Rosales, 2006, p. 155). Research cited in the literature suggests an organizational duty to engage in "ethical management of social concerns" (Hasan et al., 2023, p. 6). In other words, organizational actions and practices must reflect a sense of justice, equity, and honesty (Ismail et al., 2023, p. 270). Ultimately, this falls within the realm of "organizational justice," which is nothing more than "an individual's perception of how fairly they are treated at work" (McCardle,

2007, as cited in Neveu & Kakavand, 2019, p. 502). Other studies identified support this assertion: Hasan et al. (2023); Aqil et al. (2023); Jones et al. (2023); Addai et al. (2023); Bonau (2024).

Leadership. "A fundamental idea, common to various approaches to organizational trust, is based on the fact that an organization must ensure cooperation among people with different interests" (Martins & Costa, 2016, p. 47). The instrumental nature of trust is thus reflected—in its fullest sense—in its "key role" in leadership effectiveness, as a driving force behind organizational processes within the framework of cooperation among such diverse interests (Perilla and Gómez, 2022, p. 96). From this perspective, leadership must "be reflected in the leader's ability to listen to and respect employees' ideas; anticipate change; stimulate creativity and knowledge; delegate; and communicate through dialogue, applying holistic and democratic principles" (Martins & Costa, 2016, p. 45).

Several authors point to three factors that make an individual trustworthy and that—to a large extent—comprise this ethical dimension: (1) competence, understood as skills and knowledge in the field; (2) benevolence—doing good for the sake of good itself, regardless of personal benefit; and (3) integrity, which ultimately means being consistent between principles considered acceptable and one's daily actions (Rodríguez & Veloso, 2023, p. 547). "Cognitive trust" rests on these factors, resulting from the actions of the leader, manager, and organization (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002; McAllister, 1995; Schaubroeck et al., 2011, as cited in Bonau, 2024).

"Trust is the foundation of both individual and collective leadership" (Bustamante et al., 2023, p. 96). According to Martins & Costa (2016), transformational leadership broadly encompasses the various aspects necessary for building an environment of trust: (a) it fosters high levels of "enthusiasm, dedication, commitment, and effort" (p. 46); (b) "is based on empowering employees through relationships of trust, loyalty, and fairness, and on increasing employees' self-efficacy, self-confidence, and self-esteem" (Rego and Cunha, 2007, as cited in Rua and Costa, 2016, p. 46); and (c) to address "the challenges of a constantly changing environment, the development of transformational leadership behaviors should be considered highly beneficial, outperforming the results of traditional organizational development programs" (Abrell et al., 2011, as cited in Martins & Costa, 2016, p. 46).

Effects of vertical organizational trust. Organizational culture and climate are closely related to trust. Organizational culture, for its part, "refers to the values, beliefs, and basic assumptions that members infer as long-term guides for their behaviors" (Da Costa, 2014, p. 72). Organizational climate, on the other hand—which is dynamic and sensitive—results from the "relatively shared perception of interactions and their meaning that characterize a group or organization" (Da Costa, 2014, p. 72).

However, "trust forms the behavioral foundation of teamwork," and this translates into "organizational synergy" (Onoriode and Samuel, 2023, p. 8). In short, culture must be permeated by inter- and intra-organizational trust, and its promotion serves—to some extent—

as a stabilizer for the climate, which ultimately is a positive work climate. "Creating a positive work environment is crucial for professionals, as it can have a significant impact on satisfaction, motivation, and productivity" (Dia, 2024, p. 11). Likewise, Bustamante et al. (2023) state that "studies have demonstrated links between trust and positive outcomes, such as employee satisfaction, performance, collaboration, knowledge sharing, and successful negotiation," among others (p. 99).

More than 50% of the articles consulted in this systematic review agree that the main effects of organizational trust are commitment—defined as "a manifestation of belief in the organization's values, along with a genuine enthusiasm for contributing to the achievement of its objectives" (Borisov & Vinogradov, 2022, as cited in Zanabazar et al., 2024, p. 107); performance, understood as "the outcome of work in terms of quality and quantity that an individual is capable of achieving while carrying out their duties or the responsibilities assigned to them within the organization" (Mangkunegara, 2016, as cited in Nabilla et al., 2023, p. 3420); and job satisfaction, which encompasses two approaches: a holistic one, which evaluates job satisfaction as a whole, and an individual one, "based on an individual's emotional response to their work" (Tosun & Özkan, 2023, p. 64).

Given this "behavioral" component, trust also acts as a kind of moderator. Trust "reassures employees that they can engage in risky behaviors safely" (Yidong & Xinxin, 2013, as cited in Addai et al., 2023, p. 65). "When employees feel safe and secure at work, they are more likely to be satisfied with their jobs and perform better" (Dia, 2024, p. 9).

This perception of security is also reflected in senior management's decision-making. When there are high levels of trust, this "can significantly influence the way employees view their superiors and those strategic decisions"; in other words, "they place their trust in those decisions" (Reisdorf et al., 2024, p. 211). This directly impacts "the effectiveness of personnel management within organizations, fostering cooperation among people, promoting solidarity, and facilitating the creation of a more inclusive and integrative group" (Misztal, 1996, as cited in Chiang-Vega, 2021, p. 350). In general, all these effects of organizational trust contribute to the organization's productivity and success (Vargas & Toro, 2023), as well as its adaptability and innovation (Hong, 2023).

