THE ROLE OF TRUST AND WORK RELATIONSHIP SATISFACTION ON PROJECT OUTCOMES

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Abstract
Purpose – In recent researches, the concept of trust in a project process appears to be the one of the most significant elements. A project process involves numerous actors with often clashing interests difficult to adjust during cooperation, but the leading aim is common to all - an accomplished project. This empirical research analyzes two dimensions of trust, according to Rousseau's dimensions of trust (calculus-based and relational-based trust), in a relationship with the satisfaction with a work relationship in a project process and project outcomes, success or failure, to try to explore its mutual correlation and its predictors influence on project outputs.
Methodology – A questionnaire was delivered through Survey Monkey platform on 750 e-mail addresses in Croatia with a response rate of 13.2% (99 respondents). A correlation analysis and multiple linear regression were used to analyze collected data.
Findings – The results of an analysis revealed that trust is an essential factor in the project process, which leads to the satisfaction of players with the working relationships in a project process, and to the project's success or failure. Further the results revealed that trust is perceived as a base operator in a project process. Trust deficit can point to significant issues even before the dawn of project process, so it is a prerequisite to bring together all targets, and clashed interests.
Contribution – A trust in a project process is a complex construct which demands further debate, and this analysis is an attempt to add further scientific insight about the relevance of trust in a relationship among the participants, and at the same time provides an application design with the opportunity to foresee a behavior of stakeholders engaged in a process. A wise leader will gather on all components in an equation, trying to identify the most effective approach to carry out and execute the project with success.
Keywords: calculus-based trust, relational-based trust, satisfaction with a work relationship, project, project success, project failure.

INTRODUCTION

A project is a temporary, unique and dynamic attempt or endeavor required to provide some kind of tangible or intangible result (a unique product, service, benefit, competitive advantage, etc.). It consists of a set of connected tasks that are designed for execution over a limited time and within specific prerequisites and limitations, such as cost, quality, performance, and others (MyMG 2020). Project success depends on many factors affecting all players and key stakeholders, with divergent interests, but with the same objective – a successful project result. Dealing with project success, it is crucial to define and measure that success, requiring a total balance of all project tasks, project costs, time and performance, and, above all, expected results from the side of all project participants. The success of the project is tied to the organization itself, the time available, the resources required, accompanied by its original definition, design of organizational

transformations, negotiating and implementation. We can conclude with considerable confidence that the success of the project rests in anticipating, coordinating, and eliminating issues before the project is de facto started at all. For this reason, trust among the participants is essential because of its comprehensive impact on the overall project performance. In a project with many actors, mutual change is not achievable without the trust and motive of all participants to bring about an effective result. Trust is the key to dealing with project disputes, which enables a kind of 'stronger' coordination of stakeholders, which shows that the success of the project will depend on their reciprocal respect, understanding and satisfaction of targeted wishes. If there are disappointed stakeholders, who are full of mistrust, the project will never reach the targeted success. As many authors have claimed, trust should be the essential and the most important element in the project process among all participants, because, when someone trusts another party to perform all vital actions to carry out the targets, he likewise trying to show to that other party his trustiness.

1. TRUST

Trust is a psychological state comprising the intention to accept vulnerability based on the positive expectation of the intentions or behaviors of another (Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt and Camerer 1998). According to Kadefors (2004), trust is a complex concept and, as a result, can have a variety of meanings depending upon the situation and the actors in the relationship. Albert and Kelsey (2000) stated that trust in a contractual relationship can facilitate the exchange of information and bring about a reduction in control and its associated costs since the parties do not have to fear any manifestations of opportunism. In the earliest works (Blau 1964; Butler 1991; Deutsch 1963; Gambetta 1988; Mayer, Davis and Schoorman 1995), trust was understood as fundamental to collaborative relationships as well as to the claim that interpersonal trust had significant relationships with organizational variables, such as quality of communication, performance, problem solving, collaboration and civic behavior. Whitener, Brodt, Korsgaard and Werner (1998) found that the definition of trust reflects three aspects: a trust in the other party that reflects the expectation or belief that the other party will act in good faith; a trust which includes the willingness to hurt and the risk that the other party will not meet their expectations, and a trust involving some level of dependence on the other party, and the outcomes may be influenced by the actions of the other parties. These aspects of trust can be easily applied to the stock network and, based on the research results, can explain for a great deal of stakeholder reciprocal behavior. According to Butler and Cantrell (1984), in behavioral decision theory, trust is based on several determinants: integrity, competence, consistency, loyalty, and openness. Two main conditions are risk and interdependence according the interdisciplinary agreement between scholars on the condition that must exist for establishing trust. Risk is the perceived probability of loss (Chiles and McMackin 1996), and it creates an opportunity for trust in a relationship between two depended parties. In a relationship with complete certainty and no risk, trust is useless (Lewis and Seigert 1985). Trust as a dynamic phenomenon has three phases: building, stability and dissolution phase. The building phase is where trust is formed or reformed (Das and Tang 1998; McKnight, Cummings and Chervany 1995; Whitener et al. 1998). Stability as a trust precondition in an institutional approach connected with the trust as argued by Hagen and Coe (1998) and Shepard and Shermann (1998). Decreasing

