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Strategies for Building Trust in an Automated Work Environment

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Marta Chodyka[1], Agnieszka Król[2], Barbara Wyrzykowska[3], Barbara Drapikowska[4], Zbigniew Ciekanowski[5]

Abstract:

Purpose: *This article analyses the impact of a culture of trust on the effectiveness of implementing new technologies and automation in organisations across various industries.*
Design/Methodology/Approach: *The article is based on a review of literature and research, as well as case studies of organisations that have implemented effective strategies for building trust in an automated work environment. The research problem was formulated as follows: How do organisations build confidence in a computerised work environment (using what tools and strategies)? The research hypothesis assumes that organisational culture has a positive impact on the implementation of new technologies and automation in a company with widespread employee acceptance, thanks to the high level of trust that prevails within it.*
Findings: *People are the greatest asset of modern organisations. Technology should support and improve their work, not replace them. Organisations have a wide range of tools at their disposal that they can use to build and strengthen employee understanding and trust in the efficient functioning of an automated work environment. Organisations that have a culture of trust should "nurture" it, systematically monitor, improve, and develop it.*
Practical implications: *Organisational culture has a positive impact on the implementation of new technologies and automation within a company, thanks to the high level of trust that prevails among its employees. Examples of companies that have been successful in this field, based on a culture that is open to innovation, cooperation, and trust, where automation is viewed as a strategic tool for development, can be found in various industries. This article presents examples of such good practices.*
Originality/Value: *Key strategies for building trust in an automated work environment should be based on a transparent communication system (clear communication of goals and processes, active listening, reliance on facts), defining roles and expectations (clear division of tasks, duties, responsibilities, competencies), promoting a culture of openness and feedback, building a sense of security, keeping promises (credibility), demonstrating*

[1]*John Paul II University in Biala Podlaska, Poland, ORCID: 0000-0002-8819-2451, e-mail: m.chodyka@dyd.akademiabialska.pl;*
[2]*Warsaw Management University, Poland, ORCID: 0000-0002-5685-7578, e-mail: krolagnieszka@op.pl;*
[3]*Institute of Management, Warsaw University of Life Sciences, Poland, ORCID: 0000-0002-7025-0799, e-mail: barbara_wyrzykowska@sggw.edu.pl;*
[4]*War Studies University, ORCID 0000-0002-6852-2791, e-mail: bdrapikowska@o2.pl*
[5]*War Studies University, ORCID: 0000-0002-0549-894X, e-mail: zbigniew@ciekanowski.pl;*

consistency in actions, as well as supporting employee development (training, workshops, technological education), recognizing and appreciating their achievements. In an automated work environment, it is also essential to promote the idea that technology should support employees, not replace them (people are the actual value of an organisation; they determine the effective use of all resources, while technology remains a tool in their hands).

Keywords: *Trust, culture of trust, trust-based culture, trust-building strategies, new technologies, automation, trust in new technologies.*

JEL codes: *M14, J24, O32.*

Paper type: *Research article.*

1. Introduction

In the context of technological change, digitisation, and automation, viewed through the prism of successive industrial revolutions, we can also see the key directions of transformation undergone by organisational cultures that are opening up to new challenges, including the prioritisation of trust.

The sheer number of definitions of trust found in the literature presents a significant challenge, and attempts to organise them are fraught with difficulty. Therefore, to capture the dynamics and key aspects of research conducted in the area of trust, both contextual and processual factors must be taken into account, as trust encompasses cognitive, affective, behavioural, and ethical elements (Latusek-Jurczak, 2019).

Referring to the key role of trust in contemporary organisational cultures, it should be analysed in detail on two levels: interorganizational (i.e., between the organisation and its environment) and intraorganizational (i.e., internal, between employees and their supervisors). Trust is a key determinant of the success of modern organisations, promoting practical cooperation and communication at both organisational and individual levels (Rutten, Blaas-Franken, and Martin, 2016).

In the literature on the subject, two concepts can be found that function in tandem, namely trust-based culture and a culture of trust. These are synonymous but not identical concepts, as the former refers to a culture that is based on trust as the foundation for consciously building an organisation's strategy, which translates into the formation of norms and behaviours (this occurs during the formation phase).