4.3.2. Horizontal Organizational Trust

Horizontal organizational trust—also known as "lateral trust" (Reinders & Barghouti, 2019, p. 131) or "team trust" (Acosta et al., 2019, p. 89)—is the trust that exists "among coworkers"; in more technical terms, "the willingness to be vulnerable to the actions of team members, based on positive expectations regarding their intentions and behaviors" (Acosta et al., 2019, p. 89). Next, we will discuss the characteristics or attributes that constitute horizontal trust and that were identified and examined in this review:

Exchange relationships. In addition to the attributes previously reviewed in the context of vertical organizational trust, the literature repeatedly notes that trust involves an exchange—referred to as "social exchange"—generally associated with the formation of "affective trust" (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002; McAllister, 1995; Schaubroeck et al., 2011, as cited in Bonau, 2024). This exchange process—in organizational terms—is fueled by both a rational or technical aspect and a more emotional or experiential aspect, strictly speaking. That is to say, on the one hand, the relationship of trust between individuals involves the exchange of "knowledge, procedures, and techniques" (Mondagrón et al., 2006); and on the other hand, expressions of affection, experiences, or shared moments that enrich the organizational culture (Hong et al., 2023). This is the foundation of a "friendly and cooperative organizational climate" that promotes solidarity, camaraderie, inclusion, and integration (Chiang-Vega et al., 2021, p. 349).

Organizational social environment. "An organization's social work environment refers to the relationships and interactions among employees" (Dia, 2024, p. 8). This concept encompasses culture, norms, and interpersonal relationships. Dia (2024) notes that "the work environment is 'essential for building trust among employees'; specifically, it can help create more cohesive and productive teams" (p. 4). This work environment rests on the network of relationships among individuals, which is sensitive to any disruption—particularly those stemming from organizational practices and policies (Mondragón et al., 2006).

Positive emotions. "Trust is rooted in the emotional bonds that connect individuals" (Hong et al., 2023, p. 36). Essentially, every organizational setting must promote positive emotions—among colleagues—(Montero et al., 2021, p. 547). This is because—according to the theory of collective emotions—"emotions can be contagious within a group of people, giving rise to collective emotions" (Torrealba et al., 2024, p. 33). The term "trust among coworkers" refers to the presence of a "culture of honesty, psychological safety, and mutual respect," among other emotions (Tosun & Özkan, 2023, p. 63). "Studies confirm that promoting positive emotions within an organization improves employees' happiness and well-being, which translates into increased creativity, productivity, engagement, and performance" (Puertas and Shahar, 2012, p. 75).

Effects of horizontal organizational trust. Cultivating a culture of trust has a fundamental impact on the "social fabric and human coexistence." This allows for "developing and strengthening relationships based on trust in others, believing that they will act in good faith, which in turn generates commitment, emotional and cognitive engagement—all of which are essential for carrying out tasks as a team" (Acosta et al., 2019, as cited in Bustamante et al., 2023, p. 94).

For Katzenbach and Smith (2016), the key elements of the definition of teamwork are a "shared purpose and an approach for which members hold each other accountable" (as cited in Onoriode & Samuel, 2023, p. 5). Cooperation is the immediate result of this process, "promoting solidarity and facilitating the creation of a more inclusive and integrative group" (Misztal, 1996, as cited in Chiang-Vega et al., 2021, p. 350).

5. Conclusions

Throughout this systematic review, we have explored the multiple factors involved in the process of building an environment of trust and how this serves as a strategic element for positive leadership. The results of this systematic review of 45 scientific articles highlight the importance of organizational trust, as they demonstrate a positive relationship between it and commitment; performance; satisfaction; creativity; security or certainty; adaptability to change; positive emotions; teamwork or cooperation; civic attitudes; and, ultimately, a positive organizational climate and employee well-being.

Among other findings, vertical trust—the focus of the studies—and horizontal trust comprise the dimensions of organizational trust, characterized by various attributes such as the beliefs or expectations that mediate the relationship; the willingness to be vulnerable; perceived benefits and risks; the temporal nature of the process; the instrumental nature of this concept versus its axiological content; exchange relationships and positive emotions within the framework of an organizational social environment; and the role of leadership as the driving force behind this framework.

Organizational trust is—and will continue to be—a relevant and complex issue. Organizations, regardless of their nature, must adapt to the changes and dynamics of the new, challenging, and even hostile environments of the globalized context of modernity. This makes organizational trust an imperative for the success of leaders, organizations, and the well-being of employees.

6. Recommendations

The following recommendations for future research are proposed based on the various aspects of this systematic literature review:

Methodological. New research initiatives on this topic could focus on eligibility criteria covering shorter time periods.

Based on the results of the descriptive categories. Future research could focus on studying more recent periods; it also seems appropriate to conduct research exclusively analyzing quantitative studies, specifically the different instruments used and the results of their implementation.

Findings from the conceptual categories. Based on the analysis of the dimensions of organizational trust, it seems appropriate to suggest that future studies focus on horizontal trust. Likewise, quantitative studies should be conducted using instruments designed to measure horizontal trust.

From the narrative evidence. The concepts of organizational justice and psychological contract were identified in the extracted excerpts. It is recommended to explore the interrelationship between organizational trust and these concepts.

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