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The relationship between ethics, trust and organizational success in the case of knowledge-oriented organizations

Dissertation – thesis book

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1. Introduction

There is increasing interest in the impersonal element of organizational trust, which we call institutional trust (Costigan et al., 1998; McKnight et al., 1998; McCauley & Kuhnert, 1992; Kramer, 1999; Tan & Tan, 2000; Atkinson & Butcher; 2003; Kosonen et al., 2008; Vanhala et al., 2011). We need trust more than ever, yet there are fewer natural opportunities to develop interpersonal trust. Impersonal trust refers to trust in impersonal organizational factors such as vision and strategy, top management, management team goals and capabilities, technological and commercial competence, fairness, fair processes and structures, roles, technology and reputation and HRM (human resource management) - policies (Vanhala et al., 2011). However, these researches mainly focused on examining the dimensions and factors that measure impersonal trust, as well as the relationship between human resource management systems and impersonal trust, which indicate that HRM systems affect the entire organization and can have a positive effect on organizational impersonal trust (Vanhala et al., 2011). During the review of the literature, I did not find any research that tries to explain the success of the organization with the "soft" factors of impersonal trust. Thus, my research in Hungary and Slovakia is the first to help us understand and find the relationships that influence the correlations of organizational trust with satisfaction, commitment, technostress and competitiveness. My aim is to prove that impersonal trust has an impact on the aforementioned factors and that trust is closely related to competitiveness.

My research was also motivated by personal interest. I encounter trust issues on a daily basis, both at the organizational level and at the societal level. We all feel how important trust is in our lives, but maybe we take it for granted and don't do it to develop and maintain it in our relationships. In my research, I try to show that it is important to deal with institutional/impersonal trust, the influencing factor of which can be, among other things, technostress, which is becoming more and more important nowadays.

2. The theoretical background of the research

On the one hand, the literature review provides a conceptual framework for contextualizing the research questions and hypotheses and on the other hand, it describes the relevant theoretical and practical studies and their results, defining the place of the present research.

2.1. Knowledge and knowledge-oriented organizations

Researchers representing different viewpoints interpret the concept of knowledge in different ways (Fehér, 2003). The most well-known view can be linked to the name of Polányi (1966), according to whom knowledge has a personal aspect. The result of the transfer of knowledge depends on the capabilities, skills, psychological (especially emotional and intellectual) and physical attributes of the transmitter and receiver, as well as their personal characteristics. Since everyone interprets the given information differently, the knowledge received will not be the same for the giver and receiver.

From a practical point of view, the concept of knowledge starts from the concepts of data and information, between which a distinction must be made (Quinn, 1992; Bencsik, 2015). We still consider data as a multitude of signs, which have no meaning. A piece of data becomes information when it receives meaning in a way that changes the uncertainty of relationships with certain areas (Fehér, 2002). Information becomes knowledge when it causes some kind of compulsion to act on both the giver and the receiver, e.g.: the giver is able to interpret the information correctly, use it and draw conclusions from it (Fehér, 2002).

In most cases, the resources of knowledge-intensive organizations are called intellectual or human capital, where knowledge is more important than other inputs (Swart & Kinnie, 2003; Medina & Medina, 2015). As organizations entered the 1990s, knowledge became one of the most important strategic resources. Knowledge creation is key to maintaining competitive advantage and organizational success (Kogut & Zander, 1992; Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995). Traditional types of competitive strategies such as cost leadership or differentiation were not sufficient to cope with the dynamic environment (Porter, 1985). The essence of strategy lies not in the specific products and markets of the organization, but in the dynamics of its behavior and processes (Stalk et al., 1992; Day, 1994). In addition to all this, the ability of the organization to renew itself and to achieve innovative forms of competitive advantage have become the most

important. This ability is called the company's dynamic ability. In the modern economy, competitive advantage lies in the creation of knowledge, the ability to learn and the management of strategic changes (Wang & Ahmed, 2003).

2.2. Personal and impersonal organizational trust

There have been several organizational studies to prove the impact of trust on organizational success (Colquitt et al., 2007; Kramer & Cook, 2004; Lewicki et al., 2005). Among them, Kramer and Cook have outlined a remarkable framework for demonstrating the contribution of trust to organizational success. The study analytically identified the three main factors that help trust achieve success and effectiveness. First of all, the presence of trust is strongly related to the reduction of transaction costs within the organization. The most critical point in building exchange relationships within the organization is trust, as many things stand or fall on this. When co-workers trust each other, information sharing increases, cooperation and teamwork quality increase, which allows parties to exhibit trusting behavior, which can save on transaction costs within the organization (Kale et al., 2000; Doz, 1996).). Secondly, within the organizational framework, trust plays an important role in the extent and speed of adaptation of the employees to the community. Third, trust promotes respect for the organization (Thanetsunthorn & Wuthisatian, 2019).

Impersonal trust refers to trust in organizational factors such as vision and strategy, organizational technology, business goals, fairness, organizational rules and regulations, organizational reputation and human resource policies (Vanhala & Ahteela, 2011; Brockner et al., 1997; Costigan et al., 1998; Vanhala et al., 2011; Atkinson & Butcher, 2003; Kim & Mauborgne, 2003; McCuley & Kuhnert, 1992; Safari et al., 2020).

Impersonal trust can be forged into a competitive advantage for two reasons: it helps against the rapid changes taking place in business markets and on the other hand, with regard to the complex environmental positioning of organizations. Based on the observations of Vanhala and Ahteela (2011), employees who have achieved a high level of impersonal trust in the organization do not leave it, even if interpersonal trust has not developed at a high level. The presence of trust in the organization has many benefits, such as organizational commitment, cost reduction in decision-making processes, high financial flow and increases job satisfaction

and job performance (Tax et al., 1998; Barney & Hansen, 1994; Bozic et al., 2018; Safari et al., 2020).

Based on the observations of Vanhala and Ahteela (2011), impersonal trust can be forged into a competitive advantage, as it helps organizations to react quickly to changes in the markets. On the other hand, employees who have achieved a high level of impersonal trust are committed to the organizations even if personal trust has not developed.

