Antecedents of trust in supervisor-subordinate relationships in the context of large-sized industrial companies

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Abstract

In today's highly competitive business world, trust in supervisor-subordinate relationships is a constantly fundamental factor to ensure long-term corporate success. Even though the topic has received notable attention from researchers over the past decades, recent studies show that in practice, supervisors still struggle to be perceived as trustworthy by their subordinates. Interestingly, most of the research on the topic so far has been conducted quantitatively. Based on the findings of those previous studies, the present study investigates antecedents of trust in supervisor-subordinate relationships from a qualitative perspective. This study aims to use a mixture of inductive and deductive content analysis to deepen the knowledge about already known antecedents as well as to discover new ones. Therefore, semi-structured interviews with 15 full-time employees from large-sized industrial companies were conducted. The participants were asked to reflect on their relationship with their current and previous supervisors to discover factors that affect the trustworthiness of those. Based on the interviews, several antecedents of trust in supervisor-subordinate relationships were identified. The present study was able to confirm the relevance of some determinants that were suggested by previous research, while also several new ones emerged from the inductive content analysis.

A relevant contribution of this study is that supervisors should give their employees a leap of faith to earn their trust. Moreover, it is argued that there might be a certain tension between different antecedents, caused by the individual demands of subordinates. Hence, supervisors must be flexible in their leadership style to meet the individual needs of subordinates. Additionally, the present study suggests directions for future research to develop concepts that help people in charge to set the stage for creating organizational circumstances that facilitate the development of trust between supervisors and subordinates.

Keywords: trust in supervisor, supervisor-subordinate relationship, antecedents of trust.

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1   Introduction

Over the past decades, the concept of trust within organizations has received considerable academic attention. Particularly, the importance of trust in leadership has been a vital point of discussion and research (Currall & Judge, 1995; Likert, 1967; Willemyns, Gallois, & Callan, 2003). Scholars nowadays agree that a trustful relationship between subordinate and supervisor is linked to various positive outcomes (Korsgaard, Brodt, & Whitener, 2002; Simons & Peterson, 2000). Especially in today's highly competitive and rapidly changing business world, a well-functioning relationship between employees and managers has become crucial to maintain competitive advantages and to stay open towards change (Barney & Hansen, 1994; Mishra, 1996). However, when there is distrust between employees and subordinates, this might result in fatal outcomes (Poon, Rahid, & Othman, 2006).

Researchers have found trust between supervisors and subordinates to be related to various workplace-related outcomes. Burke, Sims, Lazzara, and Salas (2007) indicate that a high level of trust towards the supervisor positively affects the job performance of subordinates. This effect has been researched by Rempel, Holmes, and Zanna (1985) in more detail. Their study suggests that trust positively influences processes such as communication, information sharing, and cooperation (Rempel et al., 1985). Nevertheless, there is evidence that the relationship between trust and job performance is context depended. In their research, Huang, Lun, Liu and, Gong (2010) were not able to confirm an increased job performance for managerial subordinates but only for non-managerial subordinates. Even though the link between trust and job performance might be context depended, there is sufficient evidence for an existing positive relationship (Brower, Lester, Korsgaard, & Dineen, 2008).
Despite job performance, a high level of trust has been linked to increased job satisfaction (Werbel & Henriques, 2009). According to Dirks and Ferrin (2002), this is since employees feel safe and positive in trusting relationships with their supervisors. That was also confirmed by research from Knoll and Gill (2011), which further supports the well-established relationship between trust in supervisor and job satisfaction.

In their widely adopted research, Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman (1995) were able to link trust in leadership with numerous more positive outcomes. For example, trust was shown to have a significant effect on subordinates' level of motivation. Specifically, trust was shown to influence the subordinates' acceptance of goals that were stated by the supervisor. Participants were intrinsically higher motivated and showed an increased ability to work independently when having trust in their supervisor (Costigan et al., 2006). Moreover, Connel, Ferres, and Travaglione (2003) discovered a relationship between trust in leadership and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB). According to Organ (1988), OCB can be described as "behavior(s) of a discretionary nature that is not part of the employee's formal role requirements, but promotes the effective functioning of the organization," and is by definition highly related to intrinsic motivation.

The positive effects of a trustful relationship between supervisors and subordinates have been well established in research over the past decades. However, integrating those concepts into practice is often problematic. Even though the importance of trustful supervisor-subordinate relationships was already proven years ago, a recent study by Kim, Wang, and Chen (2018) indicates that supervisors still struggle to earn the trust of their subordinates. This

was confirmed by Edelman Berland Trust Barometer, which revealed that the trust of subordinates in leadership is at an all-time low (Edelman Berland, 2014). This is alarming, keeping in mind the various positive and negative outcomes of a trustful or distrustful supervisor-subordinate relationship.

In order to act on this problem, this research aims at investigating determinants that affect the development of trust in a supervisor-subordinate relationship within an organizational context. Interestingly, most of the research on the topic so far has been conducted quantitatively. However, as qualitative research methods allow to generate new ways of seeing existing data (Kelle, 2006), it might be an appropriate method to close existing research gaps on the topic of trust in supervisor-subordinate relationships. Therefore, the present study will investigate the development of trust in supervisor-subordinate relationships from a qualitative perspective to deepen the knowledge about already known antecedents as well as to discover new ones. Hence, semi-structured interviews with 15 experienced full-time employees working in the industrial sector will be conducted to answer the following research question: "*What are antecedents that affect the development of a trustful supervisor-subordinate relationship within large-sized industrial companies?*"
This study will focus on the relationship between subordinates and direct leaders that are involved in the operational day to day business. Furthermore, there will be no distinction made between the term 'manager', 'supervisor' and 'leader' since they are used interchangeably in the literature. The same goes for the terms 'subordinate' and 'employee'.

As already stated, there has been quite some research done focusing on trust in leadership. Therefore, first, a literature review will be conducted to summarize the most relevant findings on this topic so far. Subsequently, the qualitative research approach of this study will be described, and the results will be discussed. Finally, theoretical and practical implications will be given based on previous research and the findings of the conducted interviews. To get an impression on how existing literature for the present study was collected, the literature study log can be found in Appendix C.

2   Theoretical Framework

2.1   *Defining trust*

Over the years, scholars have struggled to provide a universally accepted definition of trust. Some researchers even argue that, due to the multidimensionality and context-dependency of trust, this construct cannot be captured by a single definition (Scandura & Pellegrini, 2008). Nevertheless, when viewing trust specifically from an organizational perspective, some elements of trust widely have been acknowledged by scholars. According to Johnson-George and Swap (1982), trusting another party always involves some kind of risk-taking. Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt, and Camerer (1998) describe this risk-taking as the willingness to be vulnerable to another party. Moreover, positive expectations seem to be part of the trusting process, as Rotter (1967, p. 651) defines trust as: "an expectancy held by an individual or a group that the word, promise, verbal or written statement of another individual or group can be relied upon."

Based on the previous components, Mayer et al. (1995, p. 712) formulated a widely accepted definition of trust within an organizational context. They define trust as: "the willingness of a party to be vulnerable to the actions of another party based on the expectations that the other will perform a particular action important to the trustor, irrespective of the ability to monitor or control that other party." Since this definition captures all the above-mentioned components of trust, it will also be used in the present study.

2.2   *Antecedents of trust in supervisor*

The development of trust in supervisor-subordinate relationships has received notable attention from research over the last decades. While some studies consider certain supervisor attributes as the reason to trust (Mayer et al., 1995), others point out the importance of the organizational context (Blunsdon & Reed, 2003) or the effect of specific cultural antecedents (Costigan, Insinga, Berman, Kranas, & Kureshov, 2011). In their study, Tzafrir et al. (2015) conducted a meta-analysis of the trust literature between 1995 and 2011 to identify distinct clusters of trust antecedents. The categories they detected to be most important were 'supervisor attributes', 'subordinate attributes', 'interpersonal process', and 'organizational factors' (Tzafir et al., 2015). 'Supervisor attributes' refers to how the supervisor affects the development of trust through his/her character traits and the subordinates' perceptions of those. As the counterpart, 'subordinate attributes' is linked to how the characteristics of subordinates impact the development of trust. The category 'interpersonal process' describes how the relationship between supervisor and subordinate influences the degree of trust. Lastly, the cluster 'organizational factors' describes how the development of trust is affected by the characteristics of an organization (Tzafir et al., 2015). To cover all potentially relevant determinants of trust, these main categories of antecedents will be the starting point for this literature review.

2.2.1   Supervisor attributes

Benevolence

The first of those four main categories are, according to Tzafrir et al. (2015), the attributes of a supervisor. Mayer et al. (1995) state that there are three characteristics of supervisors that affect the extent to which that person will be trusted: benevolence, integrity, and ability. According to Mayer et al. (1995), benevolence refers to the degree to which a supervisor is believed to do good to his or her subordinates and to act without an egocentric and profit-driven motive. A similar definition is given by Whitener, Brodt, Korsgaard, and Werner (1998, p. 523), who define it as: "the enhancement of the welfare of others." Depending on the study, not all scholars use the term benevolence to refer to the above-described concept. While Mishra (1996) calls it 'openness and caring', Clark and Payne (1997), define it as 'loyalty and openness'. Nevertheless, all those terms in their essence refer to the same as benevolence.

In general, there are a lot of studies that confirm the effect between benevolence and the degree of trust (Knoll & Gill, 2011; Korsgaard, Schweiger, & Sapienza, 1995). From a theoretical perspective, that makes sense. If subordinates feel that their supervisors care about them, that might decrease the fear of subordinates that is caused by the fact that they are vulnerable to their supervisor. In other words: Subordinates might think that if supervisors care about their well-being, they will be less likely to take advantage of their position of power. Thus, they will be more willing to trust that supervisor.

Integrity

Besides benevolence, the integrity of a supervisor plays a vital role in employees' decision to place trust in a supervisor or not. According to Mayer et al. (1995, p. 719), a relationship characterized by integrity "involves the trustor's perception that the trustee adheres to a set of principles that the trustor finds acceptable." Various studies have proven the impact of integrity on trust in supervisors (Butler, 1991; Sitkin & Roth, 1993). Also, the more recent study by Knoll and Gill (2011) researched the effect of integrity on trust. In line with previous research, their study revealed that integrity accounted for 38 percent of the variance. In other words: In their study, 38 percent of the dependent variable 'trust' were explained by the independent variable 'integrity'. Therefore, integrity has a highly significant effect on trust in supervisors (Knoll & Gill, 2011).

