



Tiina Kähkönen

**EMPLOYEE TRUST REPAIR IN THE CONTEXT OF
ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE – IDENTIFICATION AND
MEASUREMENT OF ACTIVE TRUST REPAIR PRACTICES**



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Dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Science (Economics and Business Administration) to be presented with due permission for public examination and criticism in the Auditorium 1316 at Lappeenranta-Lahti University of Technology LUT, Lappeenranta, Finland on the 21st of January, 2022, at noon.

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Abstract

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Organizational trust is positively related with employee job satisfaction, firm performance and productivity. However, the current disrupted work environment with unpredictable changes is challenging for employee trust. Today, employee trust repair is more relevant than ever due to the uncertainty which continuous changes bring to our lives. Active trust repair can be seen as a mean through which organizations may operate to protect trust and pursue even better trust outcomes. Therefore, there is a high relevant need to understand how different active trust-repair practices can repair violated trust and which of them are the most effective in the change context and in company-specific situations.

The objective of this study is to respond to identified research gaps and to identify active trust-repair practices especially in the change context. The study focuses on intra-organizational trust repair. It suggests that the trust repair process in where first, the trust violations are identified, second, the necessary trust repairing practices are implemented in an organization and, finally, the effectiveness of the trust-repair practices used are measured among employees by using the developed trust-repair scale (TRS). This study was conducted using mixed methods comprised of an extensive systematic review, a qualitative case study with 22 informants, and a quantitative survey with 383 respondents, and a qualitative–quantitative mixed-methods approach was applied in order to development the validated scale.

Through the findings of four individual publications, trust repair practices were identified and a multiphase trust repair process was completed. A high level of trust within an organization requires continuous and active trust-building. This means that the best trust-repair practices and patterns of behaviour are used continuously in the organization and a feedback survey with TRS is repeated on a regular basis. The study offers several contributions to the trust repair literature and provides practical information from a real work context and can improve managers' understanding of active trust repair practices. This dissertation makes a significant practical contribution to enabling organizations to gain real tools to implement trust building and repairing in organizations. The novelty contribution of this dissertation relates to discussion on the active trust repair especially by demonstrating integrated trust repair practices and the validated scale for measure them.

Keywords: employee trust repair, trust repair scale, change, trust-repair practices

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List of publications

This dissertation is based on the following papers. The rights have been granted by publishers to include the papers in dissertation.

- I. Kähkönen, T., Blomqvist, K., Gillespie, N. and Vanhala, M. (2021). Employee trust repair: A systematic review of 20 years of empirical research, integrative framework and future research directions. *Journal of Business Research*, 130, 98-109.
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- II. Kähkönen, T. (2020). Employee trust repair after organizational change. *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, 33(6), pp. 1143-1161.
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- III. Kähkönen, T. (2021). Repairing trust within teams after organizational change. *Journal of Organizational Change Management*. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JOCM-11-2020-0348>
- IV. Kähkönen, T., Vanhala, M. and Blomqvist, K. (2020). Trust repair practices: scale development and validation. Accepted paper presented at the 3rd Economics, Business and Organization Research Conference 20-22 November, Rome, Italy (online). ISBN: 978-605-68816-6-4.

Author's contribution

- I. The publication was a joint work, in which the author was responsible for literature review, data collection, data analysis, interpretation of results, and revising the paper. The theoretical development, data screening, discussion, and writing of the study were jointly performed with the co-authors. The author was the corresponding author of this publication.
- II. The author was the sole contributor of this article.
- III. The author was the sole contributor of this article.
- IV. The publication was a joint work, in which the author was responsible for literature review, data collection, discussion, revising the paper and partly responsible about the analysis (exploratory factor analysis). The questionnaire design was executed with the whole author team. Writing of the study was jointly performed with the co-authors. The author was the corresponding author of this publication.

1 Introduction

This chapter describes the research background and motivation for this dissertation. In addition, the research objective, research questions, definitions and the dissertation's structure are presented in the introduction chapter.

1.1 Research background and motivation

Employee trust, and increasingly its absence, is a critical topic for researchers and practitioners interested in social relations in organizations. Technological, economic, and socio-political disruptions challenge contemporary organizations and heighten employee uncertainty and feelings of vulnerability (Gustafsson, Gillespie, Hope Hailey, Ros and Dietz, 2020). External disruptions and even pandemics such as the current COVID-19 can undermine employees' trust in the future of their work organization. In addition, e.g. COVID-19 has caused a variety of operational and structural changes in many organizations around the world, such as increased remote working, increased use of digital tools, and restrictions related to travel and social interaction. Previous research has proposed that various structural changes may challenge trust among employees, hinder efficient operations, and adversely affect performance (Costa, Ferrin and Fulmer, 2017). In the context of organizational change and especially when an announcement of the change launched to an employee by the leaders, a state of anxiety and fear among employees increase, and the employees' response to the change can be emotionally negative at the point the change begins (Binci, Cerruti and Donnarumma, 2012). When trust levels among employees decrease, individuals will be unwilling to exchange knowledge and ideas with one another and activities and projects will suffer (Collins and Smith, 2006).

However, employee trust plays a critical role in organizations as trusting employees are more committed to their work and remain longer with the organization than those lacking trust (Weibel, Den Hartog Gillespie, Searle, Six and Skinner, 2016). Trust as a sustainable organizing principle (McEvily, Perrone and Zaheer, 2003) provides many benefits to employees and their organizations enhancing employee cooperativeness, knowledge sharing, and effective problem solving even during disruptions (see, e.g., Fulmer and Gelfand, 2012; Tremblay, Cloutier, Simard, Chenevert and Vandenberghe, 2010). Research shows that while it can take a considerable time to build trust, it can be quickly eroded in employee–employer relationships (Robinson, 1996). This realization has spurred increasing research interest in trust repair (see, e.g., Mishra and Spreitzer, 1998; Mishra and Mishra, 1994; Gillespie and Dietz, 2009).

Previous journal special issues, such as the *Academy of Management Review Special Issues* in 1998, (Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt and Camerer, 1998) and 2009 (Dirks, Lewicki and Zaheer, 2009), the *Organization Studies Special Issue* in 2015 (Bachmann, Gillespie and Priem, 2015), as well as reviews on trust repair (Bozic, 2017; Burke, Sims, Lazzara and Salas, 2007; Fulmer and Gelfand, 2012; Gillespie and Siebert, 2018; Kramer and Lewicki, 2010; Lewicki and Brinsfield, 2017) illustrate the increased academic interest in this topic over the past two decades. Thus, employee trust repair is particularly important in the current disrupted work

environment, due to unpredictable changes and the uncertainty those bring to our lives (Rudolph, Allan, Clark, Hertel, Hirschi, Kunze and Zacher, 2020).

Trust repair focuses on recovering positive employee perceptions and expectations (Gillespie and Dietz, 2009) of the trustworthiness of the organization. Trust within an organization involves a continuous social process of sense-making (Weick, 1995), interpretation, signalling, and reciprocity, which highlight the dynamic nature of trust, including that which is actively engaged (Giddens, 1990, 1994; Luhmann, 1988, 2017; Möllering, 2013). Active trust suggests that trust is ongoing, requiring continuous reproduction even after having been established (Möllering, 2013). Thus, the conceptualization of active trust emphasizes the committed and vigorous role of organizational actors in constituting and maintaining high levels of trust (Gustafsson et al., 2020) as well as repairing trust if it is violated. Active trust repair practices can be defined as *active organizational and managerial practices which attempt to return employee trust to a positive state* (Kähkönen, 2020).

To summarize, a high intra-organizational trust level increases employee job satisfaction, firm performance and productivity. Active trust repair can be seen as a mean through which organizations may operate to pursue their goals (e.g. preserving firm performance, employee satisfaction and talent staff). Therefore, there is a high need to understand how different active trust-repair practices can repair violated trust and which of them are the most effective in the change context.

1.2 Research objective, identified gaps and research questions

In the dynamic and uncertain environments we see today, trust violations are becoming increasingly complex, requiring not only attention but also concerted action from management. Existing studies on organizational trust repair have, however, primarily focused upon its conceptual development (e.g., Bachmann et al., 2015; Lewicki & Bunker, 1996; Tomlinson & Mayer, 2009), and, as such, empirical studies on trust-repair practices are limited (Kähkönen, 2020). Research projects with the purpose of measuring organizational trust repair have principally been reliant upon laboratory experiments of trust-repair practices such as apologies vs. denial (e.g., Kim, Ferrin, Cooper and Dirks, 2004; Kim, Cooper, Dirks and Ferrin, 2012), penance vs. regulation vs. apologies (Dirks, Kim, Ferrin and Cooper, 2011), or apologies alone (De Cremer & Schouten, 2008; Maddux, Kim, Okumura and Brett, 2011). Previous literature has shed light on specific aspects of organizational trust repair. However, no comprehensive instrument of measurement has yet been developed to demonstrate the effectiveness of various trust-repairing practices. This is probably due to the fact that trust-repairing practices were not widely captured and integrated prior to this study. In addition, most studies of organizational trust repair have been performed at an individual level. Trust repair has been studied, for example, in the context of the erosion of trust between managers and top management (Elangovan, Auer-Rizzi and Szabo, 2015), with regard to the dyadic trust relationships between two employees (Six & Skinner, 2010), and with respect to employee trust in groups of managers after an organizational change (Sørensen, Hasle and Pejtersen, 2011). At an organizational level, the restoration of trust has been studied much less often, and typically after a major crisis, for example, organizational fraud, a data manipulation scandal (Gillespie, Dietz and Lockey, 2014), or a corruption scandal (Eberl, Geiger and Abländer, 2015), utilizing qualitative methods. In comparison to earlier reviews

on trust repair, in this study we adopted the multilevel and multi-referent framework as outlined by Fulmer and Gelfand (2012). It is important to investigate employee trust repair at individual, group and organizational levels (Bachmann & Inkpen, 2011; Barber, 1983; Gillespie & Dietz, 2009) because employee trust is influenced by various social and impersonal referents at different levels of analysis (see Fulmer & Gelfand, 2012; Gillespie & Dietz, 2009; Gillespie & Siebert, 2018). Trust repairing needs to be explored at all organizational levels and also from a team perspective. Although the main guidelines for the application of trust-repairing practices and their implementation in practice in an organization come from the line management, the responsibility for practical actions also shifts to the level of team leaders (Kähkönen, 2020). The climate of trust that exists in an organization and the potential need to repair that trust is a common challenge for the entire organization, with responsibilities shared among all levels of the organization and its employees. In addition, no research methods are excluded, but both qualitative and quantitative research results are utilized. So, this study offers both theoretical and methodological contribution.

