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THE ROLE OF ORGANIZATIONAL TRUST IN ENHANCING EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE: A CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

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Abstract. *Organisational trust is widely recognised as a fundamental factor in fostering effective workplace relationships and improving employee performance. However, existing evidence remains fragmented across different trust referents, performance dimensions, and organisational contexts. This study aims to synthesise the current literature on the role of organisational trust in enhancing employee performance and to identify the principal mechanisms and contextual factors underlying this relationship.*

A structured literature review was conducted using predefined search, screening, and selection criteria. Twenty relevant studies, including empirical research, systematic reviews, and meta-analyses, were analysed through thematic and narrative synthesis to examine trust dimensions, performance outcomes, and mediating and moderating mechanisms. The reviewed evidence indicates that organisational trust is generally associated with improved employee, team, and organisational performance. Horizontal trust often demonstrates stronger associations with performance than vertical trust, while trust in leaders remains an important predictor through its influence on leadership effectiveness, communication, and organisational support.

The findings further show that organisational trust frequently enhances performance indirectly by promoting employee engagement, organisational commitment, knowledge sharing, collaboration, innovation, and reduced workplace stress. Nevertheless, the strength of these relationships varies according to organisational context, trust referent, and performance measurement.

Overall, organisational trust represents an important explanatory factor in employee performance, although its effects are not uniform across settings. The review highlights the need for future research to examine direct, indirect, and multilevel trust–performance relationships across diverse organisational and cultural contexts while emphasising the practical importance of cultivating trust through supportive leadership, fair organisational practices, and effective trust-repair strategies.

Keywords: *organisational trust, organisation, performance, vertical trust, horizontal trust.*

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Introduction

In contemporary organisations, employee performance depends not only on skills, resources, and formal controls, but also on the quality of the social relationship between employees and the organisation. Organisational trust is widely viewed as a pivotal factor in that relationship because it reflects employees' confidence in organisational decisions and their willingness to be vulnerable to leaders, coworkers, and the organisation itself (Espinoza et al., 2025). Trust is therefore treated as a

prerequisite for effective organisational functioning, healthy employment relationships, and sustained organisational performance (Salanova et al., 2021; Dirks & Ferrin, 2001).

A recurring argument in the literature is that trust enhances performance by encouraging reciprocity, cooperation, and discretionary effort. Social exchange theory is often used to explain this process: when employees perceive supportive practices, fair treatment, and shared goals, they respond with stronger trust and greater willingness to contribute to organisational objectives (Salanova et al., 2021; Espinoza et al., 2025). This logic helps explain why trust has been linked to employee job performance, team effectiveness, productivity, service quality, and financial outcomes across multiple settings (Vanhala & Tzafrir, 2021).

The literature also shows that organisational trust is not a single uniform construct. Recent work distinguishes vertical trust, directed towards leaders and top management, from horizontal trust, directed towards coworkers and peers, and suggests that these dimensions can differ in strength and consequences for performance (Espinoza et al., 2025; Guinot & Chiva, 2019). Meta-analytic evidence indicates that both forms are positively associated with performance, although horizontal trust appears to show stronger pooled relationships in some cases (Espinoza et al., 2025).

At the same time, evidence is not fully consistent. Systematic review evidence suggests that vertical trust often shows a positive direct relationship with job performance, but non-significant effects have also been reported in some non-Western contexts, for extra-role performance, and for specific leader-subordinate configurations (Guinot & Chiva, 2019; Salanova et al., 2021). One study further reported no correlation between organisational trust and task or contextual performance, although it did find a relationship with counterproductive work behaviour (Galat et al., 2022).

Research has increasingly moved from asking whether trust matters to examining how it matters. Studies link trust to employee engagement, organisational commitment, job crafting, knowledge sharing, innovation support, and team reflexivity, suggesting that trust often works through indirect pathways rather than only through simple direct effects (Bulińska-Stangrecka & Iddagoda, 2020; Li et al., 2025). Related evidence also shows that trust can mediate the effects of organisational culture, healthy organisational practices, and leadership-related conditions on performance outcomes (Salanova et al., 2021; Verburg et al., 2017).

This growing body of work has practical relevance because trust is associated not only with higher performance, but also with lower stress, stronger retention, greater mission motivation, and better collaboration. High-trust employees appear more willing to share information, support innovation, and align their efforts with organisational goals, while trust-building interventions can modestly improve retention and related business outcomes. However, the literature remains fragmented across levels of analysis, trust referents, and methodological approaches, which justifies a conceptual review that integrates findings from employee, team, and organisational perspectives (Guinot & Chiva, 2019; Dirks & Ferrin, 2001; Rahayuningsih, 2019).