DeConinck (2011) agrees on the importance of integrity but adds the influence of interactional justice. This means that if supervisors treat subordinates with respect and explain the rationale of their decisions, subordinates will be more likely to put trust in them (Bhattacharya, 2014). This was also shown by a study of Clark and Payne (1997), who found that leaders are perceived as more trustworthy by their subordinates when being honest, sincere, and if they act as promised. Even though some studies indicate that other facets of justice (distributive and procedural justice) might have an effect as well (Pillai, Schriesheim, & Williams, 1999), more recent research states that interactional justice seems to have the most significant influence on trust-building (DeConinck, 2011).

Ability

Following Tzafrir et al. (2015), the third sub-category of benevolence is the managers' ability. Some studies indicate that if subordinates think that the manager has the ability to impact their work environment positively, they would be more likely to place trust in that person (Conger, 1990; Davis, Schoorman, Mayer, & Tan, 2000). However, there is a certain level of disagreement among scholars towards the degree to which the competencies and skills of managers affect trustworthiness. For example, Knoll and Gill (2011) were not able to find a significant effect of leaders' ability on his or her trustworthiness. Interestingly, 'ability' still had the most considerable relative weight on trustworthiness, compared to benevolence and integrity (Knoll & Gill, 2011). This ambiguous result indicated the importance of further investigation (Knoll & Gill, 2011). This was done by Lleó de Nalda, Guillén, and Pechuán (2016), who conducted a survey among 181 mid-level managers. It turned out that ability has a significant effect on the degree to which a supervisor is trusted (Lleó de Nalda et al., 2016). This leads to the conclusion that ability indeed significantly affects the trustworthiness of supervisors' however, the other variables might be more important (Engelbrecht & Cloete, 2000).

2.2.2   Subordinate attributes

Propensity to trust

Most studies that investigate the development of trust in supervisor-subordinate relationships debate about the effect of the variable 'propensity to trust' (Burke, Sims, Lazzara, & Salas, 2007; Mayer, Davis, & Schoorman, 1995; Tzafrir et al., 2015). The propensity to trust can be defined as "a person's general willingness to trust others" (Poon et al., 2006, p. 37). Even though the topic has often been touched upon, there is disagreement among scholars to which degree it affects trust within supervisor-subordinate relationships. While some studies report a significant effect (Jarvenpaa, Knoll, & Leidner, 1998), others report mixed results (McKnight, Cummings, & Chervany, 1998). However, in the more recent study by Knoll and Gill (2011), participants' propensity to trust significantly affected the degree to which they trusted their supervisor. This indicates that, indeed, subordinates with a higher general willingness to trust people, will also be more likely to trust their direct leader.

Perceived Risk

As already stated in the introduction, trust by definition requires risk-taking, as it makes the trustor vulnerable. Burke et al. (2007) state that subordinates are vulnerable to their supervisors because supervisors are the ones that fall decisions about promotions, compensations, and employment. This seems to be related to the gap of power between supervisors and subordinates. This gap is often perceived as more salient by employees than it is by managers. In other words, subordinates are likely to perceive the risk they take when interacting with supervisors as higher than it is seen by their supervisors (Willemyns et al., 2003). The perceived risk might be even higher when, for example, the leader's motivations for specific actions are unclear (Burke et al., 2007). Hence, if subordinates perceive the risk to communicate honestly

and openly with their supervisors as high (due to a feeling of vulnerability or unclear motives of the supervisor), subordinates will be less likely to trust that person.

Leadership prototypes

The individual expectations subordinates hold, on what in their opinion, makes the ideal leader also affect the likelihood to place trust in a supervisor or not. Those expectations might vary across individuals and cultures (Burke et al., 2007). Nevertheless, people tend to expect the ideal leader to be charismatic and to endorse a team-oriented leadership style (House et al., 1999). If those expectations are met, subordinates might be more likely to trust the leader (Burke et al., 2007). Speaking differently: People tend to have an image of the ideal supervisor in mind. If those individual expectations are met, this will lead to higher trust, since the person one has in mind and the actual supervisor are complementary. Thus, according to concept of leadership prototypes, the development of trust is less dependent on factors such as integrity, benevolence, ability etc., but rather on every individual's mental model and the degree to which supervisors fit to that. If, however, the subordinate's mental models and the attributes of the actual supervisor do not fit, it can negatively influence trustworthiness (Den Hartog, House, Hanges, Ruiz-Quintanilla, & Dorfman, 1999). The whole concept of leadership prototypes is related to leadership style, which will be discussed in the next section.

2.2.3   Interpersonal process

Leadership style

Researchers have paid considerable attention to the effect of leadership style on the development of trust. Especially, transformational leadership was found to be positively related to the trustworthiness of supervisors (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002). This is because a transformational leadership style is characterized by showing concern and respect for followers (Jung & Avolio, 2000), and involving subordinates in the decision making (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, & Bommer, 1996). This seems to be related to the concept of ethical leadership. Ethical leadership is exemplified by leaders who act as role models and care about their subordinates' concerns. Furthermore, ethical leaders demonstrate honesty, integrity, and fairness (Brown & Treviño, 2006). The relatedness of transformational and ethical leadership is supported by Jambawo (2018, p. 1000), who states that "transformational leadership requires the principles of ethical leadership." This was also found in the study by Gillespie and Mann (2004), who investigated the degree to which transformational leadership practices impact supervisors' trustworthiness. It turned out that the variables 'consultative leadership' (considering subordinates' input when making decisions) and 'idealized influence' (leader considers moral and ethical consequences of decisions) significantly affected the development of trust in leadership (Gillespie & Mann, 2004). This leads to two implications: First, it can be said that transformational leadership already involves the principles of ethical leadership. Secondly, transformational leadership positively affects the degree to which a supervisor is trusted.

Additionally, to transformational leadership practices, Willemyns et al. (2003) point out the relationship between a mentoring leadership style and supervisors' trustworthiness. They conducted a content analysis that revealed that an overbearing or coercive leadership style decreases the trustworthiness of managers. However, supervisors who were perceived as caring

about the personal and professional well-being of their subordinates were rated as higher in terms of trustworthiness (Willemyns et al., 2003).

Avolio, Gardner, Walumbwa, Luthans, and May (2004) agree on the importance of transformational leadership and mentoring leadership. However, in their paper, they add authentic leadership as a determinant of trust. Authentic leadership is demonstrated by leaders who "act in accordance with deep personal values, and convictions, to build credibility and win the respect and trust of followers by encouraging diverse viewpoints and building networks of collaborative relationships with followers" (Avolio et al., 2004, p. 4). The conclusion from this definition is that authentic leadership already incorporates behaviors of transformational leadership, ethical leadership, and mentoring leadership (Avolio et al., 2004). More recent research by Hsieh and Wang (2015) confirms the impact of authentic leadership on the development of trust in supervisors. If supervisors exemplify high moral standards, integrity, honesty, and develop collaborative relationships with subordinates, this leads to higher trustworthiness (Hsieh & Wang, 2015). However, those behaviors of the supervisor need to be perceived as authentic by the subordinates (Hsieh & Wang, 2015).

Not surprisingly, 'leadership style' is highly related to 'supervisor attributes'. Especially the supervisors' 'benevolence' and 'integrity' are affected by the leadership style. Through the characteristics of an authentic leadership style, leaders can increase their perceived integrity and benevolence. Subsequently, by encouraging open communication, engaging subordinates, and sharing critical information, supervisors can enhance their ability and integrity and thus will be seen as more trustworthy (Avolio et al., 2004).

Similarities between trustor and trustee

Empirical studies show that the degree to which subordinates and supervisors share common values and perspectives also affects trustworthiness. In the study by Gillespie and Mann (2004), the variable 'common values' was the strongest predictor for trust in supervisors. This is supported by Levin, Whitener, and Cross (2006), who specifically investigated similarities between subordinate and supervisor. It was shown that employees are more likely to trust supervisors that have the same gender as they have. Notably, this effect was only significant for new and short relationships. Shared perspectives, however, were not significant in new and short, but only in old and long relationships. Levin et al. (2006) conclude that at the beginning of relationships, especially factors such as demographical similarities determine the level of trust. The longer a relationship exists, shared perspectives become more important (Levin et al., 2006).

Prior experiences

When discussing subordinates' prior experiences with supervisors, there are naturally two perspectives. The first one is about previous experiences with a specific leader. If there were already prior interactions with a supervisor, the outcomes (positive or negative) would impact subordinates' perceptions of whether that leader can be trusted or not (Burke et al., 2007). Once formed, it is difficult to change those perceptions again.

The second perspective is related to experiences with former supervisors and subordinates' affective states following from those experiences. Affective states can be defined

as moods and emotions that impact ones' perceptions of the behaviors and intentions of others (Forgas & Bower, 1987). In the context of supervisor-subordinate relationships, affective states can be either positive or negative, depending on the experiences with a supervisor. For instance: If subordinates are in a negative affective state when an old supervisor leaves the company, it is likely that this state persists until the new supervisor is introduced (Ballinger, Schoorman, & Lehman, 2009). According to Forgas and George (2001), a negative affective state causes that subordinates will focus mainly on details that confirm negative evaluations of targets. Thus, higher levels of negative affective reactions of subordinates lead to lower perceived trustworthiness of supervisors (Ballinger et al., 2009).