2.3. Technostress

The concept of technostress has been around since the 1980s, when research on the topic began. It was primarily associated with the automation of the workplace and later developed through problems related to information and communication technology (ICT – Information and Communication Technology) of the employees (Polakoff, 1982; Shu et al., 2011). Brod (1984) coined the term technostress with the interpretation that it is "the modern disease of adaptation caused by the inability to cope healthily with new computer technologies". Weil and Rosen (1997) disagreed that technostress is a disease, so they expanded the definition: "Technostress is any negative effect on attitudes, thoughts, behaviors, or body psychology caused directly or indirectly by technology." Caro and Sethi (1985) define technostress as “a perceived dynamic adaptive state between the person and the environment, mediated by socio-psychological processes and influenced by the nature of the technological environment”. Based on this, the technostress phenomenon depends on the individual characteristics of the consumers, the coping mechanism or the adaptation abilities. Tarafdar and his colleagues wrote several studies on the subject (Tarafdar et al., 2019; Tarafdar et al., 2007), they pointed out in an organizational context that the application of continuously developing ICTs and their use play a significant role in the development of technostress constantly changing physical, social and cognitive requirements. It has been formulated that the creators of technostress are factors that trigger the feeling of technostress in subordinates, as well as the reaction given to it (Krishnan, 2017; Tarafdar et al., 2007).

2.4. Job satisfaction and organizational commitment

HRM practices also stimulate employees' job satisfaction (Mohammad et al., 2019). Job satisfaction can be defined as "an individual's affective orientation toward the jobs they currently hold and this is related to the individual's workplace behavior" (Devananda & Onahring, 2019). In addition to improving the attitude of subordinates, the purpose of these exercises is to increase the performance of colleagues (Cai et al., 2019). Ana et al. (2019) found a positive, strong relationship between HRM practices and employee satisfaction and their combined result is better organizational performance (Cai et al., 2019). Organizational commitment can also be seen as a bond between the organization and the employee (Mizanur et al., 2013). When this bond is not created and employees are not satisfied with their work, it can lead to high turnover (Murat et al., 2014). In order to help with all of this, managers must apply incentives and motivate workers to increase their commitment and satisfaction (Mehwish et al., 2019). Alima and Faizuniah (2018) investigated the mediating role of organizational commitment on the relationship between HRM practices and employee engagement of bank employees. Their results showed that HRM practices were significant predictors of employee engagement. The results also identified that organizational commitment is a partial mediator of HRM practices and employee engagement. Some researchers have revealed that HRM practices can lead to employee satisfaction and commitment (Abubakar et al., 2019, Albrecht et al., 2015; Ukil, 2016). Murat et al. (2014) found that there are positive relationships between HRM practices (recruitment and selection, training and development, remuneration and benefits, performance evaluation), job satisfaction and organizational commitment. In the same line, Mizanur et al (2013) concluded that there are positive relationships between human resource practices, job satisfaction and organizational commitment in the banking sector in Bangladesh (Cherif, 2020).

2.5. Success and competitiveness

The interaction between knowledge and other organizational capabilities provided a comprehensive perspective for knowledge-intensive firms (Garcia-Perez et al., 2020; Magni et al., 2022). Markets are increasingly complex and dynamic, so the success of organizations depends on the efficient use of their knowledge and intellectual capital to achieve competitive advantage (Acikdilli et al., 2022; Sotiros et al., 2022). Competitiveness in the operation of

knowledge-intensive organizations lies primarily in the utilization of intellectual capital. (Cabrita et al., 2017; Shafiee, 2022; Yaseen et al., 2016; Fiano et al., 2020). This is the reason why knowledge-oriented organizations do not primarily invest in technologies and developments, but in human capital in order to gain a sustainable competitive advantage (Liu, 2017). Human resources not only increase the productivity and performance of the organization (Papa et al., 2020), but also improve customer loyalty (Biedenbach et al., 2019).

Knowledge has increasingly become a means of achieving competitive advantage (Alinasab et al., 2022; Magni et al., 2022). From the point of view of intellectual capital, human capital, internal capabilities and relational capital are essential for gaining a competitive advantage (Rossi & Magni, 2017; Shafiee, 2022). Human capital refers to the knowledge accumulated in the individuals working in the company (Bontis, 1998). Youndt et al. (2004) considered human capital as consisting of employees' knowledge, skills and abilities. Srivastava (2001) mentioned human capital as the leading source of competitive advantage in knowledge-based economies. In general, human capital is an intangible resource of knowledge and information (Fernandes et al., 2000). Other organizational intangible resources, such as organizational processes, skills, knowledge and information, are basically controlled by human capital, so quality human capital is the primary source of organizational renewal, innovation, creativity and competitive advantage (Shafiee, 2021; Papa et al., 2020; Shafiee, 2023).

3. Research questions, hypotheses and the model

In the empirical research, I searched answers to the following questions:

Q1: How does impersonal trust relate to organizational commitment, job satisfaction and competitiveness?

Q2: Is there a difference in the impact of impersonal and personal trust on organizational commitment, job satisfaction and competitiveness?

Q3: How does technostress affect organizational commitment, job satisfaction and competitiveness?

Q4: What differences can be identified in the case of the organizations of the examined countries (Hungary and Slovakia)?

Q5: Can a significant difference be detected in the case of knowledge-, labor- and capital-intensive organizations in terms of organizational trust, satisfaction, commitment and competitiveness?

I conducted my research based on the responses of nearly 2,300 employees of organizations in Hungary and Slovakia. The questionnaire contains all the impersonal trust indicators that were validated by Vanhala et al. in 2011 and the factors on the basis of which it can be proven whether there is a relationship between the variables mentioned in the hypotheses and impersonal trust.

H1/A: There is a significant relationship between impersonal trust and organizational commitment.

H1/B: There is a significant relationship between impersonal trust and job satisfaction.

H1/C: There is a significant relationship between impersonal trust and competitiveness.

The second hypothesis focuses on the differences between personal and impersonal trust, specifically on which has a stronger impact on commitment, satisfaction and competitiveness. In my research, personal trust means trust in a superior. I want to prove that impersonal trust has a greater influence on the factors mentioned above and through them also on business success.

H2/A: The total effect of impersonal trust on organizational commitment is greater than that of personal trust.

H2/B: The total effect of impersonal trust on job satisfaction is greater than that of personal trust.

H2/C: The total effect of impersonal trust on competitiveness is greater than that of personal trust.