In contrast, the second refers to the level of trust already present in the organisation, which is evident in the prevailing atmosphere and certainty in relationships (the organisation is in the phase of systematic improvement and “nurturing”). A culture of trust is said to exist when its stakeholders become firmly convinced that it is possible to take risks by trusting and relying on others, and they share this

conviction with others (Bylok *et al.,* 2023). In the context of the Industrial Revolution and digitalisation, including the concept of Industry 5.0, a culture of trust encompasses not only trust in relationships between internal and external stakeholders but also the level of trust in the implementation of new technologies, automation, and innovative solutions.

2. Key Strategies for Building Trust in an Automated Work Environment

The basis for building trust in an automated work environment is a transparent communication system based on open information sharing with both internal and external stakeholders, especially regarding the objectives of implementing planned changes, the resulting benefits and risks, the reasons for and effects of decisions made, and mainly based on knowledge sharing and employee participation. It is worth mentioning here the need to strike a balance between automating such a system and human interaction to prevent employee alienation.

Of course, it is worth utilising modern technological solutions in organisational communication processes, including communication tools such as Microsoft Teams, Slack, Trello, Zoom, and Miro, as well as in the context of development and training (e.g., communication workshops).

Undoubtedly, they can improve efficiency and information availability, but it is essential to exercise moderation. Technologies are there to support employees, not to replace human contact and relationships. The core of the communication system should be based on actions that promote honesty, credibility, mutual respect, and ethics.

In the communication process, especially in an automated work environment, the culture of feedback also plays an important role in two aspects: as reliable and transparent information about changes and innovations, and as support for the communication process using technology (communication platforms, performance monitoring systems, survey applications for collecting employee opinions) (Managerwopalach, 2025).

People are the greatest asset of any organisation, which is why every effort should be made to ensure that their level of trust is as high as possible. We can use a wide range of tools to achieve this, including training and practical workshops that enable direct contact with new technologies, as well as those of an integrative nature.

They provide important support for employees in adapting to new technologies, tools, and processes. It is worth mentioning here the role of coaching and mentoring as an example of adequate support for employees by experienced individuals within the organisation, which significantly accelerates the pace of adaptation in an automated work environment. Organisations that invest in the systematic development of their employees' competencies in relation to automation foster and

strengthen an atmosphere of trust, promoting a culture of continuous learning and development.

Another important aspect is building a sense of psychological security among employees, especially in an automated work environment. The implementation of automated processes in the organisation must be as transparent as possible, based on systematic learning and employee development in the context of practical cooperation with systems and technologies, and appreciation of their efforts and work, both that is performed independently by humans and that is supported by technology.

In summary, key strategies for building trust in an automated work environment should be based on a transparent communication system (clear communication of goals and processes, active listening, reliance on facts), defining roles and expectations (clear division of tasks, duties, responsibilities, competencies), promoting a culture of openness and feedback, building a sense of security, keeping promises (credibility), demonstrating consistency in actions, as well as supporting employee development (training, workshops, technological education), recognizing and appreciating their achievements. In an automated work environment, it is also important to promote the idea that technology should support employees, not replace them (people are the actual value of an organisation; they determine the effective use of all resources, while technology remains a tool in their hands).

3. Trust in New Technologies and Automation—A Review of Research

Trust is, among other things, crucial for the effective implementation of technology, including artificial intelligence. As shown by studies such as "Closing the AI Trust Gap" 2024, conducted by FT Longitude on behalf of Workday (Workday, 2024), there is a significant gap in trust in AI, only 62% of business leaders and 52% of employees confirm their trust in their organisation's responsible use of artificial intelligence.

Only 22% of employees and 30% of leaders report that their company provides guidelines on the responsible use of artificial intelligence. In comparison, 24% of employees and 36% of leaders indicate that their organisation is only just beginning to develop regulations on artificial intelligence. This is a clear signal to employers about the need to introduce greater transparency and clarity in the rules of cooperation in the field of AI.

Another study conducted by the Digital Poland Foundation, GfK Polonia, and T-Mobile Polska, "Technology in the service of society. Will Poles become a 5.0 society?" (5th edition, 2023), points to increased human oversight of AI development (40% of respondents) as one of the main factors increasing trust. On average, 4 out of 10 Poles also declare the need for better legal regulation in this area. All editions of this study emphasise the need for more education in the field of

AI (acceptance of artificial intelligence, its development, and applications is higher among respondents with greater knowledge on the subject) (Startup Voice, 2023).