2.2.4   Organizational factors

Workplace climate

The third antecedent reveals how organizational climate affects the development of trust in supervisor-subordinate relationships. A positive organizational climate that is characterized by shared ethical norms was found to increase the perceptions of trust for both subordinates and supervisors (Ruppel & Harrington, 2000). A more recent study by DeConinck (2011) investigated the relationship between ethical work climate and trust in supervisors. The study revealed that especially peer behavior and ethical norms significantly influence the trustworthiness of supervisors. This indicates that unethical behavior of peers and the degree to which such behaviors are sanctioned by the organization affects the amount of trust subordinates place in their supervisors (DeConinck, 2011). Even though the workplace climate is not only affected by the supervisor, but by all members of an organization, it is related to the antecedents 'leadership style' and 'attributes of the supervisor'. An authentic leadership style might, for instance, lead to a better workplace climate, since an authentic leader is likely to act in accordance with highly ethical norms (Hsieh & Wang, 2015) and thus will punish contrary behavior.

Burke et al. (2007) add to shared ethical norms the importance of perceived psychological safety. This is related to the feeling of subordinates that trust and mutual respect are present when interacting with a manager. It also reflects a climate in which actions such as questioning leaders' suggestions and decisions are not punished (Burke, Stagl, Salas, Pierce, & Kendall, 2006). Edmondson (2003) suggests that such a climate can be built through interpersonal activities between supervisors and managers. This is supported by Mayer et al. (1995), who state that trust is built as parties interact. However, even when an environment characterized by psychological safety was created, the trust might not necessarily stay stable. Thus leaders not only need to learn how to develop such a state but also how to sustain it (Scandura & Pellegrini, 2008).

Structural factors

Structural factors include the organization of the workplace, implementation of technologies and conditions, and workflows. There is evidence for a clear relationship between organizational change and trust in leadership. Changes such as downsizing are likely to cause a decrease of trust in the management (Spreitzer & Mishra, 1998). Morgan and Zeffane (2003) even state that any kind of change leads to a decrease of trust in management. However, the

more employees are involved during the change process, the higher the trust in leadership will be. Also, the trust will be higher when the change beneficially impacts subordinates' work (Morgan & Zeffane, 2003). Blunsdon and Reed (2003) add to this that trust in leadership is increased when decisions that seriously affect employees are taken by someone they have a direct relationship with. They also suggest that the development of trust to a certain degree differs among industry sectors, as workplaces with a higher number of white-collar workers are likely to have a higher level of trust (Blunsdon & Reed, 2003).

3   Method

The goal of the present study is to answer the research question: *"What are antecedents that affect the development of a trustful supervisor-subordinate relationship within large-sized industrial companies?"* The previous literature review indicates that there has been a considerable amount of academic reports that investigated this topic. Nevertheless, most of the reviewed studies were conducted in a quantitative way. Keeping in mind that supervisors still often struggle to have trustful relationships with their subordinates (Kim et al., 2018), the present study aims to research the topic in a qualitative way. It was decided to conduct a phenomenological research design with semi-structured interviews, as this would be an adequate method to gain in-depth insights from participants on this specific issue (Horton, Macve, & Struyven, 2004). Moreover, it was decided to investigate the topic of trust development from the perspective of subordinates to get their opinions and experiences on how trustful supervisor-subordinate relationships can be developed. Thus, semi-structured interviews with 15 full-time employees were conducted in a period of two weeks. All interviews were performed online via Zoom Video Conferencing, and the average time of an interview was 36.14 minutes (SD = 9.02). Moreover, the present study was conducted with ethical approval of the ethics committee of the University of Twente.

3.1   Participants

All participants were full-time employees at industrial companies with more than 200 employees. The sample was gathered by using non-probability sampling. Specifically, a mixture of purposive and convenience sampling was used. This was done for two reasons: First, it allowed the researcher to recruit participants based on their knowledge and expertise in the field of interest (Etikan, 2016). Secondly, it enabled the researcher to approach participants from the own network. The experience of the participants was a vital inclusion criterion since this would allow participants to not only reflect on their current but also on previous relationships with supervisors. This resulted in the fact that each participant that was chosen has had several years of experience in his/her professional career with numerous supervisors. Due to the limited capacities of the researcher, it was decided to also include three less experienced participants in the sample. Nevertheless, they have had experiences with several supervisors as well. Another crucial inclusion criterion was that potential participants were working in a position with a direct supervisor.

Based on these criteria, a list of 17 potential participants was approached via email. Those who did not respond within one week were sent a reminder. Eventually, 15 participants agreed to take part in the study, while two did not respond. With those who agreed to participate, appointments were set for the interviews. A few days before the interview, participants received another mail with a link to join the Zoom Meeting and a short description of how to access Zoom.

Of the 15 participants, 13 were male and two female. This uneven gender distribution was due to the limited network of the researcher and not intentionally. The 15 participants were divided among seven different companies. The largest proportion (n=8) of the sample worked for a company in the construction supply industry. The second-largest proportion (n=2) was employed by an international manufacturer of heating, industrial, and refrigeration systems.

The five remaining participants were divided among five other large-sized industrial companies. All participants had a direct supervisor at the point of this study. Eight participants were employed as sales managers with the responsibility for a certain region. The other participants' positions varied from key account managers to product management.

While the mean age of the first 11 participants was 49.70 years ($SD = 5.50$) with a professional career of an average of 29.60 years ($SD = 6.40$), the four younger participants had a mean age of 23.30 years ($SD = 2.50$) and 5.50 ($SD = 3.11$) years of work experience. Nevertheless, all have had experiences with several supervisors in their professional careers. The organization tenure of the participants ranged from 2 years to almost 30 years.

3.2 Data collection

The present study used semi-structured interviews to gather the needed data. This was done as this method allows participants to elaborate on specific topics and thus provides the researcher with in-depth insights on specific phenomena. However, due to the standardized way of asking questions, semi-structured interviews can be compared with each to draw conclusions (Horton et al., 2004). The interview questions were conducted based on the previously presented literature review. Due to the method of semi-structured interviews, a standard set of questions was used across all interviews. However, the questions were formulated open-ended, which gave participants the freedom to bring up new ideas and dive into specific topics based on what the researcher asked. Since most of the research on the topic of trust between supervisor and subordinate was conducted quantitatively, it was decided to formulate interview questions oneself to fit the specific circumstances of this study. Nevertheless, several quantitative studies were reviewed and used as a source of inspiration to design the interview scheme (e.g. Clark & Payne, 2006; Lleó de Nalda et al., 2016; McAllister, 1995).

At the beginning of each interview, participants were informed about the topic and the aim of the study. Furthermore, they were asked for their permission to record the interview. If the participants agreed, it was ensured that all personal data would remain confidential and that the participant had the right to withdraw his or her permission at any point in the research. After this was said, the actual interview started with some general introducing questions. Participants were asked for their age, position, years of experience in their professional careers and how long they had been working for their current company. These questions should make participants feel comfortable to prepare them for the more complex questions.

After the introduction, participants were asked questions related to their relationship with their current supervisor. First, participants were asked to describe the relationship with their direct supervisor in general. This was done to get a first impression of whether participants are positive or negative about the relationship with their supervisor. Follow-up questions included, for example: *"How would you describe the leadership style of your supervisor?"* and *"To what extent would you describe the relationship with your supervisor as trustful?"*. Based on the answers, follow-up questions were asked, such as *"Which attributes of your supervisor lead to the fact that you trust/mistrust him/her?"*.

Subsequently, participants were asked to reflect on their experiences with supervisors in general. This included the question: *"Over your whole career, can you think of a direct supervisor that you really trusted or mistrusted?"*. This question was derived from research by

Connel et al. (2003), who investigated the topic of trust using focus groups. This was, then, followed by questions such as: *"Why do you think you trusted/mistrusted that person?"*, *"What are attributes and character traits that you would use to describe that person?"* and *"In your opinion: What could the supervisor have done differently to earn your trust?"*.

Next, questions concerning the environment at work were asked to determine whether that might affect the degree to which subordinates trust their supervisor. Here, questions were asked, such as: *"How do you perceive the atmosphere at your workplace?"* and *"How do you think does this atmosphere affect the trust you have in your supervisor?"*. Lastly, questions were asked that allowed participants to put themselves in the position of their supervisors. This included questions such as: *"What do you think a direct supervisor expects from you to place trust in you?"* and *"If you were supervisor, how would you ensure that subordinates inform you about delicate issues?"*. Table 1 indicates the relation between the antecedents derived from the literature review and the questions asked during the interview. The complete interview scheme can be found in Appendix A.

Table 1: Example questions for each category of antecedents

Antecedent	Example questions
Supervisor attributes	"What attributes does a direct supervisor need to have for you to have a trustful relationship with him/her?"
Subordinate attributes	"What do you think a direct supervisor expects from you to place trust in you?"
Interpersonal process	"To what extent do you think private talks increase the development of trust between you and your supervisor?"
Organizational factors	"How do you think does the general atmosphere at your workplace affect the trust you have in your supervisor?"

3.3   Analysis strategy

The interviews resulted in qualitative data that were afterward analyzed using a multistep content-analytic procedure. After all interviews had been performed, the audio files were transcribed. For the coding process, a combination of deductive and inductive content analysis was used. The antecedents that were derived from the literature review were used as a starting point for the codebook. This was done as it would allow testing whether the results from the previous mostly quantitative studies on the topic of trust, would also be applicable in the context of the present qualitative study (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). After the first transcript had been coded by the researcher, new codes and subcategories were then added to the coding scheme that derived from inductive content analysis. This combination resulted in a codebook that consisted of deductively derived codes and inductive codes. As an example, one of the codes that were derived from the inductive content analysis was the supervisors' 'conflict skills'. This code referred to the supervisor's perceived ability to deal with criticism and contradicting opinions. This code was then linked to the category 'supervisor attributes'. One

code that derived from deductive content analysis was, e.g., 'benevolence'. The new codebook was then discussed with a second coder who had not been involved in this study up to that point. The second coder agreed on the four categories (see Table 1). However, the code 'eye-level' was moved from the category 'supervisor attributes' to the category 'interpersonal process', based on the second coder's suggestion. The full codebook can be found in Appendix B.

3.3.1 Intercoder reliability

After the second coder had agreed on the codebook, two interviews were coded by the researcher and the second coder to ensure the interrater reliability. Since the number of coded text elements varied between the interviews, it was decided to use the two interviews in which the most text elements were coded for calculating the intercoder reliability. This was also done to have a sufficient number of text elements for the less frequently mentioned codes. This resulted in the fact that the transcripts from the first and one of the last interviews were used. According to Graneheim and Lundman (2004), this also prevents that the intercoder agreement is biased by factors of inconsistency. Because researchers gather new insights during the data collection process, that might affect follow-up questions and narrow the scope of the researcher. By choosing one transcript from the beginning of the data collection process and one from the end, this risk can be precluded.