Accordingly, this article reviews the conceptual role of organisational trust in enhancing employee performance by synthesising evidence on its dimensions, mechanisms, and contextual contingencies. The introduction therefore establishes that organisational trust is a meaningful but not uniformly acting driver of employee performance, making it a suitable subject for conceptual review.

Literature Review

The literature on organisational trust and employee performance has expanded substantially, but it remains conceptually and empirically fragmented. Reviews consistently note that trust research is dispersed across different referents, levels of analysis, and performance outcomes, which has made it difficult to form a single, uniform explanation of how trust influences performance (Guinot & Chiva, 2019; Kong et al., 2025). This fragmentation is one reason recent work has emphasised integrative reviews and meta-analyses that distinguish trust in leaders, coworkers, management, and the organisation rather than treating trust as a single undifferentiated construct (Guinot & Chiva, 2019; Espinoza et al., 2025; Kong et al., 2025).

Across the literature, the dominant pattern is that organisational trust is positively associated with employee and organisational outcomes, although the strength of this relationship varies. A

recent meta-analysis of 57 studies found that vertical trust had weak but significant pooled correlations with in-role, extra-role, and organisational performance, while horizontal trust showed stronger pooled correlations across performance levels (Espinoza et al., 2025). Earlier systematic review evidence similarly concluded that trust is generally linked to performance, but the relationship is not consistently confirmed across all settings, trust referents, or performance measures (Guinot & Chiva, 2019).

Trust Dimensions and Outcomes

A major development in the literature is the distinction between vertical trust and horizontal trust. Vertical trust refers to trust in leaders, supervisors, top management, or the organisation, whereas horizontal trust refers to trust among coworkers or peers (Espinoza et al., 2025; Rahayuningsih, 2019). This distinction matters because the two forms of trust do not appear to operate identically. Meta-analytic evidence suggests that horizontal trust often has a stronger association with performance than vertical trust, especially where cooperation and peer interdependence are central to work processes (Espinoza et al., 2025; de Jong et al., 2016).

Research on team settings strongly supports this point. In a meta-analysis of 112 independent studies, IntraTeam trust showed an above-average positive relationship with team performance, and this relationship remained significant after controlling for trust in the leader and past team performance (de Jong et al., 2016). The trust-performance link in teams is also contingent on contextual features such as task interdependence, authority differentiation, and skill differentiation, indicating that trust is especially important when coordination demands are high (de Jong et al., 2016). Measurement features further shape estimated effect sizes because cross-sectional and single-source studies tend to report stronger trust-performance relationships than time-lagged and different-source studies (Feitosa et al., 2020).

Broader reviews of organisational trust report positive effects on a wide range of employee attitudes and behaviours that are closely tied to performance. Organisational trust has been associated with lower turnover intention, stronger intention to stay, more effective communication, greater readiness for change, innovative behaviour, job satisfaction, organisational commitment, organisational citizenship behaviour, safety motivation, and work performance (Rahayuningsih, 2019). In healthcare, trust in the leader and trust in the organisation have been linked to commitment, higher work production, enhanced collaboration, retention, productivity, and work-related well-being (Karikumpu et al., 2024).

Main Mechanisms

A central theme in the literature is that trust often affects performance indirectly through mediating mechanisms. Leadership research is especially clear on this point. A meta-analysis of 185 studies found that trust in the leader and leader-member exchange play distinct mediating roles in the relationship between leadership styles and performance-related outcomes, and that affective trust is a stronger predictor of performance and organisational citizenship behaviour than cognitive trust (Legood et al., 2020). Individual empirical work also shows that trust in supervisors mediates the positive effects of leader emotional intelligence, transformational leadership, and transactional leadership on job performance (Lee et al., 2023).

Other studies identify engagement, HR practices, and organisational systems as important pathways. Conceptual work has proposed trust as a mediator between employee engagement and job performance (Bulińska-Stangrecka & Iddagoda, 2020). Systematic review evidence indicates that bundles of HR practices are positively associated with trust towards management, peers, and the organisation, and that different trust referents predict different outcomes (Kong et al., 2025). Multilevel evidence further shows that healthy organisational practices and team resources foster vertical and horizontal trust, which employees then reciprocate through stronger performance at team and organisational levels (Salanova et al., 2021). As shown in Table 1, the reviewed studies consistently identify trust as a key mechanism linking leadership, HR practices, and organisational systems to employee and organisational performance.