The objective of this study is to respond to identified research gaps and to the best of my knowledge, this is the first study to provide contribution to both theory and practice, providing a validated scale to measure the effectiveness of trust-repair practices. The study focuses on intra-organizational trust repair and suggests the trust repair process in where first, the trust violations are identified, second, the necessary trust repairing practices are implemented in an organization and finally, the effectiveness of the trust repair practices used are measured among employees by using the developed trust repair scale (TRS). The main research question is as follows:

What active trust repair practices can organizations use after organizational changes in order to repair employee trust?

To find all different relevant aspects to the main research question, four separate sub-questions are formulated that are based on the publications in the dissertation. The first sub-question concerns trust repair practices used in order to repair trust. The study systematically reviewed the research on trust repair conducted in the past two decades to provide comprehensive insights and future research directions for researchers and managers. The research objective was to recap the current understanding on trust repair practices in different organizational levels. Thus, the first sub-question is as follows:

Sub-question 1: *What trust repair practices are used in different organizational levels?*

The answer to this sub-question was sought for by utilizing an extensive review of the topic. The objective was to synthesize research findings on employee trust repair, and to analyse the commonalities and differences in the findings across organizational levels and referents, to improve the conceptualization of employee trust repair, as well as to identify the most commonly studied trust repair mechanisms and their effectiveness.

The following sub-question is related to the issue of the trust-repair practices after an organizational change. The aim is to develop an empirically informed theoretical understanding of how organizational trust-repair practices can be implemented especially by top leaders in the organizational change context. The study makes three key contributions to the literature on organizational trust by (1) identifying trust violations after organizational

change, (2) proposing a process model on trust repair, and (3) extending understanding of trust repair practices by revealing new elements. Hence:

Sub-question 2: *Which active trust repair practices do organizational managers and members use to repair employee trust in the organization during and after an organizational change?*

The answer to the second sub-question was sought for by utilizing an in-depth single qualitative case study at the organizational level. This increased the understanding of diverse social phenomena in real-life work environments and especially in business management situations (Yin, 2003) focusing on the organizational level.

The third sub-question is related to the issue of the trust-repair practices within teams after an organizational change. The aim is to develop an empirically informed theoretical understanding of how organizational trust-repair practices can be implemented especially by team leaders and other team members in the organizational change context. The study makes three key contributions by (1) identifying trust violations in teams, (2) proposing trust-repair mechanisms and (3) extending the understanding of trust-repair and preservation at the team level following organizational change. Hence:

Sub-question 3: *Which active trust-repair practices do team leaders and members use within teams after organizational change?*

The answer to the third sub-question was sought for by utilizing an in-depth single qualitative case study at the team level. It is important to understand how different types of employee trust violations are linked to trust-repair actions at the team level. Because team leaders implement the policies of the organization and line managers in their management work, the team level needs to be considered in this study. Line management can partially delegate trust repair to team leaders and professional, empathetic team leader can significantly contribute to maintaining and repairing employee trust.

The following sub-question is related to developing the construct of organizational trust repair and an effective measurement scale. This study outlines a stepwise approach used to develop the construct of organizational trust repair and an effective measurement scale. The 14-item seven-factor model was found to be reliable, valid, and stable across the samples and this new tool can be adopted by researchers and practitioners alike to evaluate effectiveness of employee trust-repair practices. The third sub-question is as follows:

Sub-question 4: *What is the composition of employee trust repair practices and how they can be measured?*

The answer to the third sub-question was sought for by utilizing quantitative research. The developed scale contributes to the current literature on trust repair by presenting the first validated measure for employee trust repair. In addition, the findings provide a valuable instrument for practitioners to assess the state of employee trust-repair practices.

In summary, through the main research question and related sub-questions this study offers several contributions to the trust repair literature and provides practical information from a real work context. The study can improve managers' understanding of active trust repair

practices. Regarding management, the findings offer valuable practical insights concerning the relevant aspects of trust repair as well as an instrument that can be used for assessing the effectiveness of trust-repair practices. Management together with Human Resources (HR) professionals can use this framework as a tool for developing employee trust within their organization and for measuring the effectiveness of trust-repair practices.

1.3 Short definitions

1.3.1 Organizational change

In this section, short definitions are presented. This study focuses on employee trust-repair in the organizational change context. At the most general level, “change is a phenomenon of time. It is the way people talk about the event in which something appears to become, or turn into, something else, where the ‘something else’ is seen as a result or outcome” (Ford and Ford, 1994, p.759). Context creates opportunities and limitations that affect and shape organizational behaviour and relationships (Johns, 2006). Change is a challenge to the balanced operation of an organization and changes that affect work, employees and their operating environment are ongoing. Trust is a key factor in the ability of both the individual and the organization to face and deal with change. As part of managing change, trust must therefore be consciously built and maintained and if trust has already been violated as a result of change, it must also be consciously repair after the change. Thus, the effects of change context are strongly considered in this dissertation.

1.3.2 Employee trust and distrust

One definition used for interpersonal trust is “a psychological state comprising the intention to accept vulnerability based upon positive expectations of the intentions or behaviour of another” (Rousseau et al., 1998:395), and this definition can be used for organizational trust too (Lewicki and Brinsfield, 2017). Employees with future-oriented expectations rely heavily on this definition (Gillespie and Siebert, 2018). Thus, organizational trust is the trust of employees in the actions and future of the company. This includes trust in managers or individual team members, but also non-personal aspects such as the top manager's vision and organizational culture (values, norms, ethics and fairness of processes) (Vanhala et al., 2011). Organizational trust also means that the employee can trust both the short- and long-term future of the firm. Trust enables new learning, tolerating the uncertainty of change situations and taking into account and respecting the views of other individuals. Guo et al. (2017) see trust and distrust as separate concepts. Initially, a relationship might involve trust or distrust. When trust is violated, different approaches for repairing it may have varying levels of effectiveness due to the unique factors associated with trust and distrust (Guo et al., 2017). Without active and timely employee trust repair the lack or absence of trust might lead to a serious vicious circle of distrust from which it is very difficult to find a constructive way out.

1.3.3 Employee trust repair

Dirks et al. (2009) defined trust repair as occurring “when a transgression causes the positive state(s) that constitute(s) the relationship to disappear and/or negative states to arise, as

perceived by one or both parties, and activities by one or both parties substantively return the relationship to a positive state” (p. 69). This general definition of relationship repair can be used to understand trust repair within an organization. Both organizational trust and organizational trust repair are complex concepts. Organizational trust violations can occur on many different organizational levels (Fulmer and Gelfand, 2012) and may require multiple trust-repair actions. In the change context, time alone (Gillespie and Siebert, 2018) cannot repair trust, but employees expect management to implement benevolent personnel policies.

1.4 Structure of the study

This dissertation contains two parts. First, in the introductory part there is an overview of the dissertation. Chapter 1 introduces the research background, objective, identified research gaps, research questions, the definitions of key concepts and finally the structure of this thesis. Chapter 2 presents the theoretical concepts and frameworks utilized in this study. Chapter 3 introduces methodological aspects. Chapter 4 summarizes all four publications and their results. Chapter brings forth the discussion of the results, contributions, and suggestions for further research as well as conclusions. The overview of the dissertation is followed by the four original journal publications. Each of them addresses an individual research sub-question. In the introductory part, the contributions of all four publications and the overall results of this study are summarized in order to answer the main research question. The structure of the dissertation is presented in Figure 1.

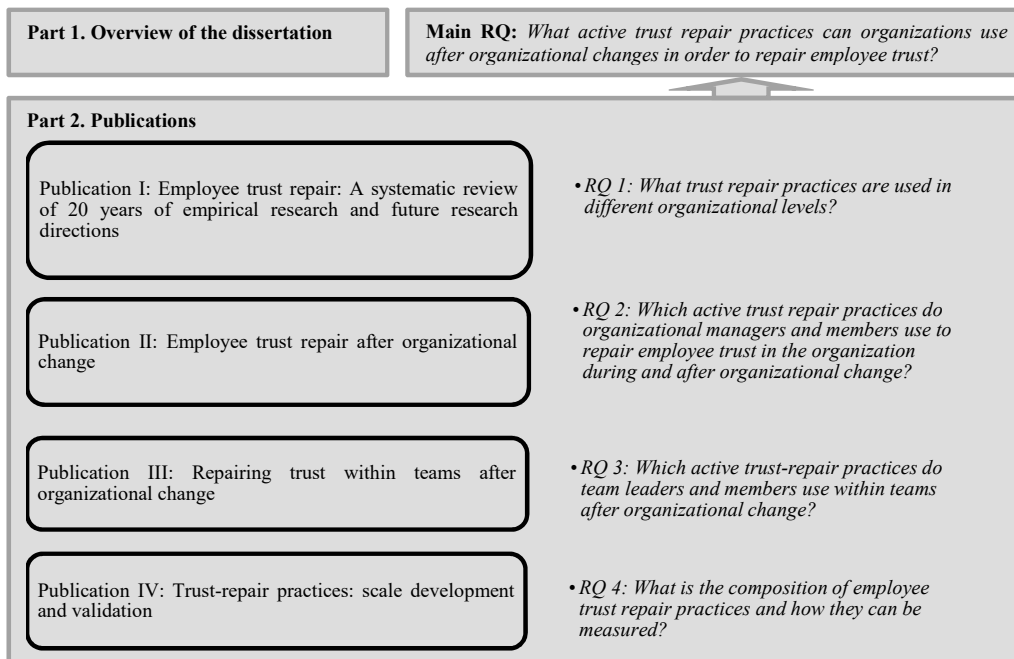


Figure 1. Structure of the dissertation

2 Theoretical background

The overview of the theoretical roots of this dissertation is provided in this Chapter. First, the specific features of organizational trust and the theoretical foundations have been presented. After this, the state-of-the-art of employee trust repair and its positioning in trust repair literature has been discussed. Subsequently, contextual determinants of trust repair are discussed. Finally, there is a summary of the theoretical frameworks of Publications I, II, III and IV, which integrates multiple viewpoints utilized in this dissertation.