After each coding session, the Cohen's kappa was calculated. Two coding sessions were conducted in which in total 139 and 148 text elements were coded. After the first coding session, the Cohen's kappa for the categories 'subordinate attributes' and 'organizational factors' were insufficient as well as the overall Cohen's kappa. After discussing the disagreements on those two categories, the transcripts were coded again. After the second coding session, a sufficient Cohen's kappa of 0.75 was reached, which is generally seen as a substantial intercoder reliability (Landis & Koch, 1977). The Cohen's kappa for each category can be found in Table 2. As it is shown, the intercoder reliability for 'subordinate attributes' was also after the second round of coding relatively low. Because of the low number of coded elements, it was decided to keep the Cohen's kappa of 0.57. This was also done because it turned out during the interviews that participants, in general, did not mention subordinate attributes frequently. Speaking differently: Even if the Cohen's kappa for this category had been higher, the explanatory power would still have been low because of the limited amount of text fragment assigned to the category. This will be discussed further in the limitations section.

Even though the number of assigned elements for the category 'organizational factors' was low as well, the codes were easier assignable. This was because the code 'workplace climate' was the only code that text elements were assigned to within the category 'organizational factors'. Thus, the coding process for this category was rather straight forward, after it had been discussed with the second coder. After all disagreements had been discussed, the remaining interviews were coded by the researcher.

Table 2: Intercoder reliability level for each category of the codebook

Category	Coded elements	Cohen's Kappa
Supervisor attributes	85	0.70
Subordinate attributes	12	0.57
Interpersonal process	43	0.71
Organizational factors	8	1.00

4 Results

Overall, the most text elements were assigned to the categories 'supervisor attributes' (n=419) and 'interpersonal factors' (n=204). The categories 'subordinate attributes' (n=18) and 'organizational factors' (n=16) received less attention. In the following, the outcomes of the previously explained data collection process will be described. Therefore, the participants' perceptions of the different categories and codes will be presented, and the most striking codes will be discussed.

4.1 Supervisor attributes

In general, it turned out that during the coding, the most text elements were assigned to codes of the category 'supervisor attributes' (see Table 3). The codes and sub-codes related to this category can be found in Appendix B. All codes that are linked to this category are related to things the supervisor does or initiates.

Table 3: Text fragments assigned to category 'supervisor attributes'

Code	Definition	Example text fragment
Benevolence (n=96)	The degree to which the supervisor is believed to enhance the welfare of employees.	"As a supervisor, you have to show interest in the normal life and daily routine of employees."
Conflict skills (n=71)	The degree to which the manager is open towards criticism and contradicting opinions.	"It is important that the supervisor can handle conflicts. There are always points and issues in the working world where you rub shoulders. It must be possible to argue and then continue working normally. One must also be able to speak clear words."
Integrity (n=63)	The degree to which the supervisor follows values that are accepted by the subordinate.	"Trust, for me, means that if I tell him something that I can assume that he will not tell anyone else. If I have problems with someone else, then I can approach him and know that he is subjected to confidentiality and will not tell anyone."

Table 3 (continued):

Code	Definition	Example text fragment
Ability (n=49)	The degree to which the manager is perceived to be able to impact the work environment positively.	"It doesn't help if I can say things to him, but he doesn't act on them. That would be his right as a boss, but if arguments are not heard regularly, then it is useless."
Degree of control (n=46)	The degree to which the manager controls his/her employees in their work.	"As an employee, you have to have the feeling that your supervisor lets you do things without taking corrective action at every step."
Leap of faith (n=43)	The degree to which the manager trusts his/her employees to receive their trust in return.	"Getting trust requires giving trust. You have to give something first to get something back."
Approachability (n=35)	The degree to which a supervisor is perceived to be approachable.	"What I appreciate about him is that when you have problems or want something from him, you can always go to him. He always has his office door open."
Showing esteem (n=16)	The degree to which the supervisor compliments the subordinates' work.	"I'm a guy that needs a longer leash. That's a kind of appreciation for me. When he lets me do things, I feel appreciation and like he trusts me."

4.1.1 Benevolence

Every participant mentioned the importance of benevolence. As it was described before, benevolence is the degree to which a supervisor is believed to do good to his or her subordinates, to care about them and to act without an egocentric and profit-driven motive (Mayer et al., 1995). Participants perceived it as important that their supervisor cares about them. They stressed the importance of having a supervisor who is interested not only in them as a workforce, but also in the person behind that. Typical statements participants made here were: *"As a supervisor, you have to show interest in the normal life and daily routine of employees."* It was striking that participants saw it as crucial for trust development, to have a supervisor they can turn to if they have work-related or private problems that impact their work. According to another participant, this could, e.g., be ensured by being responsive to individual wishes and situations. When asked why he perceives the relationship with his current

supervisor as trustful, this participant stated: "*I can come to him with problems. Sometimes the job keeps me away from home at night during the week. But he's willing to compromise if I say I need to be home this week.*" Similarly, several participants argued that a supervisor should be accommodating when employees have, e.g., a doctor's appointment. When asked how they would define trust in a relationship with a supervisor, several participants indicated this as striking.

Related to benevolence, participants indicated the importance of having a supervisor that supports them in their daily work. A supervisor should be loyal to his employees, which means that he/she supports them if, e.g., operating figures are lacking behind. One participant, e.g., stated: "*He is characterized by the fact that he is simply human. There are others where you're just a number, and you're fired. He's always looking to see what's behind it.*" In contrast to that, however, participants argued that a supervisor should be able to make tough decisions if some people in a team do not work as they should. Besides strengthening employees' backs when it is adequate, participants also highlighted the importance of being supported in the implementation of own ideas. A lot of participants pointed out that a supervisor must accept that there is not only one way to reach a goal and that he/she should support employees in finding their own solutions. Moreover, it was indicated that supervisors should support employees by identifying their potentials and assigning tasks based on those. Supervisors should develop their subordinates further, also beyond their own interests. For example, one participant stated: "*A supervisor should not act out of his or her own convenience but in the interest of the company. If an employee has potential, he or she will usually recognize that himself or herself. And at some point, if he or she is not supported in developing this potential, then you will lose him or her completely and then possibly also for the company.*"
When participants were asked about supervisors which they did not trust, most of the time, benevolence and support was low or not existent. A recurring phenomenon was that relationships were described as distrustful if the supervisor was perceived like he/she would not care about the individual subordinate but rather about his or her career and progress. One participant also stated that even his supervisor acted as he/she would care about his/her employees, it would not seem natural but rather affected. This indicates that just acting as caring does not increase trust if the supervisor is not perceived as caring by the subordinate.

Benevolence, as a variable, partially affects several more upcoming variables. However, as indicated by Whitener et al. (1998), benevolence is about enhancing the welfare of employees. This is what the variable 'support' represents. Thus, it was decided to code 'support' as a sub-code of 'benevolence'.

4.1.2   Conflict skills

The code 'conflict skills' was the most frequently assigned code during the interviews. Participants indicated that to trust a supervisor, he/she must have specific skills when dealing with contradicting opinions. Participants agreed that discussions and contradicting opinions between supervisors and subordinates enrich the relationship by making them more fruitful and trustworthy. Representatively one participant argued: "*It is important that the supervisor can handle conflicts. There are always points and issues in the working world where you rub shoulders. It must be possible to argue and then continue working normally. One must also be*

able to speak clear words." For many participants, this was a requirement to be able to have a relationship with a supervisor that is characterized by open communication. However, if a supervisor does not tolerate contradicting opinions from subordinates', participants agree that the supervisor's trustfulness decreases. This is also indicated by the fact that participants who were talking about bad experiences with supervisors complained about insufficient conflict skills. This would lead to very limited communication between supervisor and subordinate as one participant stated: *"He wasn't interested in my opinion at all. That was simply not cooperation for me. I wouldn't have come to him with worries or needs or anything. It didn't work out that way, but I would have let him strand if the situation would have arisen."*

Another thing related to 'conflict skills' that was mentioned rather frequently was that discussions and controversies should never evolve to personal conflicts. When talking about distrustful relationships with supervisors, several participants stated that they had experienced situations in which a supervisor insulted them personally. Also, when talking about 'conflict skills', participants often said things related to 'integrity'. As one participant mentioned: *"Nobody is allowed to add a personal note to the argument. So that someone becomes really disgusting and personally offensive"*. This is not only related to 'conflict skills' but also to 'integrity' as the ethical and moral values a supervisor holds are likely to affect the dealing with conflicts and contradicting opinions. Nevertheless, it was decided not to code 'conflict skills' as a sub-code of 'integrity' since, in a relationship that is characterized by open discussions, there does not necessarily must be an overlap between moral and ethical values. A supervisor might value contradicting opinions, not because of his ethical and moral standards, but because he/she thinks that open discussions lead to better results and higher profits. Noteworthy, 'conflict skills' was often assigned together with the subordinate attribute 'perceived risk' and the interpersonal factor 'eye level'.

4.1.3   Integrity

The results indicate that integrity and interactional justice play an important role when it comes to trust in supervisors. Integrity can be described as the degree to which a supervisor follows ethical principles that the subordinate finds acceptable (Mayer et al., 1995). During the interviews, participants stated that to be trusted, a supervisor must keep personal and private information about employees confidential. A statement that is representative for many participants was: *"Trust for me means that if I tell him something that I can assume that he will not tell anyone else. If I have problems with someone else, then I can approach him and know that he is subjected to confidentiality and will not tell anyone."* This was the first many participants thought of when asked what trust means for them in a relationship with their supervisor. Noteworthy, when talking about their experiences, there were more negatively connotated text fragments than positive ones that were assigned to the code 'integrity'. When participants were asked whether they have had a supervisor in their professional career with whom the relationship was distrustful, participants often indicated that this was due to a lack of integrity. As an example, one participant stated: *"These are people who want to make money by hook or by crook, who want to make money and then run away very quickly and leave the whole pile of broken glass lying around. That's what the supervisor was like. No one needs*

that." Interestingly, 'integrity' was often assigned together with the codes 'conflict skills' and 'similarities between supervisor and subordinate'.