The questionnaire validated by Vanhala does not include the technostress factor. However, I want to prove that this factor also affects commitment, satisfaction and, through them, competitiveness. Despite the fact that technostress is an increasingly important research topic, the number of researches from the perspective of impersonal trust is negligible. Therefore, the present research is a pioneer in exploring the relationships with regard to the examined factors in Hungary and Slovakia.

H3/A: There is a significant relationship between technostress and organizational commitment.

H3/B: There is a significant relationship between technostress and job satisfaction.

H3/C: There is a significant relationship between technostress and competitiveness.

The fourth hypothesis concerns the differences in the organizations of the countries I examined. Although my research does not explore the cultural differences between the two countries, there are many previous results in the literature regarding the similarities and differences between the two nations (Csókás, 2021; Körtvélyesi, 2013). The fourth hypothesis provides a comprehensive picture of the relationship between organizational trust and commitment, satisfaction and competitiveness in the case of the two countries and what differences or similarities can be identified.

H4: In the case of organizations in Hungary and Slovakia, the relationships between the examined factors (commitment, satisfaction, trust, technostress) do not show significant differences.

The fifth and last hypothesis examines the differences that arise based on the classification of organizations according to their resource needs (knowledge-, labor- and capital-intensive). This may also be important because, according to my assumption, the need for a trust-based culture of knowledge-oriented organizations carries within itself the characteristics with which I

classify organizational success in my research. I examine which resource-intensive organization has a closer relationship with the investigated factors.

H5/A: A significant difference can be shown between knowledge-oriented and non-knowledge-oriented organizations regarding organizational trust.

H5/B: A significant difference can be shown regarding the organizational resource demand (knowledge, work, capital) and commitment.

H5/C: A significant difference can be shown regarding organizational resource demand (knowledge, work, capital) and satisfaction.

H5/D: A significant difference can be shown regarding the organizational resource demand (knowledge, work, capital) and competitiveness.

Based on my research questions determined from the detection of research gaps identified from the theoretical overview, the research model became possible to set up. Figure 1 presents the connection system to be examined in a model-driven approach.

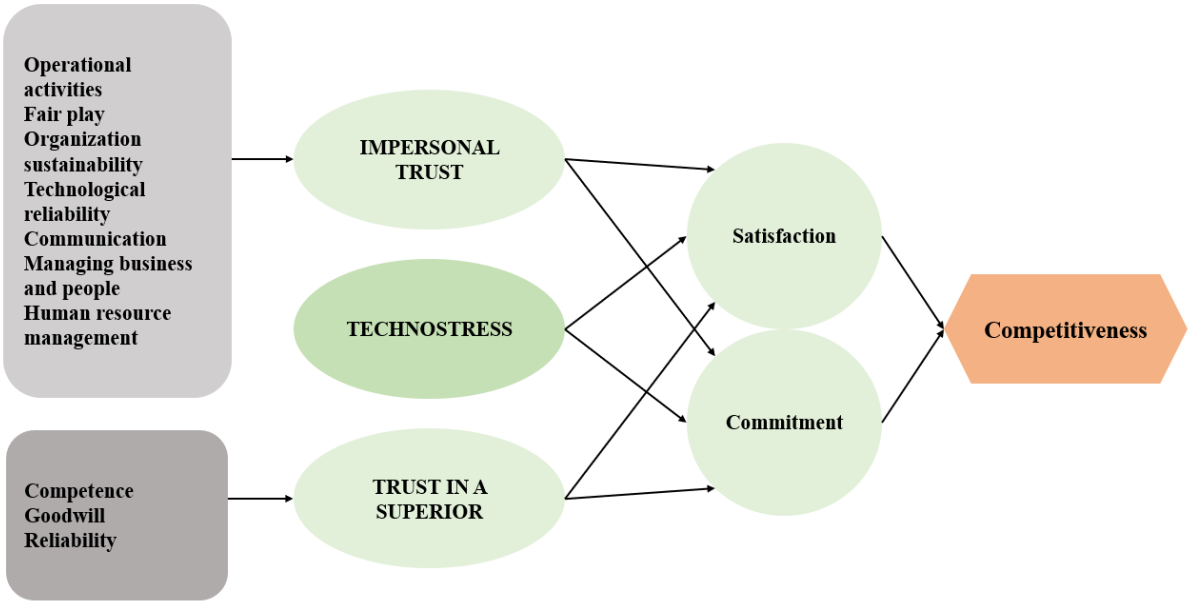

Figure 1: Research model

Source: own editing

I examined the relationships between the variables shown in Figure 1 and as a result of these analyses, I wanted to present the impact of personal and impersonal trust on competitiveness. The model has three levels. The first level determines the impersonal trust, trust in the superior and technostress variables, the second level aggregates them and finally the third level takes you through commitment and satisfaction to competitiveness.

4. Research methods

PLS-SEM

The PLS-SEM method is now widely used in various areas of management, such as organizational management, human resource management, marketing and strategic management (Hair et al., 2012; Ringle et al., 2020; Hargitai & Bencsik, 2023) . The method's popularity is due in part to the fact that it allows complex models to be estimated on small samples without imposing distributional restrictions on the data. PLS-SEM estimates the parameters based on the total variance and shapes of the model structures by combining principal component analysis and least squares regressions (Mateos-Aparicio, 2011; Hargitai & Bencsik, 2023).

Factor analysis

Factor analysis is used to reduce and group the observed variables. By this term, we mean the reduction of the number of dimensions of the variables, although the term combining the variables would be more correct. We want to reduce the number of variables in such a way that the operation results in as little loss of information as possible, that is, the same conclusions can be drawn from the transformed population as from the original population (Sajtos & Mitev, 2007).

Correlation and regression analysis

Using correlation calculation, we can determine how close, how strong and how intense the relationship between variables is, that is, this method describes the closeness and direction of the linear relationship between variables.

During regression analysis, we examine the relationship between a metric dependent and one or more independent variables. As with correlation analysis, regression also measures the relationship between variables, its direction and strength. The difference between the two

procedures is that in the regression calculation we are looking for estimated values and in the correlation analysis we do not know which is the dependent and which is the independent variable, but in the regression analysis we have to specify these variables. We only perform the calculation well if we can establish a suitable relationship between the explanatory and the explained variables. (Sajtos & Mitev, 2007).