However, another study, described in Deloitte's Tech Trends 2023 report (14th edition), emphasises that one of the key solutions to significantly reduce the low level of employee trust in artificial intelligence is to build an effective AI implementation strategy and communicate it effectively (MM Magazyn Przemysłowy Online, 2023).

The research also explores another important aspect of trust: the attitudes of different generations towards new technologies and automation. The 2023 Ipsos Global Views On A.I.2 survey, conducted using the CAWI method, which covered residents of thirty-one selected countries (total N=22,816, including N=500 in Poland), clearly indicates that the generation with the highest level of trust is Generation Z, the internet generation, growing up in a fully digitised society (people born between 1995 and 2012). This research also highlights the exaggerated trust and enthusiasm among Gen Zers (Pyżalski and Łuczyńska, 2024).

Yet another study was conducted in three focus groups (a total of 34 people) among Representatives of Generation Z, comprising students from different nationalities (Erasmus students, first-degree students, and high school students in the International Baccalaureate program), also exhibit a positive attitude towards artificial intelligence and a high level of trust in it.

However, there were also sceptics among the respondents. The respondents were aware of the benefits and risks of using new technologies, expressing mainly concerns in the area of privacy and personal data protection, as well as ethical challenges (Dewalska-Opitek et al., 2024).

The high level of trust in new technologies among Generation Z is also evident in the openness of millennials towards its widespread use, e.g., artificial intelligence, both in the professional and private spheres, while among Generation Y, this is focused on career development, personal development, and social engagement (Kowalczyk-Kroenke, 2025).

Thus, representatives of Generation Y (people born between 1980 and 1994), who grew up in the era of the internet's development, are also characterised by a relatively high level of trust in new technologies. It can even be said that they often treat technology as a “sixth sense” (Adamus and Pietraszek, 2016).

In turn, the latest Digital Poland report, “Technology in the service of society. Will Poles become a 5.0 society? 2025 edition,” reveals a correlation between the education, gender, and generation of respondents and their attitudes toward new technologies. People with higher education are much more likely to see the opportunities offered by new technologies, men are more likely than women to

embrace technological innovations, and Generation Z is most concerned about the automation of the labour market (the development of robotics and artificial intelligence).

Seventy-six per cent of the population, including baby boomers, see the negative impact of digitisation on social bonds and interpersonal relationships. In summary, the research results presented in this report indicate a positive attitude towards new technologies among nearly 70% of Poles, representing a four percentage point increase from the previous year (Digital Poland, 2025).

Research conducted in the area of HRC (Human-Robot Collaboration) is also an important aspect in building a culture of trust. People's trust in robots is a key factor determining proper cooperation. In addition, the importance of areas such as reliability, predictability of robots, human personality, and robot appearance is highlighted, as they have a direct impact on shaping the level of trust in teams whose members include humans and robots (Morze, 2023).

Research indicates that personality traits, such as a belief in one's own abilities and self-confidence, significantly increase the level of trust in relationships with new technologies. Extroverts also show a higher level of trust in robots (Robert *et al.,* 2020). Cognitive skills, experience, and knowledge, especially in the area of new technologies and automation, also influence the level of trust (Oleson *et al.,* 2011).

Increasingly, organisations worldwide are incorporating trust into their strategic documents as the foundation for building internal and external relationships and shaping their organisational culture.

However, paradoxically, there is still a noticeable crisis of trust in companies and a relatively low level of trust in business, as confirmed by the results of the Global Trustworthiness Ranking (Ipsos Global Trustworthiness Index 2022: 21,515 participants from 28 countries, online survey conducted between May 27 and June 10, 2022), where business leaders occupy one of the lower positions, indicating a low level of trust in managers.

Despite growing awareness of the importance of trust for the functioning of modern organisations worldwide, there are still challenges in implementing this strategic value in practice. Among the three key determinants influencing the growth of a culture of trust in organisations, historical tradition, structural context, and subjective factors, including employee morale, stand out (Walczak-Duraj, 2006).

It is also worth noting the benefits of trust cultures, such as increased innovation and entrepreneurship, freedom, spontaneity, and flexibility of action, pro-social activity, independent and critical thinking, following one's own convictions, openness to dialogue, tolerance, acceptance, and a positive attitude towards people of other cultures, nationalities, innovations, or changes. Cooperation is also greatly

facilitated, which, thanks to the strengthening of bonds and relationships within teams, translates into a reduction in costs related to, for example, control (Mizdrak, 2023).