As indicated by Tzafrir et al. (2015), a sub-category of integrity is interactional justice. For many participants, the degree to which a supervisor acts transparent, explains the rationale for decisions and acts as promised, turned out to be crucial for the development of trust. Two things were especially important here for the participants. First, almost every participant stated that honest dealing with employees increases the development of trust. Representatively for many statements, one participant said: *"Trust always goes hand in hand with honesty. If I get the feeling, he's telling me something different than what he's doing behind my back, it's hard."* Secondly, participants pointed out the importance of transparent communication. While participants agree that it is the job of a supervisor to fall decisions at some point, they perceive it a crucial to communicate the rationale for decisions. One participant argued: *"The supervisor has to decide at some point. But that shouldn't be done according to the motto: I'm the boss, let's do it this or that way. The reasons decisions for this must be communicated."* However, this does not mean that everything must be communicated. One participant stated, for example, that he does not even want to be informed about every bagatelle.

4.1.4 Ability

The ability of a supervisor to have a positive impact and to execute things when approached by subordinates was mentioned by many participants as a base for a trustful relationship. However, it was noticeable that the code 'ability' was most of the time assigned in interviews where participants indicated having a very trusting relationship with their supervisor. This was usually in relationships in which the communication was transparent in both ways. Participants appreciated if supervisors executed ideas that were suggested by employees. As one participant stated: *"It doesn't help if I can say things to him, but he doesn't act on them. That would be his right as a boss, but if arguments are not heard regularly, then it is useless."* Moreover, participants saw it as important that a supervisor has competence. For example, one participant said: *"The boss always has to know what you're talking about. He doesn't even have to understand every last technical detail, because that's what I'm his expert for. But he has to have some technical knowledge."* However, in this context, participants were not only talking about expert knowledge but also about general expertise. It was highlighted that a supervisor should have a certain level of competence to be perceived as someone with a high ability to tackle things.

While talking about supervisors' abilities to tackle things, several participants pointed out that to trust a supervisor, he/she should be perceived as assertive. Therefore, it was decided to introduce the code 'assertiveness' as a sub-code of 'ability'. Almost every participant argued that it is the job of a supervisor to fall decisions at some point. For example, one participant said: "*A boss who is often uncertain is not a boss. A boss is like a captain who says which direction to go. Of course, he can ask for advice from his officers, but if he decides something, then he just decides it. For me, this makes authority, and it must come. A boss has to be able to lead the people because many people need leadership.*" However, during the interviews, this turned out to be a narrow ridge, since most of the participants who have had negative experiences with supervisors complained about too dictatorial decision-making. Interestingly

another participant argued that especially young supervisors would tend to fall wrong decisions because of the fear of being perceived as uncertain by their subordinates.

4.1.5 Degree of control

After the code 'conflict skills', 'degree of control' was the most frequently assigned code. When participants were asked why they perceive the relationship with their current supervisor as trustful, an often-made statement was: *"Because he doesn't control me."* For many participants, it was crucial to be kept on the long leash by their supervisors to trust them. Related to the code 'leap of faith,' one participant argued: *"As an employee, you have to have the feeling that your supervisor lets you do things without taking corrective action at every step."* As it was mentioned in the previous paragraph, there is a clear relationship between 'leap of faith' and 'control'. However, it was decided not to code 'degree of control' as a sub-code of 'leap of faith' since there were also contradicting opinions on whether control by the supervisor is needed or not. Even though participants agreed that a certain level of freedom is required to develop trust in the supervisor, some participants also wished a higher degree of control from their supervisors, at least under certain circumstances. One participant, for example, indicated that, especially when an employee recently changed jobs and has not that much experience, he/she might demand a higher degree of control. This was supported by another participant who stated: *"I was hoping for more leadership in the beginning. I then wrote my own training plan. He supported me, but with a little more leadership, I would have been into the new topics much faster."*

In contrast to that, participants who had more years of experience in their current position often complained about too much control. According to one participant, this was especially the case if a new supervisor stepped in. A participant who had a supervisor position himself talked about his experiences: *"When I was new as a supervisor, I tried to control much more. At some point, an employee told me that I should relax and just trust him and let him do his job. After that, the relationship between us was much better."*

4.1.6 Leap of faith

Leap of faith describes the degree to which a supervisor is perceived to trust his/her subordinates. It was one of the most frequently mentioned codes, which is somewhat surprising, taking into account that it has not been mentioned by the academic articles that were studied for the present report. Participants indicated that to trust a supervisor, they need the feeling that the supervisor has trust in them as well. As one participant summarized it: *"Getting trust requires giving trust. You have to give something first to get something back."* During the interviews, participants agreed that there are mainly two ways in which supervisors can show that they trust subordinates. First, supervisors should let employees find their own solutions for problems. By giving employees the freedom to find their own way to tackle job-related problems, the supervisor demonstrates his/her trust in employees. Statements such as: *"What I have noticed is that a manager must have confidence in his or her employees. A manager has to accept when employees reach their goals by a different route than the supervisor might have thought to be right"*, were a recurring theme during all interviews. Secondly, and related to the supervisor attribute 'degree of control', a supervisor can prove that he/she trusts subordinates

by not constantly controlling them. As it was mentioned by one participant: *"As a supervisor, you should always be a pioneer in this area. But I should also show that. I also have to show that I have the confidence not to stand behind him every ten minutes."*

However, participants agreed that a supervisor-subordinate relationship works in both ways. Therefore, most participants indicated that even though the supervisor should do the first step towards an employee, the employee must then do a step towards the supervisor as well. Representatively one participant said: *"The boss has to accommodate you first. He should give his employees a leap of faith. If there's no response, you have to think of something else."* Noteworthy, the code 'leap of faith' was frequently assigned together with 'degree of control'.

4.1.7   Approachability

The degree to which a supervisor is perceived to be approachable and to always have an open ear for subordinates was another frequently mentioned antecedent of trust during the interviews. For the participants, a supervisor needed to encourage an open-door policy. However, according to most participants, it is not enough to only mention this as a supervisor but also to incarnate such a policy. When asked why he perceives the relationship with his supervisor as trustful, one participant stated: *"What I appreciate about him is that when you have problems or want something from him, you can always go to him. He always has his office door open."* Noteworthy, for participants 'approachability', was not only related to spatial aspects but also human aspects. Speaking differently: A supervisor should not only be approachable in terms of spatial accessibility but should also be perceived as someone who always has an open ear for employees. The code 'approachability' was often assigned together with the interpersonal codes 'eye level' and 'frequency of contact'.

4.1.8   Showing esteem

Even though the code 'showing esteem' was not strikingly frequently assigned, there were some interesting statements made by participants when it comes to trust. In general, very few participants mentioned that their supervisor compliments on their work regularly. However, when specifically talking about negative experiences with supervisors, a lack of showing esteem was remarked rather frequently. One participant furthermore indicated a relationship between 'showing esteem' and 'leap of faith' as he argued: *"I'm a guy that needs a longer leash. That's a kind of appreciation for me. When he lets me do things, I feel appreciation and like he trusts me."* According to another participant, this might also work the other way around. If a supervisor does not express his/her appreciation for an employee, this might cause a feeling of uncertainty, as this participant stated: *"What prevails at the moment is an implicit trust in me. If it were to be expressed, it would strengthen my position. I'm beginning to wonder where I stand. A tacit trust can also develop into a tacit distrust."* Also, expressing esteem for the work of subordinates does not necessarily require monetary expenses. According to the same participant, feeling appreciated, without involving financial benefits could decrease employee's uncertainty and thus increase trust.

4.2 Subordinate attributes

As can be seen in Table 4, codes related to the category 'subordinate attributes were assigned quite rarely. Only the code 'perceived risk' received some noticeable attention from the participants.

Table 4: Text fragments assigned to category 'subordinate attributes'

Code	Definition	Example text fragment
Perceived risk (n=14)	The degree to which the fear of consequences hinders subordinates from talking openly to their supervisor.	"I felt that the atmosphere in the team was bad. I noticed it, but I didn't go and tell him because I did not know how he would react. I thought it might make things even worse."
Leadership prototypes (n=4)	The degree to which subordinates trust supervisors because they fit to what they see as the ideal supervisor.	"I think a supervisor must have authority."
Propensity to trust (n=0)	Subordinates willingness to trust people in general.	n/a

4.2.1 Perceived Risk

This code referred to the degree to which a subordinate perceived the risk to communicate openly and honestly with a supervisor as high or low because of the fear of negative consequences. As it was already described in 4.1.4, participants indicated that a trustful relationship requires open communication between supervisor and subordinate. The fear of negative consequences, however, can negatively impact this communication. This was especially the case when participants talked about distrustful relationships with supervisors. For example, when talking about his former supervisor, one participant mentioned: *"I felt that the atmosphere in the team was bad. I noticed it, but I didn't go and tell him because I did not know how he would react. I thought it might make things even worse."* When asked how he would define trust in relation to a supervisor, another participant stated: *"For me, it is crucial that if I tell him something critical, that I can assume that this has in no way a negative influence on me."* In general, participants agreed on the importance of 'perceived risk' on the development of trust. Moreover, 'perceived risk' was often assigned together with the supervisor attribute 'conflict skills'.

4.3 Interpersonal factors

Next to the attributes of supervisors, interpersonal factors were mentioned most frequently during the interviews. The most prominent ones were 'leadership style', 'similarities between

supervisor and subordinate', 'private talks', 'eye level', and 'frequency of contact' (see Table 5).