5. Data collection

Regarding the structure of the questionnaire, I worked based on Vanhala et al.'s survey (Vanhala et al., 2011), adding the topic of technostress, so there are 54 questions in total. In addition to the dimension of fairness and the dimension of ability, there was also a place for trust in the superior, satisfaction and commitment. Responses were made on a five-point Likert scale, according to which 1 - do not agree at all, 2 - disagree, 3 - rather agree, 4 - strongly agree, 5 - completely agree.

The compilation and query of the questionnaire took place online from January 2022 to July 2022 on the LimeSurvey platform, however, before the actual query, I conducted a trial test in order to formulate clear and understandable questions for all respondents. I carried out the research in Hungary and Slovakia, so I prepared the questionnaire in Hungarian and Slovak.

I obtained the list of participants by filtering the Orbis (database containing global financial information, financial data, news, ownership structures, mergers, acquisitions, etc.) database, the conditions of which are summarized in the following table No. 1.

Table 1: Filtering the sample

Hungary		
Status	Active organization / unknown status	76 704 609
World region / country / region in the country	Hungary	1 366 114
Size classification	Large, medium and small companies	1 365 051
Complete		1 365 051
Usable addresses		474 219
Slovakia		
Status	Active organization / unknown status	77 442 738

World region / country / region in the country	Slovakia	1 057 558
Size classification	Large, medium and small companies	1 057 017
Complete		1 057 017
Usable addresses		155 523

Source: own editing

The questionnaire was filled out by all management levels of the organizations, intellectual and manual workers, regardless of gender and age. In terms of the size of the organizations, I did not make a delimitation, so employees of micro, small, medium and large companies were also included among the targeted organizations. The questionnaire also asked about the location of the organizations (county in Hungary, district in Slovakia). For research purposes, I also asked about resource demands (capital, labor, or knowledge-intensive). The following table No. 2 shows the number of the sample.

Table 2: Sending out the questionnaire

	Employees of Hungarian organizations	**Employees of Slovak organizations**
Sent	219881	155523
Partial fillings	2560 employee	1108 employee
Complete fillings	1572 employee	660 employee

Source: own editing

The following two tables (Nos. 3 and 4) show the number of returned responses in terms of the conditions determined based on the screening.

Table 3: Hungarian fillings

Number of employees (person)		**Position of respondent**		**Resource requirements**	
1-10	775 (49%)	Senior manager	1098 (70%)	Labor intensive	592 (38%)
11-50	497 (32%)	Mid-level manager	278 (18%)	Capital intensive	255 (16%)
51-250	203 (13%)	Junior manager	30 (2%)	Knowledge-intensive	725 (46%)

250+	97 (7%)	Intellectual worker	158 (10%)		
		Manual worker	8 (0,5%)		

Source: own editing

Table 4: Slovak fillings

Number of employees (person)		**Position of respondent**		**Resource requirements**	
1-10	376 (57%)	Senior manager	339 (51%)	Labor intensive	214 (32%)
11-50	166 (25%)	Mid-level manager	144 (22%)	Capital intensive	76 (12%)
51-250	75 (11%)	Junior manager	52 (8%)	Knowledge-intensive	370 (56%)
250+	43 (7%)	Intellectual worker	105 (16%)		
		Manual worker	20 (3%)		

Source: own editing

6. Evaluation of hypotheses

H1/A: There is a significant relationship between impersonal trust and organizational commitment.

Hypothesis H1/A is aimed at examining whether there is and if so, how close the relationship is between the impersonal element of organizational trust and organizational commitment. Previous research has already proven (Colquitt et al., 2007; Dirks & Ferrin, 2001; Aryee, 2002; Bijlsma & Koopman, 2003; Vanhala, 2019) that impersonal trust has an effect on organizational commitment, however, I am the first to examine these in Hungary and Slovakia relationship. I

take the research result of Vanhala (2019) as a comparative example, he examined this topic in Finland for two samples (Sample A – organizations operating in the forestry sector, sample B – organizations operating in the ICT sector), working on the basis of a total of 715 responses. His results show that impersonal trust influences organizational commitment (Sample A: impersonal trust → commitment = 0.892; Sample B: impersonal trust → commitment = 0.668). He segmented the workers according to their position and the technostress factor did not appear in his research. Based on my results, I can also say that there is a significant relationship between impersonal trust and organizational commitment (β=0.248), however, in my research, this relationship is only a weak positive relationship, while Vanhala's value is strongly positive. Although during the examination of this hypothesis I did not separate the respondents into upper, middle and lower level managers, as well as intellectual and physical colleagues, the majority of the questionnaire respondents were senior managers (70% of Hungarian participants, 51% of Slovak participants were senior managers). Their answers therefore have a dominant influence on the results. Impersonal trust can be really important when lower-ranking employees do not have a direct personal relationship with higher-level managers in the hierarchy, so their decisions are more likely to be seen as representing the organization as a whole. In the case of senior managers, this hierarchical relationship does not exist, so further analyzes are necessary to assess the closeness of the relationship.

Hypothesis **H1/A was proven** and a significant relationship between impersonal organizational trust and organizational commitment can be verified from the perspective of employees of Hungarian and Slovak organizations.

H1/B: There is a significant relationship between impersonal trust and job satisfaction.

The H1/B hypothesis, similar to the first one, also wants to explore relationships, but here between impersonal trust and satisfaction in the case of Hungarian and Slovak employees. Mohammad et al. (2018) proved that one factor of impersonal trust, human resource management practices, has a stimulating effect on employee satisfaction. Several researchers (Ana et al., 2019; Abubakar et al., 2019; Albrecht et al., 2015; Ukil, 2016) concluded that there is a strong positive relationship between satisfaction and HRM based on the sample they researched. I became curious as to whether it is true for my sample that impersonal trust as a

whole and not just one factor, is related to satisfaction. In his research, Vanhala (2019) proved the connection on the sample mentioned in the previous hypothesis. He found a moderate positive relationship for both samples (0.574 for sample A, 0.599 for sample B). My results (β=0.446) also show a moderately positive relationship, so that I did not separate the employees here either according to their position, so the high proportion of senior managers has a dominant influence on the results here as well. However, the relationship between impersonal trust and satisfaction is stronger than between impersonal trust and commitment.