2.1 Theoretical approaches on organizational trust

2.1.1 Organizational trust

Based on a cross-disciplinary review, one of the most widely accepted definitions of trust in the management literature is ‘a psychological state comprising the intention to accept vulnerability based upon positive expectations of the intentions or behaviour of another’ (Rousseau et al., 1998: 395). Mishra (1996) proposed that trust is a central factor for an organization’s long-term survival, particularly in the current uncertain business environment. Thus, trust is essential and facilitates the adaptation to new processes, forms of work and other organizational changes. Organizational trust is the trust of employees in the actions and future of the company. This including trust in managers or individual team members, but also non-personal aspects, such as the top manager's vision and organizational culture (values, norms, ethics and fairness of processes) (Vanhala et al., 2011). Organizational trust also means that employee can trust both the short- and long-term future of the firm. In an organizational context, as situations become more complex, the vulnerability of the employees becomes more prevalent given the growing inability to predict future action by employers (Bigley and Pearce, 1998). Thus, it appears that trust is intimately linked to uncertainty about the organization's future (Sztompka, 1999). Another necessary condition of trust is the inability to monitor and control another party (Mayer, Davis and Schoorman, 1995; Zand, 1972). This stresses the importance of mutual positive interaction between the trusting parties, and norms of reciprocity have an enormous influence on trusting behaviour (Butler, 1983; Lewis and Weigert, 1985; Zand, 1972; Zucker, 1986). Expectations are a key factor in many trust definitions, and in the organizational context employees generally expect that they can trust the oral or written statements of another employee, group or employer (Rotter, 1980), and employers expect that employees will perform a particular action which is important to the employer (Mayer et al., 1995). Therefore, previous definitions of trust have involved three main concepts: 1) vulnerability (Rotter, 1980), 2) reciprocity (Zand, 1972), and 3) expectation (Lewicki and Bunker, 1996; Rousseau et al., 1998). *The social exchange theory* (Homans, 1958) serves as the main theoretical perspective for understanding the underlying process of organizational trust. This means, for example, that if an organization can share benevolence human resources management (HRM) and the support given for the employee, employees are reciprocally more likely to trust the organization and to accept vulnerability based upon positive expectations of the intentions or behaviour of the organization's future (Rousseau et al., 1998).

2.1.2 Organizational trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is defined as behaviour that supports the expectation that the organization will act in the interests of its employees (Mayer et al. 1995). Furthermore, Rousseau's definitions of positive expectations are typically captured by the three dimensions of trustworthiness identified by the seminal work of Mayer and colleagues (1995), namely: ability (or competence), benevolence, and integrity. At the organizational level, these dimensions mean that the employees' assessments of their organization's trustworthiness are based on the organization's competencies, for example, to meet its goals and responsibilities, how the organization takes care of the well-being of its employees, and how committed the organization is to following moral principles such as honesty and fairness (Gillespie and Dietz, 2009). Similarly, individuals and team members within an organization evaluate the trustworthiness of the other party (individual, team and organization) by paying attention to their competence, benevolence and honesty. Thus, there are three dimensions of trustworthiness—ability, benevolence, and integrity—constituting the ABI model (Mayer et al., 1995), which is generally very largely adopted among trust scholars. The model is shown in Figure 2 and is well suited for looking into organizational actors' evaluations of another actor's trustworthiness. These dimensions of trustworthiness are also applied in this dissertation and all individual publications (Publications I, II, III and IV).

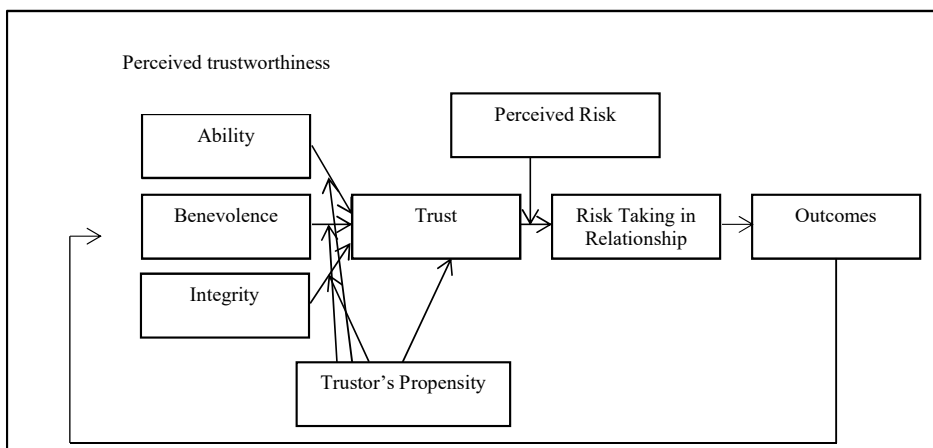


Figure 2. ABI model (Mayer et al., 1995, modified)

2.1.3 Organizational trust violations

When the actors of an organization evaluate another actor or their work organizations' trustworthiness, it must be noted that trust is fragile and can break quickly also in the organizational context. Trust violations within organizations and work groups must be taken seriously (Bies and Tripp, 1996; Lewicki and Bunker, 1996; Robinson, Dirks, and Ozcelik, 2004) because people might remember these incidents for years (Elangovan and Shapiro, 1998). Bies and Tripp (1996) define a set of behaviors that constitute a violation of trust including broken promises, stealing, lying, unfair accusations, and inappropriate disclosures. However, trust violations can also arise unintentionally, for example, as a result of

organizational changes or even external disruptions such as the current COVID-19, which can change familiar organizational work settings and thus, undermine the employees' trust in the future of their work organization (Weick, 1993). Several different types of mistakes can happen which can destroy the expectations of the trustor of the trusted party's competence, benevolence or integrity, or the expectations of employee regarding the organizations' future actions. It is important to understand the nature of trust and trust violations. Trust is not stable and there is a natural fluctuation of trust over time. For example, trust is typically built or undermined over time through social exchanges between people as they experience each other's motivations and intentions (Lewicki, et al., 2006). Trust is likely to recover to some extent over time (Gillespie and Siebert, 2018), but given the great importance of trust for employee job satisfaction, firm performance and productivity (Costa et al., 2017), it is worthwhile to actively and consciously build employee trust and immediately launch trust repair remedies after violations (Dirks et al., 2009; Gillespie and Dietz, 2009).

2.2 Theoretical approaches on employee trust repair

2.2.1 Employee trust repair

Both conceptual and empirical research indicate that trust in work relationships can be repaired (e.g., Dirks et al., 2009; Gillespie and Dietz, 2009), although this process is not always easy (e.g., Bottom, Gibson, Daniels and Murnighan, 2002). Lewicki and Brinsfield (2017) propose that repaired trust is structurally different from the pre-violation or pristine trust (Dirks et al., 2009; Lewicki and Bunker, 1996), and that, in some circumstances, no trust repair initiatives will be capable of fully restoring trust to its original level (Lewicki, McAllister and Bies, 1998). Research reveals that when employee trust is damaged, employees become unwilling to apply trust-based behaviours promoting effective functional activities such as cooperation, discretionary effort, knowledge sharing, and effective problem solving. In addition, violators' (e.g. employers) future intentions may be unclear to the employee and cause uncertainty (Dirks and Ferrin, 2001; Fulmer and Gelfand, 2012). Trust violations may also lead to a variety of retaliatory actions on the part of employees such as sabotage, theft, spreading rumours, and poor commitment to work in general (Bies and Tripp, 1996; Robinson, 1996), and escalate the breakdown of internal and external relationships (Gillespie and Dietz, 2009) critically affecting the organization's performance (Andiappan and Treviño, 2010). Thus, trust repair involves improving both trusting intentions and re-establishing trusting behaviour. Building on Cummings and Bromiley (1995), trusting intentions can be defined as a solid willingness to depend upon the trustee to induce trusting behaviours, whereas the trusting behaviours are the concrete actions demonstrating that a trustor relies a trustee without control. Much of the research on trust repair has taken a contingency approach in that it studies how the nature of trust violation affects trust and trust repair (e.g., Grover, Hasel, Manville and Serrano-Archimi, 2014; Kim 2018; Sørensen et al., 2011). In other words, the nature of trust violations has been distinguished based on the dimension of trustworthiness breached (e.g., was it a violation of ability, benevolence, or integrity). Recently, researchers have increasingly paid attention to the effectiveness of trust-repair practices and learned that, for example, the most suitable trust-repair practice after an ability-based violation would not necessarily be effective for repairing trust following an integrity-based violation (see e.g., Grover et al., 2014; Sørensen et al., 2011).