Table 5: Text fragments assigned to category 'interpersonal factors'

Code	Definition	Example text fragment
Eye-Level (n=50)	The degree to which a supervisor respects subordinate and sees him/her as coequal.	"You have to be able to talk to each other at eye level. A superior should not deal with you in a patronizing way."
Similarities between supervisor and subordinate (n=44)	The degree to which subordinates trust their supervisor because they share common values or have similar demographics.	"When I think back on it, none of my supervisors had the same character as me. And yet, in most cases, it worked very well. Maybe that's because we complemented each other in certain things."
Private talks (n=43)	The degree to which subordinates' trust in supervisor is affected by the degree to which they share private information with each other.	"If you limit yourself to purely professional matters, communication becomes tiring and difficult."
Leadership Style (n=36)	The degree to which the leadership style of a supervisor affects trustworthiness.	"Employees have different demands and requirements. A manager must respond to people individually. You cannot deal with all the people in your team in the same way and expect to be equally successful with everyone."
Frequency of contact (n=31)	The degree to which the frequency of contact with the supervisor impacts his/her trustworthiness.	"I think the frequency and regularity of the discussions is an important point. Also, to build a mutual relationship of trust."

4.3.1 Eye-level

In the context of this study, 'eye level' is defined as the degree to which supervisors respect their subordinates as much that they encourage equal discussions and do not patronize them. Different things were important here for participants, however, all referring to 'eye level'. For example, one participant mentioned: *"You have to be able to talk to each other at eye level. A superior should not deal with you in a patronizing way."* Mutual respect was one of the most frequently mentioned terms here. Participants agreed that, to a certain degree, a hierarchical chain of command might be necessary. Nevertheless, to create trust, a supervisor should not rely on his position of power to implement his ideas only. For participants, it was important that a supervisor does not treat them as preliminary workers who cannot contribute something to more complex processes. To accept the opposite side as having equal rights and to give them a voice was highly demanded by participants to develop trust. As one participant mentioned: *"Nobody will trust or respect a supervisor if he just relies on his position of power. A supervisor should be respected and trusted because of his expertise, the fact that he keeps his position of power down-low and discusses with subordinates at eye level."* However, there was consent among participants that a relationship at eye level does not only require a supervisor who supports such an atmosphere, but also employees who are willing to contribute ideas and can handle open discussions and critics. This two-sided relationship was mentioned by one participant who argued: *"The relationship of trust with my manager is so good because we can both speak freely with each other."*

4.3.2 Similarities between supervisor and subordinate

This code described the degree to which there are similarities in values, interests, or demographics between supervisors and subordinates. In general, there was mutual consent among participants that the supervisor and subordinates must be on the same wavelength. However, participants indicated that this does not require a hundred percent of congruence. As one participant mentioned: *"When I think back on it, none of my supervisors had the same character as me. And yet, in most cases, it worked very well. Maybe that's because we complemented each other in certain things."* Nevertheless, almost every participant stated that the chemistry between supervisor and subordinate must be right. During the interviews, it was striking that participants who had a laborer background expected from their supervisor to be direct and to have this laborer mentality as well. One participant complained about the mentality of his supervisor, as he was rather young and came straight from university. When asked about the relationship to his supervisor, this participant stated: *"He is still quite young. He's a different guy. He's just a college guy. But what you don't learn in college is life. You must have swept some workshops in your life."* This indicates that demographics and backgrounds, to a certain degree, might affect the relationship between supervisor and subordinate.

4.3.3 Private talks

When asked whether private talks might increase trust in supervisor-subordinate relationships, most participants stated that there should be a healthy balance between private and job. The

vast majority of participants thought that a supervisor-subordinate relationship that is focused on job-related things only, the interpersonal factors might lack behind. Representatively one participant argued: *"If you limit yourself to purely professional matters, communication becomes tiring and difficult."* However, some participants valued a certain distance between them and their supervisor. Noteworthy, 'similarities between supervisor and subordinate' was frequently assigned together with 'individual personnel management'. This was supported by another participant who mentioned: "*I am not a fan of talking about private things at work. But my supervisor also talks about private matters with others. And that definitely creates sympathy. You notice that people become more relaxed with each other and that the hierarchical distance disappears a bit*." This seems to be a narrow ridge for supervisors. On the one hand, participants indicated that the supervisor should initialize private talks. On the other hand, a participant stated that private talks should not feel affected and said: *"If you make small talk with him and he asks about the family, it doesn't seem natural to me. I am not sure then if it is just a phrase of politeness."* Interestingly, this was the same participant that indicated to be not at the same wavelength as his supervisor, due to differences in age and backgrounds.

4.3.4   Leadership style

All under 4.1 described supervisor attributes affect the leadership style of a superior. During the interviews, it turned out to be difficult for participants to identify a specific leadership style when they were asked about their supervisor. The distinction participants made was mostly between laissez-fair and authoritarian leadership. Supervisors who were described as autocratic did not embody most of the in 4.1 presented supervisor attributes. Hence, participants described relationships with such supervisors most of the time as distrustful. One participant, for example, mentioned: *"I once had a supervisor who was very choleric and had a very dictatorial temper. My opinion was always appreciated until then. Then being stifled all the time at my new workplace was simply not cooperation for me."* However, participants also criticized the relationship with supervisors who practiced a laissez-fair style. One participant argued: *"My boss gives us all freedom. There may be small differences between the people, but overall, I would say that this is his consistent management style. That's not always a good thing. I'm sure some colleagues could use some clear rules from time to time."*

Throughout the interviews, the demand for individual personnel management was a recurring topic. Participants agreed that neither the one nor the other extreme is an eligible style of leadership. Representatively for almost all one participant stated: *"Employees have different demands and requirements. A manager must respond to people individually. You cannot deal with all the people in your team in the same way and expect to be equally successful with everyone."* The code 'individual personnel management' was often assigned together with the supervisor attributes 'control', 'support', and 'private talks'. This is in line with what participants argued, namely that specific actions of control and support of a supervisor should be adjusted based on the individual subordinate.

4.3.5 Frequency of contact

During the interviews, it turned out that most participants indicated that they like to have frequent individual meetings with their supervisors. Especially when they were asked what measures they would implement if they were supervisor, almost every participant stated that he/she would arrange regular meetings and feedback sessions. For example, one participant said: *"I think the frequency and regularity of the discussions is an important point. Also, to build a mutual relationship of trust. The whole thing should run in an organized manner. You shouldn't have to report yourself that it's the manager's job."* While participants agreed that such meetings should be used to build up a feedback culture, one participant who had an executive position himself stated that such meetings might be used for private talks as well. He argued: *"Sometimes we also just have a coffee together. The topics can also be private. I won't stop that either. I think it's good when we have a very trusting relationship so that you can tell something beyond your job. I think that brings more understanding and common ground for each other."* When it came to the regularity of meetings, there were different opinions. While some participants suggested weekly meetings, others favored monthly or even quarterly meetings.

4.4 Organizational factors

When it comes to organizational factors, only the code 'workplace climate' received noticeable attention during the interviews (see Table 6).

Table 6: Text fragments assigned to category 'organizational factors'

Code	Definition	Example text fragment
Workplace climate (n=16)	The degree to which the general climate at the workplace affects the perceived trustworthiness of a supervisor.	"I felt that you were negatively affected. I had a normal relationship with my supervisor, but through discussions with the other members of the team, I also got a bad opinion of him."
Psychological safety (n=0)	The degree to which subordinates trust heir supervisor because the organizational environment is perceived as safe.	n/a
Organizational change (n=0)	The degree to which trust in supervisors is affected by organizational change.	n/a

4.4.1 Workplace climate

Many participants pointed out the importance of workplace climate when it comes to the development of trust. Participants stated that if the atmosphere in a team or department is bad,

this will decrease the trustworthiness of the supervisor. This is because, according to most participants, the supervisor is responsible for ensuring a pleasant prevailing mood within a team. This was exemplified by a participant who mentioned: *"I think it is one of the most important tasks of a manager to ensure a good atmosphere in the team. You will not have a team that is homogeneous by nature and has a good relationship. You don't have that in any soccer team, or anywhere else, there must be someone to moderate it."* This indicates that if the prevailing mood in a team is bad, employees might blame the supervisor for this.

Interestingly, other participants argued how employees could impact each other's perception of the trustworthiness of a supervisor. They mentioned, that if employees in a team or a department are unsatisfied with a supervisor, that this might also affect people's perception that were satisfied with a supervisor in the first place. For example, one participant stated: *"I felt that you were negatively affected. I had a normal relationship with my supervisor, but through discussions with the other members of the team, I also got a bad opinion of him."* Noteworthy, another participant mentioned that this effect could also be the other way around. If a team stands behind a supervisor, they might strengthen his/her back if an employee of this team is discontent with a supervisor and starts backbiting.

5 Discussion

The objective of this study was to get a better understanding of what employees perceive as essential factors to be able to develop a trustful relationship with their supervisor. As it was indicated in the beginning, most of the previously conducted studies on this topic have used quantitative research methods. Without decrying the outcomes of those previous studies, this study aimed to use the exploratory nature of qualitative research to gain reasons and opinions from employees on the topic of trust development in supervisor-subordinate relationships. The exploratory nature allowed participants to provide detailed insights on this topic. The results indicate that supervisor attributes and interpersonal factors play a crucial role in the development of trust. The results suggest that supervisors who give their subordinates a leap of faith are more likely to be perceived as trustworthy. Moreover, it was shown that the importance of certain factors depends on the individual demand of subordinates. In the following theoretical and practical implications will be given, based on these results. Furthermore, the limitations of the present study will be discussed, and some recommendations for future research will be provided.

5.1 Theoretical implications

First of all, it can be concluded that while some of the outcomes of previous studies were supported, there were also new topics that emerged. During the coding, the four main categories of antecedents that were suggested by Tzafrir et al. (2015) turned out to be a reasonable classification. Even though some new topics appeared, all could be assigned to one of those main categories. In general, all participants highlighted the importance of a trustful relationship between supervisor and subordinate. Most participants indicated that without trust, a collaboration between supervisor and subordinate would not be possible. A noticeable number of participants even stated that they would quit their job if they would perceive their supervisor as distrustful. This supports the relevance of the topic of trust.

While there is disagreement among scholars whether the supervisor attribute 'ability' has a major effect on the development of trust, the present study ascribes a high importance to it. This might also be due to the reason that 'assertiveness' and 'expertise' were also assigned to the factor 'ability'. In general, it was the case that due to the qualitative nature of this research, factors could be explored in more detail, which led to the fact that also for the variable 'benevolence' sub-categories were created ('support' and 'feedback'). This indicates that more qualitative research in the field of trust development could enrich the results of previously done, mostly quantitative studies.