trust level can be a dangerous factor in any process or relationship according to Elangovan and Shapiro (1998) and Mishra and Spreitzer (1999). Trust gives parties confidence that openness and sharing of information will not be used against them (Zaheer and Zaheer 2006). The key to healthier industrial relationships that more promote integrative decisions in the organization is a mutual trust recognized by employees and managers (García, Pender, Elgoibar, Munduate and Euwema 2014). For the purpose of this research, Rousseau's concept of trust will be used because it covers two significant dimensions of trust: calculus-based trust and relational-based trust (Rousseau et al. 1998).[1] Calculus-based trust is a type of trust which is motivated by self-interest or possible benefits achieved by the parties in a process. Investors, for example, are motivated by their self-interest in achieving business agendas in the accordance with strategic and other objectives, and they are willing to cooperate with others (Rousseau et al. 1998). All other parties involved in project are trying to maintain good relationships with the focus on longterm cooperation to secure possible future mutual projects. Relational-based trust emerges over time; this is repeated direct interactions which lead to a greater comfort zone or level of understanding between the parties. It can be measured by a RELQUAL scale (Lages, Lages and Lages 2005) which is comprised of four dimensions: amount of information sharing in the relationship, communication quality of the relationship, long-term relationship orientation and satisfaction with the relationship. Two key processes are responsible for achieving this stage: regular communication and interaction (Costa 2017).

2. THE PROJECT MANAGEMENT

The Project management Institute (PMI 2013) defines project management as the application of knowledge, skills, tools and techniques during performing different actions whose purpose is to reach the prerequisites of an individual project. A project is a onetime process between what we wish to achieve and what will be achieved. A project can be defined as any temporary venture that creates a particular unique product, service, or some definite outcome (Thackeray 2002). The project is also a onetime human endeavor that involves a specified objective, and is carried out in stages at a given time using many different and limited resources (Buble 2010; Radujković et al. 2012). The essential feature of each project is that it has precisely specified objectives, and that it is limited by time, resources, manpower, funds, equipment and capacity to be operated. Projects also bring certain risks, and the most frequent risks are exceeding deadlines, budgets and not realizing the set goals. A project is a process comprising numerous different activities that need to be coordinated and controlled with a specific time frame to achieve the set goals under the requirements of investors, stakeholders, investors, including defined time limits, costs and resources. Project objectives should be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timed. The objective must be within practical circumstances and within a definite time frame. All stakeholders can be both inside and outside the project and can affect the success of the project in various forms. The objective is to satisfy the demands and expectations of all those involved in the project. The result of the project can be: a product (part of something, a component, finished

[1] Institutional-based trust (the third dimension of trust according Rousseau) was excluded from purposefully from the study.

product); a service (e.g. a new business function in the company); or a document, a study, a draft (e.g. a research project that results in a certain new knowledge or implementation of something, a construction project). Projects have developmental stages known as life cycles. The life cycle is a framework for project management and comprises five phases (Biggins 2016): a project initiation, planning, implementation, supervision, control and conclusion of the project. Through the project initiation phase, the project is evaluated, and its scope, objectives and tasks needed for the achievement of the project are established. Project planning includes time frame, budget, resources, quality and possible risks. During the project process, the dynamics of all activities are supervised and all actors are coordinated. Surveillance and control constantly measure and observe the progress of the project, which provides the project team a consistent insight into the state of the project and identifies discrepancies from the plan and recommends corrections. Concluding the project cycle means acknowledging the project and locking down all actions. Governing the phases of the project life cycle involves better control over all components that may influence the fruitful implementation of the project. Project managers must choose the optimal combination of project resources for each project phase in a dynamic environment, which will lead to the accomplishment of project. Carrying out projects of any kind affects a greater or smaller number of affected parties, either individuals or organizations. Project results can usually have a direct impact on entities that are not a formal part of the project itself; such as project partners, participants or stakeholders. Project stakeholders are all individuals and organizations actively participated in the project, but, again, those whose interests can influence the project (Fertalj, Car and Nižetić-Kosović 2016; Schein 2004; Sikavica and Novak 1999). They may have ownership, other rights and particular interests in the project and all former, present and prospective actions that have been carried out; a project management task is to identify stakeholders, identify and direct their needs and expectations to accomplish the project. Primary project stakeholders are individuals and organizations that have a legitimate contractual and / or lawful commitment to the project. They belong to the project team, and the accompanying organizational infrastructure, and have direct strategic and operational roles in the design, development and production of project results (products, services or processes), but also in providing after-sales assistance. Secondary stakeholders are all those who are affected by the outcome of the project.

3. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Rousseau's model has three dimensions of trust: calculus-based trust, relational-trust and institutional-based trust. For the purpose of this research, focus was on calculus-based and relational-based trust. Institutional-based trust was excluded with intention to focus on more psychological aspects of trust, human perceptions and behavior. Trust is one of the most important factors in a project process, and it affects all players engaged in a process management regardless their diverse interests and attitudes (Pinto, Slevin and English 2009). All players in a project cycle calculate their equation according their interests and wishes, trying to discover a perfect formula for success. This is an important assumption which should be proved alongside with the relational-based trust concept, which is also an essential part of the overall project process success equation. Literature review reveals that a long-term relationship to the long-term objectives contributes to prosperous outcome. Open and productive communication, which is a vital component

during the project process, is likewise extremely significant because, without fair and respective behavior from all participants, is it not possible to create a trust atmosphere which contributes to success. Trust deficit implies the failure of the project no one calls for. So, the first hypotheses addressed in this study are:

H1: Calculus-based and relational-based trust have a positive significant relationship with a satisfaction with the working relation in project processes and with the project outcome.

H1a: Calculus-based trust has a positive significant relationship with a satisfaction with the project working relationship and with the project outcome.

H1b: Relational-based trust has a positive significant relationship with a satisfaction with the project working relationship and with the project outcome.

H2: Satisfaction with the working relation has a positive significant relationship with a project outcome.

Before the project start, it will be very helpful in knowing whether the project has a chance for a success, so a smart project manager will perform a pre-analysis of all players in a project process trying to foresee how they will act according their approach to calculus-based and relational-based trust concepts. It is presumed that those two trust concepts are essential elements in creating an environment where all players are satisfied with the relationship in a working process achieving determined objectives. Hypotheses addressing this claim are:

H3: Calculus-based and relational-based trust can be predictors of satisfaction with a work relationship.

H3a: Calculus-based trust can be a predictor of satisfaction with a work relationship.

H3b: Relational-based trust can be a predictor of satisfaction with a work relationship.

H4: Satisfaction with the work relation can be a predictor of future project outcome.

4. METHODS

The sample for this survey was selected from a simple random sampling from representatives of the public and private sector in the Republic of Croatia with a project process background. Online survey was performed through Monkey Survey platform. To be sure that research findings will be valid, every respondent without a project process history was asked not to fill out the questionnaire and, instead, forward it to colleagues with a project process background. A total of 750 questionnaires was sent to the e-mail addresses to randomly selected representatives of the public and private sector in the Republic of Croatia, and a total of 99 respondents was identified with a 12.3% response rate. The average respondent reported between 45-54 age (39.4%), 16-25 years of working experience (40.4%). 56 of them were females (56.6%), and 43 were males (43.4%); average number of finished projects was over 25 projects (29.3%), mostly with the Bachelor Degree (61 respondents, 61.6%), with income range from 5.000 to 14.999 Croatian kuna (83.8%); regarding employment level, 28 of the sample were employees (28.3%); 25 High Level Management (25.3%); 22 Middle Level Management (22.2%); seven of them were Low Level Management (7.1%); five of them were entrepreneurs (5.1%); and 12 of them identified themselves under label 'other' (12.1%). 56 respondents

belonged to the public sector (56.6%), 26 to the private sector (26.3%), and 17 of the sample identified themselves under the label 'other' (17.2 %).

5. MEASURES

Several scales from previous research on satisfaction with the work relationship, trust, and project success / outcome were used. All of the measures asked participants to rate each scale item using a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Rousseau's conceptualization of trust was used as the basis for survey items: calculus-based trust (5 items) and relational based trust (12 items). Relational-based trust concept was measured using a SCALE RELQUAL (Lages et al. 2005).