Table 1. Selected themes in the literature on organizational trust and employee performance

Study Focus	Main Finding	APA Source
Vertical vs. horizontal trust	Horizontal trust shows stronger pooled links with performance	Espinoza et al. (2025)
Team trust	IntraTeam trust predicts team performance, $\rho = 0.30$	de Jong et al. (2016)
Leadership pathway	Trust mediates leadership effects on performance	Legood et al. (2020); Lee et al. (2023)
HR systems	HR bundles build multiple forms of employee trust	Kong et al. (2025)
Healthcare context	Trust improves collaboration, productivity, and retention	Karikumpu et al. (2024)

Source: Compiled by the author based on Espinoza et al. (2025), de Jong et al. (2016), Legood et al. (2020), Lee et al. (2023), Kong et al. (2025), and Karikumpu et al. (2024).

Contextual Variation and Gaps

The literature also shows that trust effects are context-sensitive rather than universal. In collaboration research, trust is more strongly related to performance when trust is cognition-based, when performance is assessed as process or outcome quality, and in low generalised-trust countries or cross-sector and non-profit settings (Li et al., 2024). In organisational settings, the effects of interpersonal and impersonal trust vary across industries, and competence-related trust dimensions appear especially important for performance (Vanhala & Tzafrir, 2021). Trust in the supervisor and trust in the organisation can also strengthen the positive relationship between authentic leadership and job performance, showing that trust may operate as a moderator as well as a mediator (Ayça, 2023).

Not all evidence is positive. One study found no correlation between organisational trust and task or contextual performance, although trust was related to counterproductive work behaviour (Galat et al., 2022). Some review work also notes that many studies examine trust only indirectly through related constructs, and that direct evidence linking employee trust to employee performance is still thinner than the broader literature sometimes implies (Zen, 2023). This limitation helps explain why trust repair has emerged as a parallel stream of research, emphasising that restoring trust after minor violations can prevent escalation and improve later organisational effectiveness (Kähkönen et al., 2021).

Overall, the literature supports the view that organisational trust is an important antecedent, mediator, and sometimes moderator of employee performance. The most defensible conclusion is that trust generally enhances performance, but its effects depend on who is trusted, how performance is measured, and the organisational context in which trust is formed and maintained.

Methods

The study followed a structured literature review design to synthesize evidence on organizational trust and performance. Systematic reviews use explicit and reproducible procedures to identify, assess, and synthesize relevant studies, thereby reducing bias in the review process (Mengist et al., 2019; Booth et al., 2019). This design was selected because the literature on trust and performance spans diverse study types and levels of analysis, and evidence synthesis is well suited to integrating findings drawn from both qualitative and quantitative sources (Mays et al., 2005; Dixon-Woods et al., 2005; Huang et al., 2018).

The review began with a clearly defined research focus and an explicit protocol to guide study identification and selection (Mengist et al., 2019; MacFarlane et al., 2021). Search strategy development was treated as a critical methodological stage because weaknesses in search design can lead to incomplete retrieval and biased conclusions (MacFarlane et al., 2021; Harari et al., 2020; Crawford, 2025). Consistent with current guidance, the review process specified the search scope, eligibility criteria, and reporting elements needed to support transparency and replication (Szarucki et al., 2025; Gusenbauer & Gauster, 2025).

Studies were screened using predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria, as clear eligibility rules improve consistency in study selection when large numbers of records are retrieved (Torres-Carrión et al., 2018; Tod, 2019; Lachal et al., 2017). Systematic screening commonly proceeds from titles and abstracts to full-text assessment, with formal appraisal used to evaluate the suitability of

retained studies (Afshari et al., 2023; Hall et al., 2022; Chong & Plonsky, 2021). More than one reviewer is desirable where possible, because multiple reviewers can strengthen the application of inclusion and exclusion criteria and improve selection reliability (Wohlin et al., 2020; Hall et al., 2022).

The final sample comprised 20 papers, and this number refers to the studies analysed in the present review rather than the internal samples reported within some included review articles. Data were extracted systematically from each paper using predefined categories, including study design, trust construct, level of analysis, performance outcome, and principal findings, in line with established guidance for structured reviews (Mengist et al., 2019; Crawford, 2025). Data extraction and classification are central synthesis steps because they organise comparable evidence across heterogeneous studies (Mengist et al., 2019; Booth et al., 2019).