Hypothesis **H1/B was proven** and a significant relationship between impersonal organizational trust and job satisfaction can be verified from the perspective of employees of Hungarian and Slovak organizations.

H1/C: There is a significant relationship between impersonal trust and competitiveness.

Hypothesis H1/C focuses on competitiveness and its relationship with impersonal trust. Based on the research mentioned in the literature section (Acikdilli et al., 2022; Sotiros et al., 2022), in my thesis I explain the success of the organization with competitiveness. Several other researchers (Cabrita et al., 2017; Shafiee, 2022; Yaseen et al., 2016; Fiano et al., 2020; Liu, 2017; Papa et al., 2020) proved that how to gain competitive advantage is important they use their intellectual capital and knowledge, so competitiveness lies in the use of human resources. In another research, Shafiee (2023) found that intellectual capital promotes trust-based relationships within and between organizations. However, these researches examined this topic from the perspective of knowledge-oriented organizations. The relationship between competitiveness, human resources and personal trust has been proven, however, I have not found any research that does not take into account the orientation of organizations, which would explain competitiveness with impersonal trust.

In my research model, I want to explore the relationship between impersonal trust and competitiveness through satisfaction and commitment. My results show that there is a weak positive relationship through commitment (β=0.030) and satisfaction (β=0.173). Although there is a relationship between impersonal trust and competitiveness, the relationship is weak, so it is not certain that impersonal trust affects competitiveness.

Hypothesis **H1/C was proven** and a significant relationship between impersonal organizational trust and competitiveness can be verified from the perspective of employees of Hungarian and Slovak organizations.

H2/A: The total effect of impersonal trust on organizational commitment is greater than that of personal trust.

The second group of hypotheses focuses on the differences between personal and impersonal trust, which trust has a greater impact on various factors.

Hypothesis H2/A investigates which type of organizational trust has a greater overall effect on commitment. Research has proven that both personal (Ferres et al. 2004) and impersonal (Vanhala, 2019) trust are related to commitment. In addition to all this, I am curious as to which trust has a greater impact on engagement in my sample. My results show that the relationship between personal trust and commitment (β=0.361) is stronger than between impersonal trust and commitment (β=0.248), but this is still a moderate positive relationship. According to Shams and Esfandiari Moghadam, 2016), impersonal trust motivates employees to stay with the organization, especially when employees tend to look for organizations that provide them with higher levels of job satisfaction. In my research, it can be said that personal trust has a more stimulating effect on employees than impersonal trust.

Hypothesis **H2/A was not proven**, because based on the results of the employees of the organizations operating in Hungary and Slovakia, the total effect of personal trust on organizational commitment is greater than that of impersonal trust.

H2/B: The total effect of impersonal trust on job satisfaction is greater than that of personal trust.

The H2/B hypothesis, like the previous one, examines the relationship between personal and impersonal trust, but now with the employee's job satisfaction.

Both personal and impersonal trust are related to satisfaction, however, Ellonen et al. (2008) and Shams and Esfandiari Moghadam (2016) concluded that impersonal trust has a greater impact on satisfaction. In other words, trust in the organization's strategy and vision, commercial merit and technology, fair structures and processes and human resource policies and their metrics will lead to higher employee satisfaction. Impersonal trust leads staff to work more enthusiastically and be more satisfied with their work (Ellonen et al., 2008; Esfandiari Moghadam, 2016; Safari et al., 2020).

My results confirm previous research, as impersonal trust has a stronger influence on satisfaction among the workers I interviewed than personal trust (impersonal trust → satisfaction = 0.446; personal trust → satisfaction = 0.335). In the case of Hungarian and Slovakian organizations, it has also been confirmed that satisfaction is mostly not coupled with trust in the superior, but with impersonal trust, that is, the organizational factors and processes mentioned above help them to build trust and thus satisfaction.

The **H2/B hypothesis was proven**, because based on the responses of the employees of the organizations operating in Hungary and Slovakia, the total effect of impersonal trust on satisfaction is greater than that of personal trust.

H2/C: The total effect of impersonal trust on competitiveness is greater than that of personal trust.

The third part of the second hypothesis examines competitiveness again, more specifically, whether the effect of personal or impersonal trust is greater on competitiveness. As I have already mentioned some researches (Cabrita et al., 2017; Shafiee, 2022; Yaseen et al., 2016; Fiano et al., 2020; Liu, 2017; Papa et al., 2020; Shafiee, 2023), they proved the relationship between personal trust and competitiveness, but only in the case of knowledge-oriented organizations. I wonder which trust has a greater impact on competitiveness. I present my results in the following table No. 5 for the sake of easier transparency, because here, too, I examined the relationships through satisfaction and commitment.

Table 5: Verification of hypothesis H2/C

Path	Path coefficient
Impersonal trust → Commitment → Competitiveness	0,030
Personal trust → Commitment → Competitiveness	0,043
Impersonal trust → Satisfaction → Competitiveness	0,173
Personal trust → Satisfaction → Competitiveness	0,103

Source: own editing

The table clearly shows that the total effect of impersonal trust on competitiveness is greater only through satisfaction, while the total effect of personal trust is greater through commitment. Although the previous two hypotheses proved that while impersonal trust has a greater impact on satisfaction, personal trust has a greater impact on commitment, so it is not surprising that the results of competitiveness also show this. In all four cases, I discovered significant relationships.

Hypothesis **H2/C was partially proven**, as impersonal trust has a greater impact on competitiveness through satisfaction and personal trust through commitment.

H3/A: There is a significant relationship between technostress and organizational commitment.

In the literature section, I showed that several researchers (Lei & Ngai, 2014; Webster, 2014; Tarafdar et al., 2019; Salazar-Concha et al., 2021) believe that technostress is not only negative, but can also be positive or neither negative nor positive. In my research, I used statements with a negative effect, because I think that nowadays people first have a negative effect and then after they see the positive sides of technology, we can talk about personal development and learning. I was curious to what extent negative technostress affects organizational commitment. My results show that there is a weak negative relationship between technostress and commitment (β= -0.142). A negative relationship means that technostress and commitment move against each other, so if technostress increases, commitment will decrease and vice versa, so technostress negatively affects organizational commitment.