The interviews also showed that employees will not blindly follow a supervisor, even though they might perceive him/her as trustful. This was, e.g., indicated by Burke et al. (2007), who argued that if people trust a supervisor, they will follow, regardless of the goal. The outcomes of the present study suggest, however, that subordinates absolutely question decisions made by their supervisors. Even in trustful relationships, subordinates will not follow their supervisors blindly. Another implication is that participants in this study demanded a relationship in which decisions of supervisors can be challenged. This implies that earning subordinate's trust, should not be seen as a free ticket to have carte blanche. As it was already

mentioned by Scandura and Pellegrini (2008), trust is a fragile concept and thus highly vulnerable.

Because employees constantly question decisions from their supervisors, one might think that this makes the concept of trust even more vulnerable. However, another theoretical implication is that there might be a link between the by this study suggested antecedents and the concept of high-quality connections (HQCs). Speaking differently: In supervisor-subordinate relationships in which the indicated antecedents are present, this might also support HQCs between supervisor and subordinate. According to Dutton and Heaphy (2003), HQCs are developed through factors such as mutual positive regard and active engagement on both sides. This, in turn, leads to higher psychological safety and trust (Carmeli, Brueller, & Dutton, 2009). This is clearly related to the antecedents of the present study. Hence, if supervisors would engage in the suggested behaviors and endorse subordinates as sparring partners, this rather strengthens the development of trust and the strength of the relationship in general.

As Dutton and Heaphy (2003) explain HQCs, it was initially a concept to describe relationships between employees. However, applying this to relationships between supervisors and subordinates may be an opportunity to oust outdated leadership approaches. It might be worth it if research turns away from classical forms of leadership that see employees only as receptors of orders, to approaches in which supervisors are instead seen as a part of the team. For theory, this means that the topic of trust development might not be seen anymore as a distinguishable part of a relationship, but rather as a multidimensional concept that develops through HQCs.

5.2   Practical implications

As indicated in the introduction: Even though the topic of trust in supervisor-subordinate relationships has widely been researched already, supervisors still struggle to earn the trust of their subordinates (Kim et al. (2018). This raises the question: If the factors that affect the development of trust are known, why is it still so difficult to implement them in practice? The present study suggests two answers to this question. First: Although the factors that influence the development of trust might be known, this does not guarantee that a supervisor can transform those factors into specific and natural behavior. Even though one might know that 'benevolence', 'integrity' and 'interactional justice' are important to develop a trustful relationship, those behaviors can only to a certain degree be learned, since they must emerge from the inner values a person has or not has. Just because certain factors are known to affect the development of trust, it does not mean that everybody can just adopt those behaviors. If a supervisor only pretends to hold such values, this might even lead to distrust.

A second obstacle is that there might be tension between some of the factors and individual demands of subordinates. The results indicate that leading based on the saying: "Trust is good, control is better" will neither lead to long-term success nor trust. Giving employees the freedom to find their own solutions for problem settings and not constantly standing behind their backs is crucial here. As plausible as that sounds, a practical implementation of those behaviors must not necessarily lead to a higher degree of trust.

There might also be situations in which a higher degree of control even strengthens the development of trust. Especially people who were new in their position or still at the beginning

of their professional career pointed out the demand for guidance by the supervisor. However, an employee who works in a position for ten years or even longer, might not have this demand. It would instead lead to distrust if a supervisor tried to guide that person. Also, the frequency of individual meetings with the supervisor turned out to affect trust. In practice, employees define the term 'frequent' totally different. While one person would like to have a feedback meeting every week, another person would be annoyed by that and would prefer quarterly meetings. While some employees indicated it as crucial to also have private talks with a supervisor, some stated that they would rather have a clear separation of private and job.

Interpersonal sympathy between supervisors and subordinates are, to a certain degree, important as well. Supervisors and subordinates should be on a similar wavelength. The results indicate that this must not be superimposable, nevertheless irreconcilable differences in values and characteristics will not allow for a trustful relationship. However, knowing this only helps to a certain degree. Depending on the variety of characters in a team, a supervisor cannot be on the same wavelength as all of them.

These two obstacles may answer the question of why so many supervisors still fail to be perceived as trustful by their subordinates. However, what does that mean for practice? Still, there are several practical implications for executives with personnel responsibility, recruiters, and other people in charge. First: Supervisors and people with personnel responsibility need to understand the importance of trust and the complexity and variety of factors that impact it. Only by looking at the factors that the present study suggests to be important, this already implies that being a supervisor is not something one does just next to something else. The topic is too complex and time-consuming, as the interviews showed the importance of individual personnel management. Secondly, a supervisor must be able to act on the individual demands of his/her subordinates. To repeat what one participant stated: "*You cannot deal with all the people in your team in the same way and expect to be equally successful with everyone.*" In practice, the leadership style must be adaptable based on the individual demands of subordinates. To be able to do that, supervisors first need to understand and recognize those individual needs. However, if in contact with employees' supervisors often tend to focus on talking rather than listening, which will not provide them with any insights. Therefore, supervisors need to step aside and leave the limelight to their employees to identify demands, potentials, strengths, and weaknesses.

In practice, a supervisor should act based on the factors the present study suggests. However, a supervisor must also be able to adapt the behavior to individual demands. The more homogenous a team, the easier it is for a supervisor to lead this team. A supervisor must fit the team he/she is supposed to lead. However, the team must also fit the attributes and character traits of the supervisor. Finding the perfect match between supervisor and subordinates will not always be possible. However, if a team or department consists of a homogenous mixture of characters, this will facilitate this process a lot. This process should already start when new employees or executives are recruited. Not only qualifications should play a role here, but also the individual character and demands a potential new employee has and whether this fits the team and the supervisor. When recruiting a new supervisor for an existing team, the supervisor has to fit this team in terms of character traits and leadership style.

Regarding the category 'organizational factors', the results suggest that supervisors need to ensure that the general atmosphere in a team is positive towards the supervisor. If the

majority of the team is convinced of a supervisor, the team might protect him/her against potential gossiping from other employees. However, if the majority of a team is not well-disposed towards a supervisor, this will also affect the opinions of employees who were initially satisfied with the supervisor. Nevertheless, ensuring a positive mood towards the supervisor must be reached by means that are in line with the other suggested antecedents. In other words: Actively attempting to influence what employees talk about, e.g., in their break and trying to limit the freedom of opinion of employees, is not in line with the previously discussed factors.

Lastly, applying the concept of HQCs like it was discussed in the previous section might also open up far-reaching opportunities for practice. If supervisors would engage in the by this study recommended behaviors, it might be possible to develop HQCs between supervisor and subordinate. For practice, this would mean that supervisors would rather act as team leaders who are at eye-level with the rest of the team. Together with the other suggested behaviors, this may be an opportunity to oust outdated leadership approaches in which employees are only seen as receptors of orders. Organizations and supervisors who act based on the antecedents recommended by this study could thus not only benefit from the positive outcomes of a trustful relationship, but also from the positive effects of HCQs between supervisor and subordinate such as increased learning from failures, improved organizational processes and a higher level of loyalty towards the organization (Blatt & Camden, 2007; Carmeli & Gittell, 2009).

5.3   Limitations and recommendations for future research

Even though the present study was conducted in all conscience, some limitations should be noted. First, the present study was not able to come to a meaningful result regarding the effect of the categories 'subordinate attributes' and 'organizational factors'. This was mainly due to the selected sample of the study and its qualitative nature. Since the interviews were conducted with subordinates, it was somewhat difficult to formulate adequate questions about, e.g., their propensity to trust and how this affects the relationship with their supervisor. The same goes for the category 'organizational factors', which was quite challenging to investigate using a qualitative approach. This resulted in a rather low number of coded elements for those two categories (see Table 4, Table 6). It should be mentioned here that the small number of assigned text elements assigned to these categories should not be seen as an indication that they are not important. For a future investigation of specifically the categories 'subordinate attributes' and 'organizational factors', different research designs should be taken into consideration.

Another limitation is that the present study mainly reflects the opinions of subordinates. Therefore, it could be interesting to conduct semi-structured interviews with supervisors, to get their opinion on what they perceive as important to be able to trust subordinates. Another option might be to discuss the different antecedents of trust with supervisors and subordinates simultaneously. Conducting, e.g., a focus group with supervisors and subordinates from different organizations to discuss the various antecedents might lead to interesting insights.
A general limitation is the uneven gender distribution among the sample. This was not done intentionally but was mainly caused by the limited capacities of the researcher. This was also the reason why not all participants included in the sample worked for different companies. For future research, it might be interesting to investigate whether there are differences between male and female subordinates, in the way they develop trust.

A final limitation is that many antecedents were derived from an inductive content analysis. This might not be a limitation per se. However, it could be the case that the specific factors of the present study might not be applicable in other studies with different samples (Shenton, 2004). Future research could investigate whether the antecedents of trust differs between organizations based on size, sector, or organizational structure. Another point that might be interesting here is the degree to which subordinates work experience affects the development of trust. To test this, it might be worth it to translate the antecedents that are suggested by the present study, back to quantitative research. This would allow to specifically test under which circumstances which factors are most important.

To tap the full potential of the present study, a next step could be to develop a method that supports recruiters to find employees that match the team and the supervisor that leads that team. Additionally, a method could be developed to facilitate the process of recruiting supervisors that fit the demand of a homogenous team. Implementing such methods in recruiting processes could facilitate the development of trustful relationships between supervisors and subordinates enormously.