The analysis used a thematic synthesis approach to identify recurring patterns across the included studies. Thematic synthesis is a common method for coding extracted findings and developing broader themes from the reviewed literature (Macura et al., 2019; Hall et al., 2022; Naeem et al., 2023). In practice, this involves coding study findings, grouping similar codes, and deriving descriptive or analytical themes through systematic comparison (Macura et al., 2019; Hall et al., 2022). An inductive orientation was appropriate because it allows themes to emerge from the included evidence rather than imposing a rigid prior framework (Hall et al., 2022; Naeem et al., 2023).

Because the included literature contained empirical studies, systematic reviews, and meta-analyses, the final synthesis was presented narratively as well as thematically. Narrative synthesis is commonly used when evidence is methodologically diverse and cannot be reduced to a single statistical metric (Mays et al., 2005; Dixon-Woods et al., 2005; Huang et al., 2018). This combination of structured searching, explicit screening, systematic extraction, and thematic-narrative synthesis provided a transparent basis for interpreting the 20 papers included in this review (Mengist et al., 2019; Gusenbauer & Gauster, 2025; Turnbull et al., 2022). As shown in Table 2, the review followed a structured methodological approach, including predefined eligibility criteria, systematic data extraction, and thematic and narrative synthesis.

Table 2. Core methodological elements to retain in the article Methods section

Element	Wording to Keep
Review design	Structured literature review
Final sample	20 papers
Screening basis	Inclusion and exclusion criteria
Extraction	Predefined categories
Synthesis	Thematic plus narrative synthesis

Source: Compiled by the author

Results

The evidence shows that organisational trust is generally positively associated with employee, team, and organisational performance, although the strength of the relationship varies by trust referent, context, and method (Guinot & Chiva, 2019; Espinoza et al., 2025; Rahayuningsih, 2019). Meta-analytic evidence indicates that vertical trust has weak but significant pooled correlations with different forms of performance, while horizontal trust shows stronger pooled correlations, especially for collaborative and extra-role outcomes (Espinoza et al., 2025; de Jong et al., 2016).

Results also show that trust is often more important as a mediating mechanism than as a simple direct predictor of performance (Guinot & Chiva, 2019; Legood et al., 2020; Lee et al., 2023). At the same time, some studies report null direct effects on task and contextual performance, which indicates that the trust–performance relationship is not uniform across all settings (Galat et al., 2022; Guinot & Chiva, 2019). As shown in Table 3, the reviewed studies consistently indicate that organisational trust enhances performance through multiple direct and indirect pathways, although the strength of these relationships varies across trust dimensions and organisational contexts.

Main Findings

Table 3. Core empirical patterns linking organizational trust to performance outcomes

Trust Dimension or Mechanism	Result	Key APA Sources
Vertical trust	Weak but significant links with performance	Espinoza et al. (2025)
Horizontal trust	Stronger pooled links than vertical trust	Espinoza et al. (2025)
IntraTeam trust	Positively related to team performance, $\rho = 0.30$	de Jong et al. (2016)
Leadership trust	Mediates leadership effects on performance and organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB)	Legood et al. (2020); Lee et al. (2023)
Healthy practices and resources	Build trust that predicts team and organizational performance	Salanova et al. (2021)

Source: Compiled by the author based on Espinoza et al. (2025), de Jong et al. (2016), Legood et al. (2020), Lee et al. (2023), and Salanova et al. (2021).

Organisational trust is linked to a broad set of positive outcomes beyond formal performance ratings, including job satisfaction, organisational commitment, organisational citizenship behaviour, innovative behaviour, communication, engagement, retention, and safety motivation (Rahayuningsih, 2019; Karikumpu et al., 2024; Fahriski et al., 2025). In healthcare, trust in the leader and trust in the organisation contribute to work production, collaboration, productivity, retention, and well-being, suggesting that trust has both performance and workforce-stability consequences (Karikumpu et al., 2024; Olvera et al., 2024). As shown in Table 4, the literature demonstrates that organisational trust influences performance through direct, mediated, and moderated pathways, although the strength of these relationships varies across organisational contexts.