2.2.2 Process models on employee trust repair

The early literature on trust repair first emphasized process models illustrating the phases required for trust repair. Subsequent work has refined these models and conceptualized broader theoretical approaches to explaining and mechanisms for undertaking the repair of damaged trust. In their early seminal paper, Lewicki and Bunker (1996) proposed a model of how trust is developed and repaired in work relationships. Their influential four-stage process model for trust repair includes the following stages: 1) recognizing the violation, 2) identifying the causes of violations and admitting culpability, 3) admitting that the act was destructive, and 4) taking responsibility for the consequences. Later, Gillespie and Dietz (2009) took a systems perspective to propose a systemic, multilevel framework for understanding strategies to repair employees' trust in their employing organization after an organizational violation. They proposed four stages: 1) immediate response with verbal responses and actions, 2) diagnosis of the systemic causes of the trust failure, 3) reforming interventions across the organization's infrastructure to ensure a repeat future trust violation would not occur, and 4) evaluation of the effectiveness of the reforms. In contrast to Lewicki and Bunker's (1996) dyadic view on trust breakdown and repair in interpersonal relationships, Gillespie and Dietz (2009) propose that the causes of and those responsible for an organizational-level failure are often unclear, and such failures require the input of several actors. They theorize how different internal and external components shape employees' perceptions of the organization's trustworthiness and can subsequently contribute to trust failures and effective trust repair (Gillespie and Dietz, 2009). In the same year, Dirks et al. (2009) developed a process model for trust repair that emphasized the temporal nature of the process, distinguishing between: 1) pre-transgression and the state of trust prior to a transgression, 2) disruption, identifying what factors are changed by the transgression and how, 3) trust repair, identifying what actions are taken to repair violated factors, and 4) post-repair, identifying the state of trust after repair.

2.2.3 Three key theoretical approaches explaining trust repair

Hand in hand with developed the process model for trust repair, Dirks et al. (2009) further identified three key theoretical approaches underlying relationship repair: 1) attributional, 2) structural, and 3) social-equilibrium perspectives. First, the attributional approach draws on the principles of attribution theory (Heider, 1958) and can be applied to different levels of analysis and when the violator is an individual, a group, or an organization. From the perspective of attribution theory, the trustor tries to explain the situation by using sentiments, motives, and external factors and by changing attributions, the violator seeks to re-cast understanding of the violation events to present themselves in a more trustworthy light through tactics such as denials, explanations and social accounts (Dirks et al., 2009; Tomlinson and Mayer, 2009). Second, the social-equilibrium perspective is suited to addressing negative affect and exchange, although it might indirectly address the repair of trust (Ren and Gray, 2009). Social equilibrium involves engaging in social rituals (e.g., apologizing, punishment and penance, and offering compensation) to atone for the violation and restore balance in the relationship and help to settle the account and re-establish the expectations of the relationship after the violation (Dirks et al., 2009). Third, from the structural perspective, trust violation leads to a breakdown in positive exchange and increases negative exchange. Therefore, trust is most effectively repaired when structural processes in

which negative exchange is discouraged and positive exchange is encouraged are put in place (Dirks et al., 2009). Trust repair practices include legalistic remedies such as policies, procedures, contracts, and monitoring (Sitkin and Roth, 1993) that increase the reliability of future behaviour and therefore advance the rebuilding of trust (Gillespie and Dietz, 2009) discuss a similar concept they term distrust regulation). Three key theoretical approaches underlying relationship repair are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Three key theoretical approaches underlying relationship repair

Authors	Theories/traditions	Trust repair practices	Scholarly examples
Heider (1958)	Attribution theory	Social accounts, apologies, denial and penance	Gillespie and Dietz, 2009; Kim et al., 2006; Kim et al., 2004; Tomlinson and Mayer, 2009
Homans (1958)	Social exchange theory	Legalistic remedies and social structures	Gillespie and Dietz, 2009; Sitkin and Roth, 1993
Pareto (1935); Parsons (1939)	Social-equilibrium perspective	Penance, punishment and apologies	Bottom et al., 2002; Ren and Gray, 2009

2.2.4 An integrative framework of six repair mechanisms

Building on and extending three trust repair approaches by Dirks et al. (2009), Bachmann et al. (2015) suggested that an integrative framework of six mechanisms repairs trust among stakeholders after organizational and institutional trust failures. The first mechanism is sense-making (Weick, 1995). The sense-making process involves collective learning aiming to a shared understanding and evaluating what went wrong and why. Sense-making includes practices such as investigations, public inquiries, explanations, and accounts which are based Attribution theory. Second, in the relational mechanism the aim is addressing the negative emotions caused by the violation and re-establishing the social equilibrium between the parties (Dirks et al., 2009). This social-equilibrium approach involves for example engaging in social rituals and symbolic acts including public explanations, apologies, punishment, and also the compensation of victims (Bachmann et al., 2015). In the third mechanism, called 'regulation and controls', formal rules and controls to constrain untrustworthy behaviour and prevent future trust violations. The Structural mechanism is involved in and includes practices such as laws, rules, policies, process and codes of conduct and sanctions in order to deter or constrain untrustworthy behaviour and/or incentivize trustworthy behaviour (Dirks et al., 2009; Gillespie and Dietz, 2009). Fourth, from the viewpoint of ethical culture, trust repair requires informal cultural controls to constrain untrustworthy behaviour and promote trustworthy behaviour. Leaders and their attempts to repair trust and signal organizational trustworthiness by developing and communicating a strong shared ethical culture are central. Fifth, transparency means that organizations share accurate, timely, and relevant information in a way that allows stakeholders to make informed decisions on their relationships with the organization. This can act as a mechanism to help restore trust in the organization. Practical actions include for example corporate reporting and external audits. The sixth mechanism, transference, helps trust repair by transferring trust from a credible party to the discredited party. For example, certification, affiliations, and endorsements can be transferred from one

actor or institution to another and resulting positive trust outcomes. These six trust repair mechanisms by Bachmann et al. (2015) are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. An integrative framework of six mechanisms by Bachmann et al. (2015).

Six trust repair mechanisms	Theories/Traditions	Trust repair practices	Scholarly examples
Sense-making	Organization theory	Investigations, public inquiries, explanations and accounts.	Gillespie and Dietz, 2009; Kim et al., 2006, 2009; Tomlinson & Mayer, 2009
Relational approach	Psychology and sociology	Explanations, apologies, punishment, penance, compensation, redistribution of power and resetting expectations.	Bottom et al., 2002; Gillespie and Dietz, 2009; Ren & Gray, 2009
Regulation and controls	Sociology, management, and organization science	Laws, regulation, organizational rules, policies, controls, contracts, codes of conduct, incentives and sanctions.	Bachmann and Inkpen, 2011; Eberl et al., 2015; Gillespie and Dietz, 2009; Sitkin and Roth, 1993
Ethical culture	Philosophy, organization science and management	Cultural reforms, induction and socialization, professional training, leadership and role modelling.	Eberl et al., 2015; Gillespie and Dietz, 2009; Harrison, Bosse and Phillips, 2010
Transparency	Public management and corporate governance	Corporate reporting, public inquiries, external audits and whistle blower protection.	Augustine, 2012; Child and Rodrigues, 2004
Transference	Social networks and sociology	Memberships, certifications, affiliations, awards and endorsements.	Ferrin et al., 2006; Mueller et al., 2015; Spicer and Okhmatovskiy, 2015

2.2.5 Trust repair after organizational change

In the change context and especially when announcements of the change are launched to employees by leaders, a state of anxiety and fear among employees increases, and the employees' response to change can be emotionally negative at the point the change begins (Binci et al., 2012). When trust levels among employees decrease, individuals will be unwilling to exchange knowledge and ideas with one another and activities and projects will suffer (Collins and Smith, 2006). Trust repair is very important in the change context if trust has declined as a result of the change. This importance of trust raises the relevant question of how leaders and other actors in an organization can repair trust after change. In the context of change, the relationship itself has not changed but rather the context in which the relationship is embedded. It is critical when organizations face unexpected surprises or implement structural changes that managers have an awareness of the importance of trust to the work community and knowledge of how changes can affect employee trust. Researchers have proposed that more trust repair studies are needed in the contexts of organizational change and negotiations (Lewicki, Polin and Lount, 2016; Sørensen et al., 2011). There are already

some studies on organizational changes and their impact on employee trust (e.g., Sørensen et al., 2011; Saunders, Dietz and Thornhill, 2014), as well as some new investigations regarding trust repair following negotiations in which negotiators do not keep their promises (see, e.g., Lewicki et al., 2016). In the context of change, Sverdrup and Stensaker investigated trust repair at group level (2018). Their objective was examining trust between the broader groups of senior management and employees because developing a trustful relationship with employees remains essential for managing change. They proposed that the trust restoration process is a three-stage process. In this process, the aim is to restore reciprocity, renegotiate the transactional terms of the psychological contract, and extend the psychological contract. Similarly, in the organizational change context and at group level, Sørensen et al. (2011) investigated the development of trust dynamics and the influence of time in two Danish manufacturing firms. They found that it is very important that the leaders' integrity, competence, and benevolence are visible to employees and these properties have been passed on to staff through strong management actions. Previous studies provide evidence that *active attempts to protect trust* can give positive trust outcomes, but if low trust turns into distrust, it can lead to a serious vicious circle of distrust (Sørensen et al. 2011; Sverdrup and Stensaker, 2018). However, we currently have little research about the understanding of employee trust repair in the context of (and after) organizational change.