4. Trust in Automated Work Environments – Examples of Good Practices

Organisational culture can have a positive impact on the implementation of new technologies and automation within a company, thanks to the high level of trust that prevails among its employees. Examples of companies that have been successful in this field, based on a culture that is open to innovation, cooperation, and trust, where automation is viewed as a strategic tool for development, can be found in various industries.

In IT technology companies, such as Google and Microsoft, programs are being implemented that integrate employees with automation teams by organising regular meetings between these teams, during which employees have the opportunity to share their experiences and concerns related to automation in the company.

Focus groups are also being created to research the impact of technology on employee motivation, engagement, work culture, and job satisfaction. Mentoring is viewed as a strategic tool for the effective implementation of innovation, which helps minimise stress and fears associated with change.

Toyota, on the other hand, has based its efforts to build employee trust in the context of implementing new technologies and automation on activities in three key areas, namely the active participation of employees in the process of designing and implementing automation, which significantly increases their level of engagement and reduces stress, cultivating a culture of continuous improvement within the organization (submitting ideas, "improvements") and the systematic organization of meetings to share knowledge, insights, and experiences in working with new technologies (managerwopalach, 2025).

Another example is InPost, a leader in the courier services market. Its business is based on the principle of creating simple solutions using modern technologies, automation, knowledge, passion, and employee creativity. InPost systematically surveys employee satisfaction, engagement, and morale (Pulse Check survey), which allows it to quickly identify areas for improvement, track changes in satisfaction, and take corrective action.

The company also comprehensively supports the development of its employees by offering a variety of programs, such as INNOVATION LAB (promoting innovation among employees, moving from ideas to implementation, encouraging unconventional thinking), PEOPLE OUT OF THE BOX (mapping competencies), and KEY PEOPLE (talent and successor management in the organisation), which promote innovation and creativity.

Competency development is also carried out using nanolearning platforms and external tools, such as eTutor (for language learning) and Good Habitz (a training platform). Employees also have the opportunity to participate in various initiatives and competitions, e.g., the Innovation Challenge Competition (co-creating ESG strategies, proposing actions in areas such as well-being or technological exclusion).

The company's pro-social activities, along with the Well-Time program, which promotes employee health and well-being, are additional tools that foster an atmosphere of trust within the organisation. InPost's culture is based on the PEOPLE FIRST idea (the employee is the most important). The company also ensures the reliability and clarity of the communication system, allowing for a seamless flow of information and data. Regular meetings with employees are organised, and reports are published (MP, 2023).

5. Conclusions

Trust is crucial for the effective implementation of technology and automation in organisations across various industries worldwide. People are the priority here. It is their "attitude" towards innovation and change that determines success or failure. The foundation should be a strong culture of trust, shaped by systematic employee training that facilitates an understanding of technology and enables faster adaptation to change and innovation in an automated work environment, taking into account the ethical implications.

Other important elements include a transparent communication and feedback system, employee participation, and well-being. In an atmosphere of openness, understanding, empathy, and cooperation, it is easier to gain the trust that is necessary to implement technological changes and process automation.

The key principles and practices that managers should follow to strengthen the level of trust in the organization include credibility, honesty, and ethical conduct (keeping one's word, being able to rely on others), transparent communication (preventing rumors, speculation, and conflicts based on them, freely expressing opinions), acceptance of mistakes (learning lessons, taking risks), respect and confidentiality, listening skills (appreciating the opinions of others), implementing changes in response to feedback, delegating responsibility (increasing employee autonomy), appreciating and recognizing achievements (increasing satisfaction, loyalty, and sense of security), being a role model for others, and using emotional intelligence in building relationships.

People are the greatest asset of modern organisations. Technology should support and improve their work, not replace them. Organisations have a wide range of tools at their disposal that they can use to build and strengthen employee understanding and trust in the efficient functioning of an automated work environment. Organisations that have a culture of trust should "nurture" it, systematically monitor,

improve, and develop it. When building or shaping a culture of trust, it is also essential to consider the diverse needs, motivations, and key values of representatives from different generations in the labour market.

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