Direct, Mediated and Moderated Effects

Table 4. Direct, mediated, and moderated trust-performance relationships reported across the literature

Relationship Type	Result	Key APA Sources
Direct effect	Many studies find positive direct effects on job performance	Guinot & Chiva (2019); Ayça (2023)
Mediated effect	Trust often explains how leadership improves performance	Legood et al. (2020); Lee et al. (2023); Olvera et al. (2024)
Organisational pathway	Healthy practices and team resources increase trust, which improves performance	Salanova et al. (2021); Verburg et al. (2017)
Moderated effect	Trust in supervisor and trust in organisation strengthen leadership-performance links	Ayça (2023)
Null direct effect	No link with task/contextual performance in one study, but link with counterproductive behaviour	Galat et al. (2022)

Source: Compiled by the author based on Guinot and Chiva (2019), Ayça (2023), Legood et al. (2020), Lee et al. (2023), Olvera et al. (2024), Salanova et al. (2021), Verburg et al. (2017), and Galat et al. (2022).

Leadership findings are especially consistent. Trust in the leader and leader-member exchange play distinct mediating roles in the relationship between leadership styles and performance outcomes, and affective trust is a stronger predictor of performance and organisational citizenship behaviour than cognitive trust (Legood et al., 2020). At the individual level, trust in the supervisor mediates the positive effects of leader emotional intelligence, transformational leadership, and transactional leadership on job performance (Lee et al., 2023). As shown in Table 5, the strength of the trust-performance relationship varies according to team context, research design, trust basis, industry context, and employee age.

Context and Method Variation

The literature also indicates that supervisor trust tends to have the strongest employee-performance association among common trust referents, exceeding coworker and top-management trust in one large worker sample (Rahayuningsih, 2019; Espinoza et al., 2025). HR practice bundles are positively associated with trust toward management, peers, and the organization, and those different forms of trust predict different outcomes (Kong et al., 2025).

Table 5. Factors that modify the observed trust-performance relationship

Source of Variation	Result	Key APA Sources
Team context	Trust matters more under interdependence and differentiated team structures	de Jong et al. (2016)
Measurement design	Cross-sectional and single-source studies show larger effects	Feitosa et al. (2020)
Trust basis	Cognition-based trust shows stronger links in collaboration settings	Li et al. (2024)
Industry context	Interpersonal and impersonal trust both connect to performance, with industry-specific variation	Vanhala & Tzafrir (2021)
Age	Older samples show a weaker trust-performance association	Espinoza et al. (2025)

Source : Compiled by the author based on de Jong et al. (2016), Feitosa et al. (2020), Li et al. (2024), Vanhala and Tzafrir (2021), and Espinoza et al. (2025).

A smaller but important stream shows that trust is also fragile and repairable. Early use of trust-repair strategies after minor violations appears to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of trust restoration with employees (Kähkönen et al., 2021; Zen, 2023). Overall, the results support a positive trust-performance relationship, but they also show that its size and consistency depend on who is trusted, how performance is measured, and the organizational context.

Discussion

The findings indicate that organizational trust is an important correlate of employee, team, and organizational performance, but its effects are not uniform across trust referents or outcomes (Espinoza et al., 2025; Guinot & Chiva, 2019; Vanhala & Tzafrir, 2021). Vertical trust appears to have weak but significant links with performance, whereas horizontal trust tends to show stronger associations, particularly in collaborative settings and extra-role domains (Espinoza et al., 2025; de Jong et al., 2016; Li et al., 2024).

A central implication is that trust often operates more strongly as a mechanism than as a stand-alone predictor of performance (Guinot & Chiva, 2019; Legood et al., 2020; Lee et al., 2023; Salanova et al., 2021). Across leadership and organisational studies, trust repeatedly explains how leader behaviour, healthy practices, and team resources translate into higher job performance, service quality, citizenship behaviour, and organisational results (Olvera et al., 2024; Verburg et al., 2017; Rahayuningsih, 2019). As shown in Table 6, the reviewed literature highlights four key interpretive themes that explain how organisational trust contributes to employee and organisational performance across different contexts.