2.2.6 Active trust repair practices

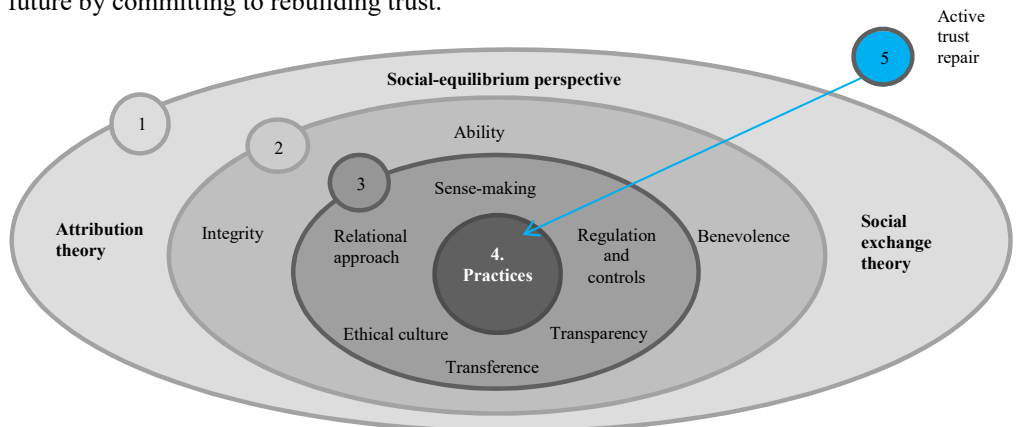
The roots of notions about active trust stem from the works of sociologists (Giddens, 1990, 1994, Luhmann 1988, 2017, Möllering, 2006, 2013). In line with the idea of active trust, organizations' members have the active role in the constitution of trust (Gustafsson et al., 2020). Accordingly, a high trust level within an organization requires continuous action from the members of the organization. Trust is formed when actors use these sources to inform different trust strategies, for example, by influencing the employee conditions with open communication (Giddens, 1994), or creating possibilities for direct interaction between leaders and their staff (Giddens, 1990). Active trust suggests that trust is not stable but rather an ongoing, requiring continuous reproduction even once established (Möllering, 2006, 2013). Based on Giddens (1990), this reconstitution of trust is particularly important in contexts which are unstable such as in the context of organizational change. As trust is a concept that integrates micro- and meso-levels (psychological process and group dynamics) with macro-level (organizational and institutional forms, see e.g., Gillespie and Dietz, 2009; Rousseau et al., 1998), access to various trust-repair strategies is necessary if trust violated in the change context. Because in the organizational context violations and especially their effects diffuse easily across levels, active and diverse trust-repairing strategies should be applied in order to repair employee trust. Trust which is once established and later after change repaired needs continuous attention and active trust repair practices so that a high level of trust can continue to be better protected.

2.2.7 Summary of theoretical frameworks applied

The escalating and systemic nature of trust (Gillespie and Dietz, 2009) highlights the importance of studying trust repair from a multilevel and cross-level perspective where roots are based on several scientific disciplines and theories. To advance both research and the practice of trust repair, it is important to discover if there are divergent or potentially common

underlying principles and processes of trust repair across levels of analysis and interpersonal referents of trust. It is also important to note that employee trust includes not only interpersonal referents but also impersonal referents, such as organizational structures and processes (on impersonal organizational trust, see e.g., Vanhala, Puumalainen and Blomqvist, 2011). Hence, there is a need to understand trust repair strategies and principles that are effective in repairing trust as a multi-dimensional concept, at multiple organizational levels, and in various referents of trust. Since in this dissertation each of its independent publications forms a logical continuum for each other, all theories outlined in this theoretical section also were applied in every individual publication (ABI-model, attribution theory, social exchange theory, social-equilibrium perspective, active trust approach and the framework of six mechanisms). Thus, repairing trust with multiple active trust repair practices is a multi-dimensional research topic including several theoretical frameworks.

This thesis is positioned in the field of Business and Management studies but is a multidisciplinary study which utilizes research results and traditions achieved in different disciplines. The multidimensional trust repair framework is presented in Figure 3. In this dissertation, first, three key theoretical approaches explaining trust repair have been applied. Especially Social Exchange Theory provides a theoretical basis for explaining humans' behaviour and attitudes, for example why employees choose to engage in more or less work or why the trust level is what it is in their organization. Second, the ABI-model (Mayer et al., 1995) has been applied to better identify and understand how different violations of trust were hit to different dimensions of trustworthiness. Third, the integrating framework of six mechanisms by Bachmann et al. (2015) has been applied in order to classify the identified trust repair mechanism. Fourth, trust-repair practices represent the wide range of actions that put trust-repairing into practice. Fifth, in this study, active trust repair involves an ongoing process of repairing, building, and preserving trust in organizations. Thus, repairing trust after change does not happen by itself, but rather requires actors to be active, as well as an interactive desire to consider the importance of trust to the organization's performance and future by committing to rebuilding trust.



1) Main theoretical approaches, 2) Dimensions of trustworthiness, 3) Related trust repair mechanisms, 4) Trust repair practices, and 5) Active ongoing trust repair process.

Figure 3. Multidimensional trust repair framework

3 Methodology

In this chapter, the philosophical and methodological theories that guided this dissertation are discussed. Next, the research design in individual publications, data collection, data analysis as well as an assessment of the reliability and validity of the study are presented. Finally, the applied research methods in all four publications are summarized.

3.1 Philosophy of science considerations

This dissertation focuses on investigating employee trust repair in the context of change. In this study, investigated organizations, work processes and the behaviour of humans in their work context. Thus, in this dissertation it is accepted that we cannot be absolutely certain of the truth when studying these issues because humans are always individuals with their own subjective views (Creswell, 2009; Guba and Lincoln, 2005). When comparing positivism and post-positivism, the main difference is that post-positivism epistemological recognizes these limitations relating to the behaviour of humans (Creswell, 2009), and this is the reason why the main principles of *post-positivism* are justified in this study.

Post-positivism relies on the ontological position of *critical realism* (Guba and Lincoln, 2005), which assumes that there is a real and objective reality out there, but that our understanding of it is limited by human cognition and subjective views (Guba and Lincoln, 2005). Some of the key assumptions of critical realism mean that 1) an objective reality exists independent of humans, 2) humans create social reality, 3) facts about social reality are inseparable from values, biophysical and social realities are distinct but interconnected, and 4) a hierarchical ontology is accepted in which there is an ordered structure, e.g. social, economic or biophysical structures (Spash, 2012). Researchers have proposed that critical realism is particularly useful in case studies and when investigating and analysing complex entities, such as organizations, work environments and relationships of organizations (Easton, 2010). This is why critical realism is accepted also in this dissertation.

The ontological and epistemological philosophical positions influence methodological choices. These ideologies affect how research is conducted. When considering the nature of the relationship between theory and research, this study utilizes, among other approaches, also an abductive approach. According to this approach, previous theory acts as a pillar which provides guidelines, but it does not explain all the perspectives within the specific change context under this study (Dubois and Gadde, 2002). Trust repair in the organizational change context cannot yet be considered as a mature research field. Existing literature on the topic as well as some theoretical approaches are presented, but before this current study, validated and structured employee trust repair scale has not been developed and established in the change context. Thus, an abductive approach is a fruitful method when the goal of the research is to make discoveries and extend previous theory (Dubois and Gadde, 2002). Previous theory on the basis of past research on the trust repair research field and theoretical considerations related to it and new insights based on qualitative data from focus group discussions together allow developing hypotheses for employee trust repair scale.

This study utilizes both quantitative and qualitative methodologies and adopts an approach which is also rooted in a *pragmatic* worldview (Creswell, 2009). In positivist and social constructivist approaches, the antecedent conditions are utilized, but pragmatism rather means actions, situations and consequences. Pragmatism advocates that scholars are free to use the methods which are most suitable for their purposes (Creswell, 2009).

This dissertation utilized mixed-method approaches, and pragmatism is thus justified view. In this study, following the pragmatic approach, four individual publications applied different research methods which were chosen according to their suitability for each research project. Overall, this thesis follows the critical realist perspective. The pragmatic perspective is reflected in the choices of used methods. In this study, both qualitative and quantitative research have an important role to play in achieving reliable research results. In the research process, it has been important to combine different research methods to confirm the results. Trust is an abstract research topic and thus a research subject of a complex and challenging nature. The progression of this study from the literature review through the qualitative research phase to the quantitative research phase has been appropriate, as individual approaches interact with each other and thus together produce a deeper, broader and more comprehensive understanding of the research subject (Greene 2007). Indeed, mixed methods research has been found to be particularly suitable for examining complex social phenomena and so-called “wicked problems” as well as vulnerable groups such as employees (Gómez 2014; Mertens 2015). It is also a multifaceted way of thinking. In other words, it is "multiple ways of seeing and hearing" and "multiple ways of making sense of the social world". (Greene 2007, 20).

3.2 Systematic literature review

First, in Publication I a systematic review was conducted, i.e. a systematic and structured method to identify and synthesize existing research within a specific field. The systematic review of literature is designed to be replicable and transparent and provide a clear structure and approach to the literature selection and review process (Tranfiel, Denyer and Smart, 2003), and accordingly a number of steps were taken to ensure the review process was replicable and transparent. According to Nguyen, de Leeuw and Dullaert (2018), a high-level review is based on clear research questions developed at the start of the review process. The research question focused on the employee trust repair within organization. It was formulated through dialogue between the authors and other academic experts.

Each selected research article had to meet six inclusion criteria, namely: 1) offering empirical research providing evidence on trust repair, 2) including an employee perspective on trust repair or relationship repair, 3) conducted within the context of work or an organizational context, 4) being peer reviewed, 5) being available in English, and 6) located within the disciplines of business, management and accounting, social sciences, and/or psychology. Literature published in the past two decades, from 2000 to 2020 were searched. Non-empirical papers, papers that represented only external stakeholders without an employee perspective, and papers on trust repair between organizations were excluded. Papers were also excluded if it was unclear whether an employee perspective was included (e.g., experimental designs where the stakeholder role of the respondent was not clear).