Hypothesis **H3/A was proven**, as there is a weak negative significant relationship between technostress and organizational commitment.

H3/B: There is a significant relationship between technostress and job satisfaction.

Similar to the previous hypothesis, H3/B also examines the relationship between technostress, but now with satisfaction. With the development and mastery of technology, the ability to use technologies effectively during the transformation process can develop rapidly. However, for this it is necessary that the employees can easily accept the innovations and be able to apply them effectively (Al-Mamary, 2020). I believe that if this is not fulfilled and employees are afraid of innovation, afraid of changes and of not being able to learn how to use new technology, it will also negatively affect their satisfaction.

As a result, I found that there is a significant relationship between technostress and job satisfaction, but here too the relationship is weakly negative (β=-0.039), so here too it can be said that if the level of technostress increases, satisfaction will be lower and vice versa .

Hypothesis **H3/B was proven**, as there is a weak negative significant relationship between technostress and job satisfaction.

H3/C: There is a significant relationship between technostress and competitiveness.

Hypothesis H3/C examines the relationship between competitiveness and technostress. Tarafdar et al. (2011) concluded that technostress reduces work performance, because excessive communication interruptions enabled by the development of technology cause doubts in workers and their abilities. In addition, the new functions of smart technologies require employees to develop their skills. The learning process and learning pressure interrupt the daily activities of subordinates. Leung (2019) investigated the topic among hotel workers and found that changes or updates to information systems negatively affect the performance of hotel employees. Thus, technostress negatively affects the performance of employees, which is one of the pillars of competitiveness. If the subordinate feels good, satisfied and committed, his work performance also changes positively. Again, I present the results in a table (No. 6) for

easier transparency, as I looked at the effects of technostress on competitiveness here as well through satisfaction and commitment.

Table 6: Results of hypothesis H3/C

Path	Path coefficient
Technostress → Satisfaction → Competitiveness	-0,017
Technostress → Commitment → Competitiveness	-0,015

Source: own editing

The two results are almost the same, the relationship between technostress and competitiveness is weak in both cases, so if technostress increases, satisfaction (or commitment) and competitiveness decrease and vice versa.

Hypothesis **H3/C was proven**, as there is a weak negative significant relationship between technostress and competitiveness through both satisfaction and commitment.

H4: In the case of organizations in Hungary and Slovakia, the relationships between the examined factors do not show significant differences.

The fourth hypothesis examines the differences and similarities between the organizations of Hungary and Slovakia. My research does not go into the cultural differences and similarities of the two countries, however, from the answers it is possible to clearly determine how the two countries relate to impersonal trust and the relationships between the factors indicated in the previous hypotheses can be explored.

In the univariate analysis, I showed that there are not really any differences between the two countries, but the Slovaks are more satisfied than the Hungarians, the reason for which may be that although the average earnings of the two countries are almost the same (Slovakia – €1,373, Hungary – €1,440), the the purchase value of Slovakian salaries is higher. The rankings of the DESI index also show that Slovakia is ahead of Hungary in terms of digitalization on a social and economic level.

My results show that impersonal trust has a more dominant effect on satisfaction in Slovak organizations (β=0.490) than in Hungarian organizations (β=0.407). On the other hand, personal trust is more valued among employees of Hungarian organizations and impersonal trust has a greater impact on satisfaction. The study shows that in the case of Slovak workers,

impersonal trust is the more dominant party in terms of relationships, while in the case of Hungarian colleagues, the relationship between personal trust and the previously mentioned factors is stronger.

Overall, it can be concluded that there are no international differences between the two countries, but differences in the functioning of the organizations are noticeable. I could explain the fact that, based on Slovaks' answers, impersonal trust has a greater impact on the factors, although there are no great cultural differences, Slovaks are much more withdrawn, not open, not friendly and aloof. This can be felt to the maximum within the organization, it is difficult to form a "friendly" relationship with the managers, there will be no close relationships, so the employees are forced to call on their faith in the organization for help when it comes to commitment and satisfaction.

Hypothesis **H4 was proven**, as no statistical differences can be detected between organizations in Slovakia and Hungary regarding personal and impersonal trust.

H5/A: A significant difference can be shown between knowledge-oriented and non-knowledge-oriented organizations regarding organizational trust.

The first sub-hypothesis of the last hypothesis investigates whether there are differences in the relationship between personal and impersonal trust according to the organizations' resource needs. In the literature section, I described the characteristics of knowledge-intensive organizations, as well as the resources needed to gain a competitive advantage. Swart and Kinnie (2003) and Medina and Medina (2015) named intellectual capital as the most important resources, where knowledge is the most significant factor. Knowledge creation, learning capabilities, strategic change management and knowledge flow are key to sustaining competitive advantage and organizational success (Kogut & Zander, 1992; Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995; Wang & Ahmed, 2003). However, to build all this, it is necessary to include factors such as trust. Since knowledge and its appropriate use are essential for the successful operation of knowledge-oriented organizations, it is rather helped by personal trust. If employees trust each other, it is easier for them to share their knowledge with their co-workers and thanks to trust, group work works more effectively, which also creates knowledge and allows it to flow properly between them. The same can be said if the superior trusts the

subordinates and is not afraid to share sensitive information with them for fear that they will tell others or use it against the organization after leaving. That is why I thought that there would be differences in the examination of personal and impersonal trust in the case of work-, capital- and knowledge-oriented organizations.

Hypothesis **H5/A was proven**, as differences can be shown in terms of organizations' resource needs.

H5/B: A significant difference can be shown regarding the organizational resource demand (knowledge, work, capital) and commitment.

In the following sub-hypothesis, I examine the differences in organizational commitment regarding the orientation of organizations. The result of my study is that in the case of work-intensive organizations, impersonal trust has the greatest impact on organizational commitment. The reason for this may be that labor-intensive organizations invest a lot in their employees, receive training and bonuses and in addition, overtime is most likely not a stress factor, since they work enough for the organization. In the case of knowledge-intensive organizations, trust between employees is very important so that they can operate all kinds of knowledge management processes, so I think that personal trust has a greater impact there. Employees of labor-intensive organizations (if they do not know the managers) can trust the organization, which gives them many positives (in addition to negatives). My further results show that personal trust has the greatest impact on commitment in work- and knowledge-intensive organizations, which confirmed my previous suggestion. In the operation of knowledge- and work-oriented organizations, people are the biggest key, for which the development of both personal and impersonal trust is important.