Interpretive Themes

Table 6. Core interpretive themes for the discussion of organizational trust and performance

Theme	Discussion Point	Key APA Sources
Relative strength	Horizontal trust generally shows stronger performance links than vertical trust	Espinoza et al. (2025); de Jong et al. (2016)
Mediating role	Trust frequently carries the effects of leadership and practices onto performance	Legood et al. (2020); Lee et al. (2023); Olvera et al. (2024)
Context sensitivity	Effects vary by industry, collaboration form, and measurement design	Vanhala & Tzafrir (2021); Li et al. (2024); Feitosa et al. (2020)
Practical value	Trust supports performance, retention, collaboration, and well-being	Karikumpu et al. (2024); Fahriski et al. (2025)

Source: Compiled by the author based on Espinoza et al. (2025), de Jong et al. (2016), Legood et al. (2020), Lee et al. (2023), Olvera et al. (2024), Vanhala and Tzafrir (2021), Li et al. (2024), Feitosa et al. (2020), Karikumpu et al. (2024), and Fahriski et al. (2025).

Explaining Variation

The mixed findings in the literature appear to reflect real contextual variation rather than a simple contradiction. Trust-performance effects differ by team structure, industry, collaboration type, and measurement approach, with stronger effects often appearing under high interdependence, in cross-sector collaboration, and in cross-sectional or single-source designs (de Jong et al., 2016; Feitosa et al., 2020; Li et al., 2024). Industry-specific evidence also suggests that both interpersonal

and impersonal trust matter, while competence-related trust dimensions may be especially relevant for performance (Vanhala & Tzafrir, 2021).

The literature also suggests that trust is multilevel. Team-level horizontal trust predicts team outcomes and work engagement, while organizational-level trust helps connect healthy practices and managerial support to broader performance indicators such as supervisor ratings and return on assets (Olvera et al., 2024; Salanova et al., 2021). This interpretation is consistent with broader reviews showing that trust contributes not only to task performance, but also to commitment, innovation, communication quality, intention to stay, and overall employee relations (Rahayuningsih, 2019; Karikumpu et al., 2024; Fahriski et al., 2025).

Implications and Gaps

- Supervisor trust appears especially important for employee performance relative to coworker or top-management trust (Rahayuningsih, 2019).
- HR practices seem to shape trust toward management, peers, and the organization, and these trust forms predict different outcomes (Kong et al., 2025).
- Authentic and ethical leadership likely matter partly because they cultivate trust that strengthens performance links (Ayça, 2023; Legood et al., 2020).
- Trust repair matters because early responses to small violations appear to improve restoration and prevent escalation (Kähkönen et al., 2021; Zen, 2023).

Not all evidence is positive. One study reported no relationship between organisational trust and task or contextual performance, although trust was related to counterproductive work behaviour, which suggests that trust may sometimes matter more for preventing performance-harming behaviour than for raising formal performance scores (Galat et al., 2022). The literature also remains thinner on direct trust–performance effects than on mediated pathways, and some reviews note that direct studies are still relatively limited (Guinot & Chiva, 2019; Zen, 2023; Bulińska-Stangrecka & Iddagoda, 2020).

Conclusion

In conclusion, organisational trust is generally associated with higher employee, team, and organisational performance, although the strength of this relationship varies across trust referents, contexts, and outcomes (Espinoza et al., 2025; Vanhala & Tzafrir, 2021; Rahayuningsih, 2019). The evidence suggests that horizontal trust and IntraTeam trust often show stronger links with collaborative and extra-role performance than vertical trust (Espinoza et al., 2025; de Jong et al., 2016; Li et al., 2024). At the same time, vertical trust remains important, particularly in relation to leadership and organisational functioning (Guinot & Chiva, 2019; Karikumpu et al., 2024). Across the literature, trust appears to improve performance most consistently through indirect pathways, acting as a mediating or moderating mechanism through which leadership, organisational practices, justice, and control systems shape job performance, service quality, and organisational citizenship behaviour (Legood et al., 2020; Lee et al., 2023; Salanova et al., 2021; Olvera et al., 2024; Verburg et al., 2017; Ayça, 2023). Trust is also associated with broader positive outcomes, including commitment, communication, innovation, retention, engagement, and workplace well-being (Rahayuningsih, 2019; Karikumpu et al., 2024; Fahriski et al., 2025; Bulińska-Stangrecka & Iddagoda, 2020). However, the relationship is not uniform, as some studies report null direct effects on task and contextual performance, and several reviews note that direct trust–performance research remains less developed than mediated models (Galat et al., 2022; Zen, 2023; Guinot & Chiva, 2019). Future research should therefore examine direct, indirect, and multilevel effects more rigorously across industries, cultural settings, and trust referents, while organisations should strengthen trust through fair leadership, supportive HR practices, and early trust-repair efforts when violations occur (Kong et al., 2025; Kähkönen et al., 2021).

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