To address the sub-questions on what trust repair practices were used in different organizational levels in order to repair trust (Publication I), the data were collected by conducting a search of the relevant databases for literature published during the last two decades, the period during which the large majority of empirical research on intra-organizational trust repair has been conducted. The structured literature review process proposed by Tranfield et al. (2003) was followed and is presented in Figure 4.

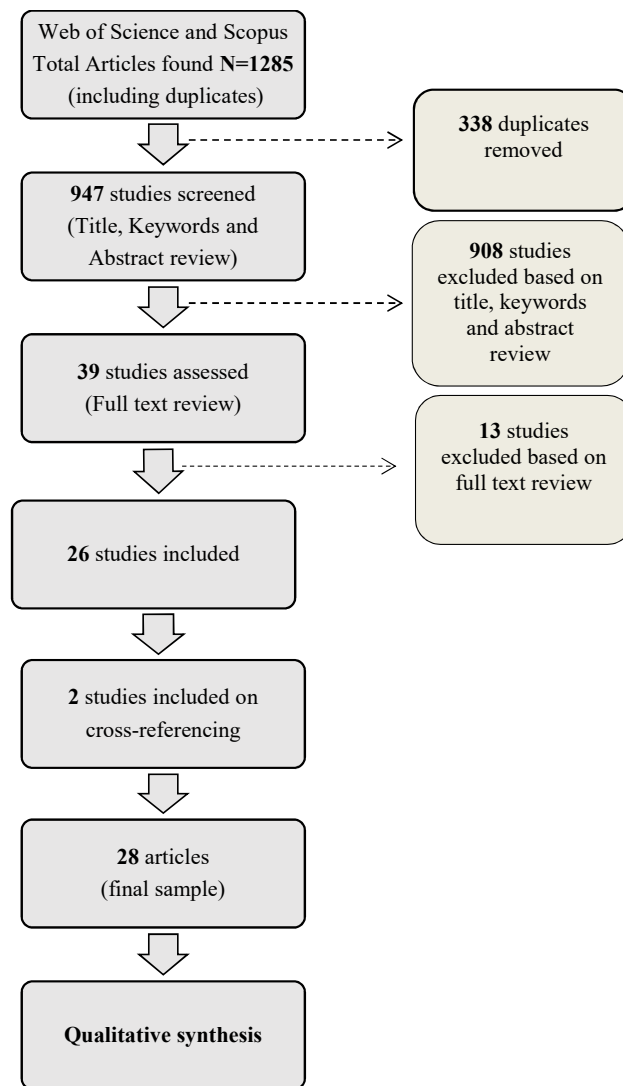


Figure 4. The systematic literature selection process

Each stage served to select relevant articles according to the pre-defined criteria. In the first stage, a comprehensive search was made in two of the dominant databases in social sciences; Web of Science and Scopus were used (Falagas, Pitsouni, Malietzis and Pappas, 2008). The search terms 'trust AND repair' OR 'trust repair' OR 'trust AND rebuild*' OR 'trust rebuild*' OR 'trust AND restor*' OR 'relationship repair' were used. The search strings were targeted at article titles, abstracts, and keywords. The first search produced 1285 potentially relevant articles and was reduced to 947 after removing duplicates.

In the second stage of the literature selection process, 947 articles were screened by title, keywords and abstract. 908 studies excluded based on title, keywords and abstract review because it turned out that they 1) were not empirical papers, 2) papers represented only external stakeholders, 3) papers were without an employee perspective, or 4) trust repairing was focused between the two organizations. In the third stage, 39 accepted papers were scanned, and articles that failed to meet the inclusion criteria were eliminated. Furthermore, 13 studies excluded based on full text review because the papers did not include an employee perspective on trust repair or because the context was of trust repair but not within an organization.

In the fourth stage and after the full text examination, the number of relevant articles was reduced to 26. Our last stage of the selection process involved scanning the reference lists of the 26 accepted articles (Wohlin, 2014) as well as seven conceptual and review papers on trust repair (Bachmann et al., 2015; Dirks et al., 2009; Fulmer and Gelfand, 2012; Gillespie and Siebert, 2018; Kim, 2018; Kramer and Lewicki, 2010; Lewicki and Brinsfield, 2017), to locate additional suitable empirical works. This snowballing method increased the accepted number of relevant articles to 28, which was the final sample. In order to avoid possible selection bias, the screening and selection of the articles were verified independently by two researchers. The key empirical studies on employee trust repair are listed in Table 3.

Table 4 also shows the methods used to examine trust repair. Laboratory experiments were utilized in 50% and qualitative studies were utilized in 32% of the articles reviewed. Surveys (14%) and a combination of surveys and laboratory experiments (4%) were used to a lesser extent than laboratory experiments alone. Additionally, the research objectives as well as the journals in which the articles were published are presented.

Table 3. Key empirical studies on employee trust repair

Author(s), year	Type of study	Research objectives	Journal
Kim et al. (2004)	Laboratory experiment	The research examined the effects of apology versus denial for repairing a competence-based versus integrity-based trust violation.	Journal of applied psychology
Kim et al. (2006)	Laboratory experiment	Trust repair implications of apologizing with an internal vs. external attribution after a competence- vs. integrity-based trust violation.	Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes
Schweitzer et al. (2006)	Laboratory experiment	The aim of the study is to test whether trust that is easily broken is difficult to repair.	Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes
Ferrin et al. (2007)	Laboratory experiment	The research target is reticence. An accused party may use reticence in a sincere and even legitimate attempt to persuade a trustor to trust with judgment.	Journal of Applied Psychology

De Cremer and Schouten (2008)	Survey / laboratory experiment	The research examined whether apologies are more effective when they are communicated by an authority being respectful to others.	European Psychologist
De Cremer (2010)	Laboratory experiment	This study investigated the effectiveness of financial compensation and apologies in motivating trust behaviour by the violated party.	Journal of Economic Psychology
Six and Skinner (2010)	Qualitative illustration	This study investigated what happens when the trouble that occurs is of central concern in the context of relationship maintenance and whether repair and (unnecessary) damage to the relationship can be avoided if trouble is dealt with effectively.	International Journal of Human Resource Management
Dirks et al. (2011)	Laboratory experiment	Four studies examined two forms of substantive responses, penance and regulation, that represent different categories of trust repair attempts.	Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes
Maddux et al. (2011)	Laboratory experiment	The study investigated the function and meaning of an apology (and thus its effectiveness for negotiators) across cultures.	International Negotiation
Sørensen et al. (2011)	Longitudinal multimethod case study	This paper analyses how trust dynamics develop over time in two Danish manufacturing firms affected by major change programmes.	Scandinavian Journal of Management
Kim et al. (2012)	Laboratory experiment	This study investigates decision-making and trust repair when alleged transgressors attempt to regain the trust of groups as compared to individuals.	Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes
Pate et al. (2012)	Survey	This study investigated a senior management team's attempt to regain trust through addressing workplace bullying.	Human Resource Management Journal
Webber et al. (2012)	Survey	The purpose of this paper is to examine the trust repair efforts of the top management within an organization specifically focusing on the impact of perceived organizational support and issue-selling.	Journal of Management Development
Gillespie et al. (2014)	Qualitative case study	The aim of this paper is to analyze the decisions and actions taken by the company in its efforts to restore trust with its stakeholders after a scandal.	Business Ethics Quarterly
Grover et al. (2014)	Qualitative grounded theory approach	This paper explores how trust is violated and restored in the leader-follower relationship.	European Management Journal
Eberl et al. (2015)	Qualitative grounded theory approach	This paper investigates how an organization attempts to repair trust after organizational-level integrity violations by examining the influence of organizational rules on trust repair.	Organization Studies
Elangovan et al. (2015)	Survey	The purpose of this paper is to examine the effects of damage incurred by the trustor as a result of a trust violation and the impact of different levels of post-violation trust repair behaviours by the trustee on the subsequent erosion of trust.	Leadership and Organization Development Journal
Goodstein et al. (2015)	Qualitative case study	This study examined moral repair in the aftermath of breaches of trust and harming.	Journal of Business Ethics
Haesevoets et al. (2015)	Laboratory experiment	The aim of the research was to investigate how a negative decision outcome generated by a leader in a hasty, timely, or delayed manner impacts upon the need for, and the effectiveness of, apologies to restore followers' trust.	Journal of Business and Psychology
Monzani et al. (2015)	Laboratory experiment	This study examined the effects of three emotional competencies of the followers (attention, clarity and repair) and three goal-setting types on trust in leadership over different periods.	Revista Latinoamericana de Psicología

Petriglieri (2015)	Qualitative case study	This study aimed to elucidate the processes set in motion when organizational identification is damaged, how damaged organizational identification can be repaired, and how these processes affect the relationship of the members.	Administrative Science Quarterly
Holten et al. (2016)	Longitudinal qualitative study	The purpose of this paper is to investigate whether and how knowledge hoarding functions as antecedent and consequence of work-related negative acts, as a measure of bullying. The authors investigate the relationship as mediated by trust and justice.	Journal of Knowledge Management
Lewicki et al. (2016)	Laboratory experiment	This study examined whether some apologies are more effective than others.	Negotiation and conflict management research
Krylova et al. (2016)	Laboratory experiment	This study determines, whether the pre-emptive self-disclosure of negative performance information allows applicants to accept responsibility for prior integrity-based wrongdoing without ruining their chances of being selected.	Journal of Business Ethics
Sverdrup and Stensaker (2018)	Longitudinal qualitative study	This study examined group-level trust between the broader groups of senior management and employees, as developing a trustful relationship with employees remains essential for managing change.	Strategic Organization
Grover et al. (2019)	Survey	The research examines the conditions under which apologies help to restore trust in the leader–follower relationship.	Journal of Business Ethics
Bagdasarov et al. (2019)	Laboratory experiment	The research examines the value of the mistrusted party's empathy, specific responses to an integrity-based violation (apology vs. denial), and the nature of consequences (personal vs. organizational), as well as their interactive effects, on trust repair.	Frontiers in Psychology
Henderson et al. (2020)	Laboratory experiment	The research examines six general repair tactics (i.e., full penance, partial penance, denials, apologies, excuses, and combined apology/excuse) in terms of whether they improve trust and diminish the negative emotions following a breach.	Journal of Business and Psychology

After article screening, qualitative meta-synthesis and integrated framework were completed. The aim was to better understand and explain the phenomena related to the present research topic and to build a convincing overall picture of the topic (Walsh and Downe, 2005). The framework integrates information derived from the systematic review and the categorization of trust violations, trust repair mechanisms, trust repair practices, moderators, and contextual factors. The findings were organized into three categories. The first category, the individual level, incorporates all findings that relate to the individual level of analysis. The other two categories, the team/group level of analysis and organizational level of analysis, are treated in the same manner. The developed framework is dynamic and can be further expanded with new findings, serving as a theoretical basis to guide future research.