Pinto et al. (2009) used Hartman's (2002) work to analyze satisfaction with the working relationship, so for this study, the same scale was used. Overall project performance (9 items) was analyzed using the project implementation profile (PIP), (Pinto and Slevin 1986; 1987). The survey used a 5-point Likert scale, with responses ranging from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree'. Reliability of the measurement instrument was validated with Cronbach's alpha (CA) coefficient.

- Calculus-based trust was measured with 5-item scale, and its internal reliability using CA was .818. Relational-based trust was measured with 12-item scale; CA was 0.851.
- Satisfaction with the working relationship was measured with 7-item scale and CA for this scale was unacceptable (.280), so four items were removed, and the new CA with a 3-item scale was .688, which is moderate. Items measuring emotionality, effort, performance and players association were removed due low score.

Project performance was measured with 7-item scale adjusted from PIP; after removing one item, CA was .770, which is moderate (See Table 1). Item *not the best solution was removed due its low score.

Table 1: **Reliability Statistics**

	Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
Calculus-based trust	0,818	0,828	5
Relational-based trust	0,851	0,861	12
Satisfaction with work relationship	0,688	0,697	3
Project outcome	0,770	0,784	6

Source: Authors, SPSS Software

Descriptive analysis was used in research to explain sample data basic characteristic, mean and standard deviation. Correlation analysis was performed to confirm the first two hypotheses: a statistically significant positive relationship between constructs. Finally, regression analysis was performed with an intention to predict a project success model (H3 and H4) measuring the influence of three variables (calculus-based trust, relational-based trust and the satisfaction with work relationship) on project success.

6. FINDINGS

Correlation analysis discovered that there exists some degree of association among these constructs with p-value less than 0.01 level (2-tailed) and 0.05 level (2-tailed). There was a statistically significant positive relationship between calculus-based trust and relationalbased trust (.591); calculus-based trust with a satisfaction with a work relationship (.383); and calculus-based trust with project outcome (.216). Relational-based trust showed a statistically significant positive relationship with satisfaction with a work relationship (.498) and project outcome (.407). Satisfaction with a work relationship and project outcome revealed a statistically significant positive relationship between them was .587 (See Table 2). The correlation matrix shows confirmed hypotheses H1, H1a, H1b, and H2.

Table 2: **Correlation Matrix**

		Calculus based trust	Relational based trust	Satisfaction with work relationship	Project outcome
CALCULUS BASED TRUST	Pearson Correlation	1	**0.591****	**0.383****	**0.216***
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0,000	0,000	0,032
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	916,081	861,919	153,889	188,212
	Covariance	9,348	8,795	1,570	1,921
	N	99	99	99	99
RELATIONAL BASED TRUST	Pearson Correlation	**0.591****	1	**.498****	**.407****
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,000		0,000	0,000
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	861,919	2318,081	318,111	564,788
	Covariance	8,795	23,654	3,246	5,763
	N	99	99	99	99
SATISFACTION WITH WORK RELATIONSHIP	Pearson Correlation	**0.383****	**.498****	1	**.587****
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,000	0,000		0,000
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	153,889	318,111	175,778	224,333
	Covariance	1,570	3,246	1,794	2,289
	N	99	99	99	99
PROJECT OUTCOME	Pearson Correlation	**0.216***	**0.407****	**.587****	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,032	0,000	0,000	
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	188,212	564,788	224,333	832,182
	Covariance	1,921	5,763	2,289	8,492
	N	99	99	99	99

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Source: Authors, SPSS Software

Regression analysis was performed to discover whether it would be possible to predict the success of a project with the calculus-based and relational-based trust as well with the satisfaction with a work relationship as predictors. All assumptions as preconditions of multiple linear regression were met. The relationship between the IVs and the DV was linear (see Fig. 1). There was no multicollinearity in the data, and analysis of collinearity

statistics showed this assumption had been met, as VIF scores were well below 10, and tolerance scores above 0.2. (See Table 3.)

The values of the residuals are independent. The Durbin-Watson statistic showed that this assumption had been met, as the obtained value was close to 2 (DurbinWatson = 2.096). The variance of the residuals was constant. The plot of standardized residuals vs standardized predicted values showed no obvious signs of funneling, suggesting the assumption of homoscedasticity has been met. The values of the residuals were normally distributed. There were no influential cases biasing a model because Cook's Distance values were all under 1, suggesting individual cases were not unduly influencing the model.