Hypothesis **H5/B was proven**, the significant difference between the orientation of organizations and commitment can be demonstrated.

H5/C: A significant difference can be shown regarding organizational resource demand (knowledge, work, capital) and satisfaction.

In terms of satisfaction, the results of the H5/C hypothesis show that here, too, impersonal trust has the greatest effect on job satisfaction in work-intensive organizations. However, an interesting relationship for me can also be demonstrated: in the case of capital-intensive organizations, the effect of personal trust on satisfaction is the greatest.

Hypothesis **H5/C was proven,** the significant difference between the orientation of organizations and satisfaction can be demonstrated.

H5/D: A significant difference can be shown regarding the organizational resource demand (knowledge, work, capital) and competitiveness.

My last hypothesis, like the previous ones, reveals the differences between organizational orientation and competitiveness.

In the case of work- and knowledge-intensive companies, impersonal trust has the greatest impact on competitiveness through satisfaction and also in work-intensive organizations, personal trust has the greatest impact on competitiveness through satisfaction. In the case of work- and knowledge-intensive organizations, the workers are also at the center. Previous research (Cabrita et al., 2017; Shafiee, 2022; Yaseen et al., 2016; Fiano et al., 2020; Liu, 2017; Papa et al., 2020) has shown that how it is used is important for gaining competitive advantage their intellectual capital and knowledge, so competitiveness lies in the utilization of human resources. In another research, Shafiee (2023) found that intellectual capital promotes trust-based relationships within and between organizations. This may be the reason why both trusts have the greatest impact on competitiveness in the case of labor- and capital-oriented organizations. Employees trust both their colleagues and superiors, as well as the organization, which can be forged into a competitive advantage.

Hypothesis **H5/D was proven,** the significant difference between the orientation of organizations and competitiveness can be demonstrated.

7. Interpretation of research results

The data for testing the hypotheses was collected using an online questionnaire and the research was carried out among organizations operating in selected Hungarian and Slovak counties and districts. As a result, based on the responses of a total of 2,232 Hungarian and Slovak workers, I drew conclusions about the differences and similarities between impersonal and personal trust and in terms of their effects, what relationships can be shown with satisfaction, commitment, competitiveness and technostress. In order to test the hypotheses, I analyzed the data in a complex manner in some cases and in other cases according to several criteria variables (according to the resource needs of countries and organizations).

In the following, they are summarized with the hypotheses described in the previous table related results and conclusions, based on which I formulated my theses.

T1: From the perspective of employees of Hungarian and Slovak organizations, a significant relationship between impersonal organizational trust and commitment, job satisfaction and competitiveness can be verified regardless of the organization's orientation.

My model basically starts from examining the relationships between the previously mentioned factors (satisfaction, commitment, competitiveness) and personal and impersonal trust. Based on these, I wanted to reach the conclusion that impersonal trust affects business success, which I explain in my thesis with competitiveness. The first hypothesis only explores the relationships between impersonal trust and organizational commitment, job satisfaction and competitiveness. Organizational commitment is a state, a link between the organization and the employees, so I assumed the relationship between trust and commitment. Vanhala (2019) investigated the relationship between these two factors. His research resulted in a strong positive relationship, in my case a weak positive one. Vanhala segmented the workers according to their position, I didn't. In my thesis, senior managers have a dominant influence on the results (due to the response rate), which can mean a stronger commitment. The relationship between impersonal trust and satisfaction was also investigated by Vanhala (2019), his results also showed a moderately positive relationship, just like mine, so all factors of impersonal trust have an impact on employee satisfaction. It is not enough to deal with only one variable / process, all of them

(organization of operative activities, organizational sustainability, business and people management, technological reliability, human resource management, fair play, communication) must be operated together, as a result of which organizations gain a competitive advantage, that their employees will be satisfied, they will be more motivated, they will do everything for the organizational goals and, last but not least, turnover will be low.

There is also a relationship between competitiveness and impersonal trust, but it is weakly positive, through both satisfaction and commitment. Impersonal trust has a greater effect on satisfaction than commitment, so it was expected that there would be a stronger relationship between impersonal trust and competitiveness through satisfaction.

T2: From the perspective of the employees of both Slovak and Hungarian organizations, the total effect of impersonal trust on organizational commitment, job satisfaction and competitiveness is greater than that of personal trust, regardless of the orientation of the organizations.

I based my research on the fact that trust in the organization lies beyond trust in the superior, the factors of which have a greater influence on the factors I examine. Some of my assumptions were confirmed, but not in all cases. I fully accepted only the second hypothesis, so only on satisfaction is the overall impact of impersonal trust greater than that of personal trust. For me, this is an interesting result, because if commitment is the link between the employee and the organization, then why does trust in the superior have a greater impact on commitment?

Based on these, it is not surprising that the total effect of impersonal trust on competitiveness is greater through satisfaction and the total effect of personal trust is greater on competitiveness through commitment. The results gave me an unexpected end result, but this also proves that it is not enough to deal with personal trust or impersonal trust on the road to success, but with both, because this is how you can forge a competitive advantage from them. Their combined strength is the key to success.

T3: Regarding organizations in Hungary and Slovakia, technostress has an impact on organizational commitment, job satisfaction and competitiveness, regardless of the organizations' resource needs.

In the literature section, I showed that some researchers examined technostress as a negative effect (Polakoff, 1982; Shu et al., 2011; Brod, 1984; Weil & Rosen, 1997; Connolly & Bhattacherjee, 2011; Tarafdar et al., 2017, 2019; Krishnan; 2017; Chen, 2015; Salazar-Concha et al., 2021), while others have hypothesized that stress is neither positive nor negative in nature (Lei & Ngai, 2014; Webster et al., 2011). In my research, I gave respondents statements that focus on the negative effects of technostress. The reason for this is that I was wondering how negative emotions such as technostress affect engagement, satisfaction and competitiveness.