Reliability and validity

The existence of bias related to literature selection can undermine the validity and reliability of a systematic literature review. Thus, in this study the systematic literature review procedure aimed at minimising the bias by utilising objective approaches in literature selection and review. The entire process was transparently described to increase replicability. A high

quality of the reviewed publications is also one of the key issues for a relevant and impactful literature review. This point was addressed by including only peer-reviewed journal papers. The quality of the systematic reviews was further warranted by including a sufficient number of articles to form a representative sample of literature related to each research question. In this study, it was found that several of the selected articles were published in high-quality journals such as *Administrative Science Quarterly*, *Human Resource Management*, *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *Journal of Business Ethics*, *Organization Studies* and *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*. These journals are presented on the current list of the top-tier journals the Financial Times use for business school rankings. Starting from the development of the search terms, the reviewer is able to affect the outcome of the literature search, which influences every subsequent stage of the review procedure. During the limitation, titles, abstracts and full-texts, all the decisions concerning inclusion and exclusion are eventually executed on the premises of the reviewer's preference and expertise. In order to avoid possible selection bias, in this study the screening and selection of the articles were verified independently by two researchers. In summary, the systematic review creates a comprehensive search protocol which aims to capture all the relevant knowledge in a specific field, which is why it is applied in Publication I.

3.3 Case study

Second, for Publications II and III a case study was conducted. An abductive research approach was chosen because it is a fruitful method when the goal of the research is to make discoveries and extend previous theory (Dubois and Gadde, 2002). Abduction is a systematized intuition for developing new knowledge, and particularities can be distinguished from generalities. Because it aims to understand a topic in a new way, it is suitable when the research is conducted in a change context (Dubois and Gadde, 2002). In abductive research, previous theory serves as a pillar and provides guidelines, but it does not explain all the perspectives within the specific context under study (Dubois and Gadde, 2002). An in-depth single case study was performed with qualitative data to discover trust repair practices utilized in the case organization. Case studies are particularly useful when one is trying to understand diverse social phenomena in real-life environments, such as in business management situations or if the target is building new theory (Yin, 2003). The purpose of a case study is to increase one's understanding, but analytical generalizations can also be made. Similarly, the abductive research approach focuses on specific situations and their unique features (Kovács and Spens, 2005) in order to extend previous theory. The aim of Publications II and III was to extend the findings of the systematic literature review (Publication I), to form new understanding that could be used for building propositions and to develop measurable dimensions of trust repair that provide valuable information and new insights into the topic for employee Trust Repair-Scale (TRS) development (in Publication IV).

3.3.1 Sampling, data collection and analysis

To address the sub-question 2 on which trust repair practices do organizational managers and members use to repair employee trust in the organization during and after organizational change (Publication II) and the sub-question 3 on which active trust-repair mechanisms do team leaders and team members use within teams after organizational change (Publication III), the data were collected from a Finnish non-profit organization that operates within the

field of education and research. The organization is in a state of constant change and for example personnel reductions took place in 2008, 2013 and 2015 and a merger of three organizations took place in 2020. In addition, there are continually many other structural changes and reforms in different departments and within teams. The views of several different staff groups were considered to ensure a multifaceted perspective.

The study used semi-structured focus group discussions and interviews as data sources. The semi-structured interviews were useful because they allowed the researcher more freedom to follow up on different perspectives and also gave the researcher a voice in the conversation (Leavy, 2014). The discussion groups were formed by inviting key informants, which ensured that information came directly from knowledgeable people and the interviews and focus group discussions provided data and insights that could not be obtained by other methods (Tremblay, 1957). Each participant's background information was collected on a registration form, and the 16 participants were divided into three internally homogeneous groups based on their work unit and position in the organizational hierarchy. The focus group guide was pilot-tested on two informants from the target organization and adjusted accordingly. The focus group discussions were conducted in May and June 2018. The first focus group comprised employees, the second middle managers and the third union representatives. There were five–six participants in each group involved in group-specific discussions. Each focus group discussion lasted about 90 minutes, and the discussions comprised 264 minutes in total. All the focus group discussions were recorded and fully transcribed, and the first was implemented together with an expert in focus group research. The key informants were also invited to interview (Tremblay, 1957). In total, six semi-structured interviews were conducted in May and June 2018, and they shared the same themes as the focus group discussions. Two informants were middle managers, one was a union representative and three were employees. Each interview lasted about 30–45 minutes, and the total interview time was 214 minutes. All interviews were recorded and fully transcribed.

The data analysis in Publication II as well as in Publication III involved thematic coding and analysis. The study followed an analytical process, where the data was arranged into first- and second-order codes, and then aggregated into theoretical dimensions (Gioia, Corley and Hamilton, 2012). The use of this method is justified because it is a straightforward analytical process which enhances the credibility of qualitative research by clearly demonstrating the progression from raw data to theoretical dimensions (Zimmermann et al., 2015). First, all the data material was studied and sorted into general groupings describing the informants' experiences of organizational violations in the case organization. Next, the first-order codes were organized into second-order codes based on similarities. Finally, comprehensive theoretical dimensions were formed based on the second-order codes.

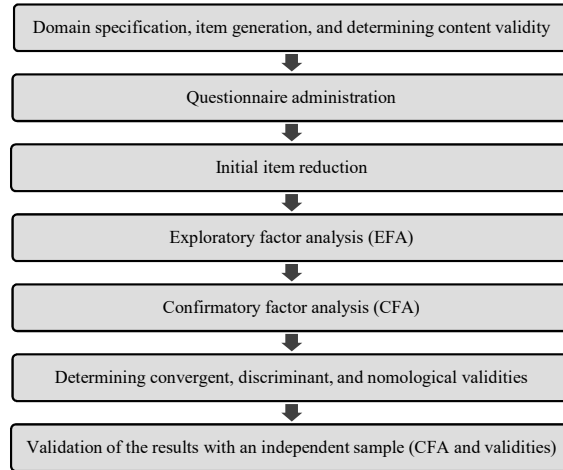
3.3.2 Quality assessment

Generally, in qualitative research the data is always unique and incorporates the researcher's interpretations. However, the purpose of a case study is to increase one's understanding and build a new theory, not to make statistical generalizations. Similarly, the abductive research approach focuses on specific situations and their unique features (Kovács and Spens, 2005) in order to extend previous theory. Therefore, even if this study does not yield statistically generalizable findings, the results are analytically rich and valuable. In this study, data

collection methods, key informants (Tremblay, 1957), the Gioia data analysis procedure (Gioia et al., 2012), and previous theory were used to guide and improve the credibility and validity of the data and the robustness of the results (Lincoln and Guba, 1985), and moreover, saturation points were achieved. Focus groups and interviews were facilitated by the researcher's personal work relationship with the case company and a deeper and more personal knowledge of the environment, the change situations of the case company and the employees. On the other hand, this situation can make a risk of making interpretations based on personal experience. For this reason, it was important to look at the experiences of the informants through the eyes of an “outsider” and this was helped by the fact that the first focus group was carried out together with the focus group expert. For this dissertation, the qualitative part was very useful because it formed propositions and developed measurable dimensions of trust repair that provide valuable information and new insights into the topic. The results of Publication II and III expand the current theory by presenting novel insights into organizational trust-repair practices. These two studies highlight that trust-repair after organizational change takes place in two phases. In the first phase, employees give feedbacks and diagnosis about trust violations can be carried out. In the second phase, suitable trust-repair mechanism will be implemented within the organization. The results of publication II and III provide practical information from a real work context which can improve understanding of active trust-repair within an organization. Thus, qualitative findings were essential for the development of the TRS (in Publication IV). Without a qualitative contribution - where one can learn to understand people as well the world around them through their own experiences - this research could not have progressed to the quantitative research and the development of the TRS (Onwuegbuzie and Leech 2005).

3.4. Trust-repair scale development

In Publication IV, a two-phase—i.e., qualitative–quantitative—mixed-methods approach was adopted to scale development (Creswell, 2009). First, the components for employee Trust Repair Scale (TRS) were conducted. This phase involved an extensive literature review and meta-synthesis (in Publication I) as well as a qualitative study employing focus groups and interviews (in publications II and III). Then, based on the combined results from past literature, focus groups, and interviews, scale items were generated, and a questionnaire was created and administered to respondents. The approach to scale development we adopted followed a procedure utilized widely in the literature (see, e.g., Hinkin, 1995, 1998): (1) domain specification, item generation, and the establishment of content validity, (2) questionnaire administration, and (3) initial item reduction, (4) EFA, (5) CFA, (6) determination of convergent, discriminant, and nomological validity, and (7) validation of the results with an independent sample (CFA and validities). The scale development process is depicted in Figure 5.