5.4 Conclusion

In summary, the present study extends previous research on the topic of trust between supervisor and subordinates by providing new insights on already existing factors and new factors in general. Moreover, it is argued that due to the individual demands of subordinates and the tension between certain factors, the development of trustful relationships becomes even more challenging. Nevertheless, the study provides several theoretical and practical implications that could be highly valuable for recruiters, supervisors, and people in charge. The results of the present study could serve as a basis to develop methods that support HR managers to strategically align the recruitment of organizations to facilitate the development of trustful relationships for long-term success. This is up to future research as well as determining whether the results of this study apply to other contexts as well.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Interview scheme

Researcher: *Before we start the interview, I would like to thank you for participating. This interview will be used for my Bachelor Thesis I am writing at the University of Twente. The topic is trust in supervisor-subordinate relationships. To be specific: I am interested in factors that affect the degree of trust in supervisor-subordinate relationships. Therefore, I am interested in the experiences you have had with supervisors over your professional career.*

Do you agree with this interview being recorded so that I can transcribe it afterward? All recorded data will be deleted after they have been transcribed.

If the respondent agrees to record the interview, the recording will be started by the researcher. However, the researcher first explains to the respondent that he is asking for permission again in order to have the participant's permission on tape.

Could you please confirm a second time that you gave permission that the entire interview is being recorded?

If the respondent agrees again, the participant will be informed about the details of the study.

This research aims to find out how subordinates and (direct) supervisors develop trustful relationships. You are one of 15 participants I am interviewing to find an answer to this question based on your experiences. Therefore, I will ask you several questions about the relationships you had with your supervisors. I want to emphasize that there are no right or wrong answers to the questions I am going to ask, it is about your experiences and perceptions. You do not have to apply the questions to your current supervisor only, but you are free to reflect on previous supervisors as well.

Everything you will be saying will remain confidential. No personal data that could be traced back to you will be published or shared with the supervisor of this thesis or anybody else. You have the right to do not answer any question you do not want to answer without any justification. Also, you have the right to withdraw your participation and your data at any point in this study. Finally, I would like to emphasize that you have the opportunity at any time to stop this interview, and you can always ask for clarification if you do not understand a question.

Have you understood these terms and do you agree to them?

If the respondent agrees the interview starts

Topic 1: Introduction

- Respondent introduces himself (age, position, years of experience in his professional career)
- How long have you been employed for your current company?

- How often are you in contact with your supervisor?
- How would you describe your relationship with your supervisor in general?
- What does trust mean for you in a relationship with your supervisor?

Topic 2: Current supervisor

➔ To what extent would you describe your relationship with your current supervisor as trustful?
➔ When it comes to your own traits
➔ In terms of work environment
- To what extent does the power gap between you and your supervisor affect the degree to which you trust him/her?
- What type of leader is your supervisor?
  ➔ Related to the previous question: How does this leadership style influence your relationship with your supervisor?
- To what extent do you talk openly and freely when communicating with your supervisor about work related topics?
  ➔ What hinders you from being totally transparent?
  ➔ Why do you think you can be honest with your supervisor?
  ➔ What would be needed so that you would talk openly and freely?
- What should your supervisor change to be perceived as more trustful by you?

Topic 3: Experiences with supervisors in general

- Over your whole career, can you think of a direct supervisor that you really trusted or mistrusted
  ➔ Why do you think you trusted/mistrusted that person?
  ➔ What are attributes and character traits you would use to describe that person?
  ➔ How did you feel when talking with him/her?
  ➔ In your opinion: What should your manager have done differently?
- Over your whole career: Do you think you more often had trustful relationships with supervisors or rather distrustful?
  ➔ Why do you think this is the case?
- To what extent do you think it is important for trust development, that you and your supervisor are similar types of persons?
  ➔ To what extent do you think it is important for trust development, that you and your supervisor share similar values and perspectives when it comes to work related issues?
  ➔ To what extent do you think it is important for trust development, that you and your supervisor share similar values and perspectives when it comes to general societal issues.
- To what extent do you think it is important for trust development that you like your supervisor as a person?

Topic 4: Work environment

- How do you perceive the atmosphere at your work when interacting with others (not only supervisors but in general)?
  - ➔ How do you think does this general atmosphere affect the trust you have in your supervisors?
  - ➔ How should the atmosphere at work be in order that people have trust in decisions that are made by supervisors? ➔ Please elaborate on those factors

Topic 4: Beyond one's own nose

- What do you think a direct supervisor expects from you to place trust in you?
- If you were supervisor, how would you ensure that your subordinates trust you?
- Who is, according to you, responsible for the creation of trust in supervisor-subordinate relationships?
  - ➔ To which degree is the subordinate responsible as well?
  - ➔ What could a supervisor do to be perceived as more trustful?

Appendix B

Codebook

1. Supervisor attributes:

Number	Code	Description	Example
1.1	Benevolence	The degree to which the supervisor is believed to do good.	I trust my supervisor because I think he/she acts to my best.
1.1.1	Support	The degree to which the supervisor supports employees.	My supervisor recognizes my strengths and tries to support me on them.
1.1.2	Feedback	The degree to which the supervisor provides feedback.	I can always come to my supervisor to get some advice.
1.2	Integrity	The degree to which the values the supervisor follows are accepted by the subordinate.	To trust a supervisor, he/she needs to follow certain ethical values.
1.2.1	Interactional justice	The degree to which a leader explains the reasons for decisions and acts as promised.	I can trust my supervisor because he/she acts transparent and keeps promises.
1.3	Ability	The degree to which the manager is perceived to be able to positively impact the work environment.	If I tell my supervisor about problems, he/she can change something.
1.3.1	Assertiveness	The degree to which the manager is able to make decisions at some point.	A supervisor has to make the decisions at some point of the discussion, even not everyone agrees with it.
1.4	Conflict skills	The degree to which the manager is open towards criticism and contradicting opinions and manages conflicts.	In discussions, my supervisor is open towards my opinion even it might not be his opinion.
1.4.1	Asking for help	The degree to which the supervisor asks the subordinate for his/her suggestions.	I appreciate that my supervisor asks be for my suggestions. He/she cannot know everything.
1.5	Leap of faith	The degree to which the manager trust his/her employees to reveive their trust in return.	I have the feeling that he/she trusts me. This is why I feel like I can trust him/her as well.
1.5.1	Control	The degree to which the manager controls his/her employees in their work.	I have a lot of freedom in my daily work.
1.6	Approachable	The degree to which a supervisor is perceived to be approachable.	My supervisor always has an open ear for me.

Number	Code	Description	Example
1.7	Interpersonal skills	The degree to which the supervisor has empathy and knowledge of human nature.	I feel like my supervisor is socially competent.
1.71	Showing esteem	The degree to which the supervisor compliments the subordinates work.	I feel like my supervisor really appreciates my work.
1.8	Experience	The degree to which the supervisor is perceived as experienced.	I do not know if I can trust him, he just lacks experience.

2. Subordinate attributes:

Number	Code	Description	Example
2.1	Propensity to trust	Subordinates willingness to trust people in general.	I generally think that people can be trusted.
2.2.1	Perceived risk	The degree to which subordinates do not trust a supervisor because the perceived power of a supervisor is too salient.	I do not dare to tell my supervisor my opinion openly because I could lose my job.
2.3	Leadership prototypes	The degree to which subordinates trust supervisors because they fit to what they see as the ideal supervisor.	I do not trust my supervisor because he/she is not the type of leader I would like to have.

3. Interpersonal factors:

Number	Code	Description	Example
3.1	Authentical Leadership Style	The degree to which the supervisor is perceived as trustworthy because of his authentic leadership style.	I trust my supervisor because he/she has certain values and acts based on them.
3.1.1	Individual personal management	The degree to which a supervisor recognizes the individual demands of employees and reacts on that.	My supervisor recognizes that I can work independently and thus keeps the leash longer.
3.2	Similarities between supervisor and subordinate	The degree to which subordinates trust their supervisor because they share common values or have similar demographics.	I trust my supervisor because we share similar perspectives.

3. Interpersonal factors (continued):

Number	Code	Description	Example
3.3	Prior experiences with a leader	The degree to which subordinates' trust in supervisor is affected by prior experiences with that specific supervisor.	I do not trust my supervisor because he/she promised me something but did not keep this promise.
3.4	Private talks	The degree to which subordinates' trust in supervisor is affected by the degree to which they share private information with each other.	The fact that we also talk about private stuff makes me feel like we are at eye level.
3.5	Length of relationship	The degree to which the length of the relationship between supervisor and subordinate impacts his/her trustworthiness	A trustful relationship takes time.
3.6	Eye level	The degree to which a supervisor respects subordinate and sees him/her as coequal.	I can challenge the decisions of my supervisor because he/she respects me as a sparring partner.
3.7	Frequency of contact	The degree to which the frequency of contact with the supervisor impact his/her trustworthiness	I am rarely in contact with my supervisor, he probably does not even know what I am working on.

4. Organizational factors:

Number	Code	Description	Example
4.1	Workplace climate	The degree to which the general climate at the workplace affects the perceived trustworthiness of a supervisor	I do not trust my supervisor because I feel like everybody in this company works against each other.
4.1.1	Psychological safety	The degree to which subordinates trust heir supervisor because the organizational environment is perceived as safe.	In discussions, I challenge the decisions of my supervisor because he/she respects me as a sparring partner.
4.2	Organizational change	The degree to which trust in supervisors is decreased by organizational change.	I do not trust my supervisor because he/she recently introduced a new software that did not work.

Appendix C

Literature Study Log

Date	Source	Search terms and strategies	Relevant hits	Notes
04.03.2020	Scholar	(supervisor OR manager OR executive) AND (subordinate OR employee OR staff) AND (trust)	2,820,000 many relevant sources, however quite broad	Good start to get a first general impression of the topic. For specific literature review however too broad.
06.03.2020	Scholar	(supervisor OR manager OR executive) AND (subordinate OR employee OR staff) AND ("development of trust" OR "trust development")	17,500 some relevant sources, however also quite a few irrelevant	Some quite specific sources that fit the topic. However, some are also too specifically focused on a specific context.
07.03.2020	Scholar	(supervisor subordinate relationship) AND (trust development OR development of trust)	131,000 many relevant sources, however rather focused on the outcomes of a trustful relationship, not on the antecedents	Some good sources, however next time the focus should be more on the antecedents of trust
08.03.2020	Scholar	("trust in leadership" OR "trust in supervisor" OR "trust in managers") AND (employee OR subordinate OR staff) AND (antecedents OR factors OR determinants)	11,400 many relevant sources.	Good start for a specific literature review