Regression analysis results indicate that all independent variables can be used as a predictor for project success. Regression results showed that calculus-based trust significantly predicted project success with F-score = 4.7; adj. r-square = 0.037; $p < 0.05$); relational-based trust significantly predicted project success with F-score = 9.576, adj. r-square = 0.149, $p < 0.01$; and satisfaction with a work relationship significantly predicted project success with F-score = 18.530, adj. r-square = .349, $p < 0.01$, so hypotheses H3, Hra, H3b, and H4 were supported. Greater level of calculus-based and relational-based trust leads to project success as well as greater level of satisfaction with a work relationship in a process. It can be underlined that satisfaction with a work relationship had a greater impact on final project outcome than calculus-based and relational-based trust. (See Table 4.)

Table 3: **Collinearity Diagnostics**

Model			Condition Index	Variance Proportions Conts.	Calculus based trust	Relational-based trust	Satisfaction with work relationship
1	1	3,978	1,000	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00
	2	0,012	18,161	0,10	0,77	0,00	0,11
	3	0,006	24,960	0,43	0,01	0,03	0,84
	4	0,003	33,763	0,47	0,22	0,97	0,05

a. DV
Project Outcome

Source: Authors, SPSS

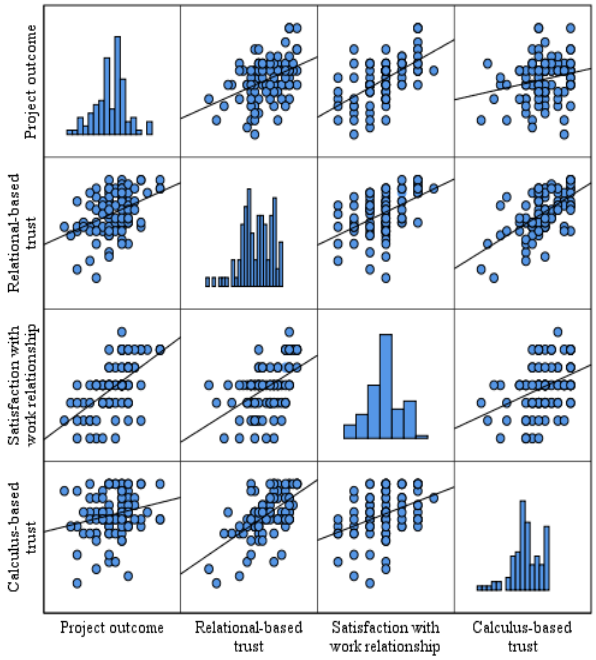
Table 4: **Model Summary**

Model Summary b			Adj.	Std.err.	Durbin-
Model	R	R Square	R Square	of the Est.	Watson
1	,608a	0,369	0,349	2,35077	2,096

a Predictors: (Constant)
Calculus-based trust
Satisfaction with work relationship
Relational-based trust
b Dependent Variable: Project outcome

Source: Authors, SPSS Software

Fig.1: **Scatterplot Matrix**



Source: Authors, SPSS

DISCUSSION AND FURTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

Trust as the one of the most significant components in a project process is a phenomenon of many academic studies and is exceptionally appealing. A multidisciplinary approach is essential if someone calls to investigate the nature and environment of trust, pursuing for possible causes and aftereffects of trust presence in a specific area and processes. The results revealed that trust is perceived as a base operator in a project process. Trust deficit can point to significant issues even before the dawn of project process, so it is a prerequisite to bring together all targets, and clashed interests. Building trust before the start encourages the ultimate project success, stable arrangement of project process steps, and satisfaction of all participants in a chain. Open communication is a precondition for trust between participants and a pathway to a successful project conclusion. Study results showed a noticeable influence of satisfaction with a work relationship on project success, but a considerable influence of calculus-based and relational-based trust in satisfaction itself. Hypotheses H1, H1a, H1b, and H2 supported a study presumption that calculus-based trust, relational-based trust, and satisfaction with a work relationship have a positive statistically significant relationship with a project's success / outcome. Study results showed also that a satisfaction with a work relationship has a greater impact on a project's success.

For future research, it is suggested to examine the complex association between those three constructs. According to regression analysis results, it can be stated that all constructs in the model supported H3, H3a, H3b, and H4, which is significant on the functional side. Prediction of prospective activities and attitude of all players in a project process can ensure the ultimate positive outcome. Failing in this segment of preparation of the project can generate a complete and absolute failure of a project itself. A smart leader will draw on all factors in an equation, trying to identify the most useful approach to manage and complete the project with success.

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