All three of my hypotheses have been proven, because technostress has a negative effect on all three factors, albeit weakly, that is, if the level of technostress increases, the satisfaction and commitment of the workers decreases, as well as the competitiveness. It is not surprising, since employees feel that technology threatens their work and are often confused about its use. Because of this, they distrust their superiors and colleagues, which sooner or later leads to dissatisfaction and a weakening of commitment.

T4: The effect of personal and impersonal trust on organizational commitment, job satisfaction and competitiveness does not show a significant difference in the case of organizations operating in Slovakia and Hungary.

In her research on Slovak and Hungarian organizations, Csókás (2021) mainly dealt with ethics, trust and knowledge management. As a result, it was found that in the examined sample in Slovakia and Hungary, the SME type organizations recognized the importance of hidden ethical regulations to a similar extent. Tóbiás (2016) built her research around knowledge management in the case of Slovak and Hungarian organizations. The result was that the essential organizational characteristics influencing organizational success are the expertise, reliability and flexible working of managers and subordinates. She did not look for differences between the organizations of the two countries, but she also came to the conclusion that trust contributes to organizational success. In my research, I also found that there are no statistical differences between the organizations of the two countries regarding personal and impersonal trust.

T5: In the case of both Hungarian and Slovak organizations with different resource requirements (knowledge-, labor- and capital-oriented), significant differences can be shown in terms of the effectiveness of trust in terms of commitment, satisfaction and competitiveness.

In my research, I assumed that the differences could be detected, since one organization focuses on knowledge management processes, the second on employees and the third on investments. As a result of my research, I found that in the case of knowledge- and work-intensive organizations, personal and impersonal trust has the greatest impact on competitiveness, since intellectual capital promotes trust-based relationships within and between organizations (Shafiee, 2023). Employees trust both their colleagues and superiors, as well as the organization, which can be forged into a competitive advantage.

I believe that my research has achieved its stated goals. I have proven that the effect of impersonal trust is as important as that of personal trust, so it is necessary to deal with it. I proved that although there are constant tensions between the two countries under investigation (primarily from a political point of view), their organizational functioning and their relationship to trust are very similar. In addition to all this, I confirmed that organizations have different relationships with respect to personal and impersonal trust, satisfaction, commitment and competitiveness according to their resource needs. This is definitely an invisible area that deserves to be paid attention to and made visible in the future. However, the real result of the research is that transparent results are available for Hungarian and Slovak organizations, which are related to the emergence and application of personal and impersonal trust, satisfaction and commitment, competitiveness and success and the mutual influence of the factors.

8. Summary

I fulfilled the purpose of the dissertation, I managed to reveal the relationships between the factors I examined, with which I can provide assistance to other researchers and organizational workers. My research gives senior managers a comprehensive picture that, in addition to numerical results, trust also supports success by leading employees to satisfaction and commitment and at the same time helps organizations to be competitive.

Overall, it can be said that I managed to achieve this during the research goals set in the thesis. Another goal is for these results to reach as many organizations and researchers as possible and for them to recognize the importance of soft factors such as personal and impersonal trust.

At least, in Table No. 7, I present the questions formulated after processing the literature, the hypotheses they set up, which methods were used to examine them and finally the theses.

Table 7: Research results

Research questions	Hypotheses	Methods used to verify the hypothesis	Theses
What is the relationship between impersonal trust and organizational commitment, job satisfaction and competitiveness?	**H1/A:** There is a significant relationship between impersonal trust and organizational commitment.	PLS-SEM	**T1:** From the perspective of employees of Hungarian and Slovak organizations, a significant relationship between impersonal organizational trust and commitment, job satisfaction and competitiveness can be verified regardless of the organization's orientation.
	H1/B: There is a significant relationship between impersonal trust and job satisfaction.	PLS-SEM	
	H1/C: There is a significant relationship between impersonal trust and competitiveness.	PLS-SEM	
Is there a difference in the effects of impersonal and personal trust on organizational commitment, job satisfaction and competitiveness?	**H2/A:** The total effect of impersonal trust on organizational commitment is greater than that of personal trust.	PLS-SEM	**T2:** From the perspective of the employees of both Slovak and Hungarian organizations, the total effect of impersonal trust on organizational commitment, job satisfaction and competitiveness is greater than that of personal trust, regardless of the orientation of the organizations.
	H2/B: The total effect of impersonal trust on job satisfaction is greater than that of personal trust.	PLS-SEM	
	H2/C: The total effect of impersonal trust on competitiveness is greater than that of personal trust.	PLS-SEM	
How does technostress affect organizational commitment, job satisfaction and competitiveness in terms of the effect of organizational trust?	**H3/A:** There is a significant relationship between technostress and organizational commitment.	PLS-SEM	**T3:** Regarding organizations in Hungary and Slovakia, technostress has an impact on organizational commitment, job satisfaction and competitiveness, regardless of the organizations' resource needs.
	H3/B: There is a significant relationship between technostress and job satisfaction.	PLS-SEM	
	H3/C: There is a significant relationship between technostress and competitiveness.	PLS-SEM	
What differences can be detected in the case of the organizations of the examined countries (Hungary and Slovakia)?	**H4:** In the case of organizations in Hungary and Slovakia, the relationships between the examined factors (commitment, satisfaction, trust, technostress) do not show significant differences.	PLS-MGA	**T4:** The effect of personal and impersonal trust on organizational commitment, job satisfaction and competitiveness does not show a significant difference in the case of organizations operating in Slovakia and Hungary.

Can a significant difference be detected in the case of knowledge-, labor- and capital-intensive organizations in terms of organizational trust, satisfaction, commitment, and competitiveness?	**H5/A:** A significant difference can be shown between knowledge-oriented and non-knowledge-oriented organizations regarding organizational trust.	PLS-MGA	**T5:** In the case of both Hungarian and Slovak organizations with different resource requirements (knowledge-, labor- and capital-oriented), significant differences can be shown in terms of the effectiveness of trust in terms of commitment, satisfaction and competitiveness.
	H5/B: A significant difference can be shown regarding the organizational resource demand (knowledge, work, capital) and commitment.	PLS-MGA	
	H5/C: A significant difference can be shown regarding organizational resource demand (knowledge, work, capital) and satisfaction.	PLS-MGA	
	H5/D: A significant difference can be shown regarding the organizational resource demand (knowledge, work, capital) and competitiveness.	PLS-MGA	

Source: own editing

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