Note: EFA in Study 1, CFA in Studies 1 and 2

Figure 5. Scale development procedure (Hinkin, 1995, 1998, modified).

Domain specification entails a clarification of the construct being measured (DeVellis, 2012). This is important when describing intangible phenomena which cannot be directly observed, such as trust repair. Domain specification is implemented with a systematic literature review (Publication I) as well as with focus groups and interviews (Publication II and III). Based on the results found in the past literature, focus groups, and individual interviews, the results were integrated and the TRS was developed, which comprises seven relevant trust-repair factors: 1) transparent information sharing, 2) strong management actions, 3) benevolent personnel policies, 4) emotional support, 5) apologies, 6) third-party involvement, and 7) constructive behavior. Data extraction technique (Nguyen et al., 2018) was used to categorize trust-repair factors and to identify items in the past literature as well as to evoke during the focus groups. The data extraction technique provided the tools to arrange items logically under the appropriate factors. In the first stage, there were 81 items. This number was reduced by removing similar items and balancing the remaining items so that all factors received a roughly even number (about six items per factor). Only the strongest items remained that appeared in both the previous literature and the focus groups. In the item generation stage, a total of 41 items were generated. Together with five other researchers, the functionality of the items was pretested. None of the items were excluded in the initial item reduction, but some changes were made to improve the functionality of the questionnaire. The questionnaire, administered in both Finnish and English, was double translated by a professional language editing firm, as recommended by Brislin (1980), to ensure that the meaning of every item in the Finnish version of the survey was the same as that of the English survey version.

3.4.1 Sampling, data collection and analysis

To address the sub-questions on what kind of a construct and a scale for measuring the effectiveness of employee trust-repair practices in organizations is developed (Publication IV), the data (dataset 1, Study 1) were collected from a non-profit, public-sector organization of 1,106 employees operating in education and research. After pretesting, the survey was published via the Webropol platform in May 2020, and the response link was personally provided to each employee via email. In total, 282 completed surveys were returned, thus giving a viable response rate of 25.5%. Another new dataset (dataset 2, Study 2) was collected in order to validate the results from the dataset 1 from the administrative unit of the Finnish Army, which operates in the field of national defence. The survey was published via the Webropol platform in October 2020, and the response link was personally provided to 298 employees via email. In total, 101 surveys were returned completed, thus providing a viable response rate of 33.9%. The seven-point scale to measure trust repair practices in the target organization was used in both surveys.

EFA was initially performed in Study 1 in order to test the factor structure. JMP Pro 14. Ink software was used for the analysis. The objective was to highlight items which did not load on the appropriate factors of the TRS. Next, CFA was carried out. For this purpose, a random split was conducted for the data and utilized two sub-samples of 141 cases (sub-samples A and B). These two sub-samples were used separately for dimensionality testing and scale development. For both sub-samples, the 141 cases were processed via LISREL 8.80, and PRELIS 2.80 was used to calculate the covariance matrix. The maximum likelihood estimation method was adopted. In order to validate the results from Study 1, an additional study was conducted with the new dataset and analyses. Again, CFA was conducted to establish the dimensionality of the construct and scale in order to measure trust-repair practices. A total of 101 cases were processed via LISREL 8.80. PRELIS 2.80 was adopted to calculate the covariance matrix, and the maximum likelihood estimation method was applied.

3.4.2 Reliability and validity

CFA as a validation method is useful as it enables explicit assessments of the theoretical concepts, non-observational hypothesis and errors (Smith, Milberg and Burke, 1996). The reliability of the items was evaluated through their path coefficients and squared multiple correlations (R^2). Average variance extracted (AVE) was used in order to directly define the amount of variance captured by the construct in relation to the amount of variance caused by measurement error. Two methods were used to evaluate discriminant validity. The first was compared to the AVEs against the variance shared between focal construct and the other constructs in the model (i.e., the squared correlation between two constructs; Fornell and Larcker, 1981). In order to test the scale's nomological validity, the study relied on structural equation modelling, and sub-sample B, which consisted of 141 cases, was utilized for this purpose. The predictive ability of trust-repairing practices was tested against the degree to which trust in top management has developed during different organizational changes. Trust-Repair Scale (TRS) was found to demonstrate reliability, validity, and stability across the sample.

3.5 A summary of the research methods in individual publications

Table 4 summarizes the research methods used in all the four publications included in the dissertation. The information on data and sample size, research method, as well as methods of data analysis is provided.

Table 4. The summarized research methods used in the four publications

	Publication I	Publication II	Publication III	Publication IV
Title	Employee trust repair: A systematic review of 20 years of empirical research, integrative framework and future research directions	Employee trust repair after organizational change	Repairing trust within teams after organizational change	Employee trust repair practices: scale development and validation
Research objective	To recap the current understanding on trust repair practices in different organizational levels.	To develop an empirically informed theoretical understanding of how employee trust repair practices can be implemented.	To develop an empirically informed theoretical understanding of how employee trust repair practices can be implemented.	To develop a construct and a scale which can measure the effectiveness of trust-repair practices in organizations.
Research method	Systematic literature review	Case study	Case study	Qualitative—quantitative—mixed-methods approach to scale development.
Data collection	28 journal articles	6 expert interviews and 3 focus groups with 16 expert	6 expert interviews and 3 focus groups with 16 expert employees	383 participants from two different non-profit
Data analysis	Qualitative synthesis	Thematic coding and analysis (Gioia et al., 2012)	Thematic coding and analysis (Gioia et al., 2012)	Confirmatory factor analysis

4 Summary of the publications and the results

This chapter summarizes the four research publications included in this dissertation. Each publication is discussed in a separate section, which presents the background and objective of the publications and highlights the results and contribution. The final section summarizes the results and contributions of the whole study.

Publication I integrated the trust-repair practices used within organizations to enable future scholars to clarify the various trust-repair practices and their effectiveness at different organization levels. Paper II and III outlined active trust-repair practices in an organizational change context and expanded the current theory by presenting novel insights for organizational trust repair. Paper IV developed a construct and scale with the aim of measuring trust-repair practices in organizations. This scale was found to be reliable, valid, and stable across the sample. Overall, these publications help to establish an overarching view of intra-organizational trust repair practices at multiple levels and the findings provide a valuable instrument to assess the state of trust-repair practices in organizations.

4.1 Publication I: Employee trust repair: A systematic review of 20 years of empirical research and future research directions

4.1.1 Background and objective

The first publication addresses the sub-question of what practices were used in different organizational levels in order to repair trust. In order to set boundaries on the review of trust repair literature, we have included the studies that examine: 1) employee trust repair in organizational personal and impersonal relationships, 2) employee trust repair in leader-follower relationships, 3) employee trust repair in superior-subordinate relationships, 4) employee trust repair in employee-employee relationships, 5) employee trust repair within teams/groups, 6) employee trust repair between teams/groups. Thus, in this study we have examined violators' responses and employee trust repair at: 1) individual, 2) team or group, and 3) organizational levels. The objective was to recap the current understanding on trust repair practices in different organizational levels and to better understand and explain phenomena related to the present research topic.

4.1.2 Results and contribution

The paper synthesized findings from the studies included in this review into an integrated, multi-dimensional framework which presented selected studies in light of similarities and differences to build a convincing overall picture of the topic (Walsh and Downe, 2005). The framework integrates information derived from the systematic review as well as the categorization of trust violations, trust repair mechanisms, trust repair practices, moderators and contextual factors. The developed framework is dynamic and can be further expanded with new findings, serving as a theoretical basis to guide future research. The findings regarding trust violations and trust repair mechanisms from existing literature categorized into three categories. The first category, the individual level, incorporates all findings that relate to

the individual level of analysis. The other two categories, the team/group level of analysis and organizational level of analysis, are treated in the same manner. The study contributes with discussing the state-of-the art in empirical research on employee trust repair to provide a point of departure for future research. Further, the study highlights promising new research avenues and discusses the managerial implications for HR and management involved in the everyday practice of work and organizing. In this study, several trust repair mechanisms and practices are identified and presented in Table 5. The synthesized information provided in this study together with the integrative framework will be useful and valuable for future researchers.

Table 5. Trust repair practices identified in the systematic literature

1. Individual level (prevalence in the sample 20/71%)*		
<i>Author(s) and year</i>	<i>Trust repair mechanism</i>	<i>Trust repair practices (type)</i>
De Cremer (2010); De Cremer and Schouten, (2008); Ferrin et al. (2007); Kim et al. (2004; 2006; 2012); Krylova et al. (2016); Lewicki et al. (2016); Maddux et al. (2011); Schweitzer et al., (2006)	Social relations	Apology, denial, excuse, promises, reticence (verbal), accepting responsibility, financial compensations (substantive)
Six and Skinner (2010); Dirks et al. (2011)	Social relations & regulation and controls	Apology (verbal), penance, regulation (substantive)
Bagdasarov et al. (2019); Grover et al. (2014); Grover et al. (2019); Haesevoets et al. (2015); Monzani et al. (2015)	Social relations & ethical culture	Apology, denial, emotional support (verbal)
Elangovan et al. (2015); Goodstein et al. (2015); Holten et al. (2016)	Social relations, ethical culture & sense-making	Increasing the social exchange quality, penance (substantive), explanations, apology (verbal)
2. Team/group level (prevalence in the sample 5/18%)*		
Pate et al. (2012); Sørensen et al. (2011); Sverdrup and Stensaker (2018); Webber et al. (2012)	Ethical culture	Strong management actions (organizational reforms), increasing the social exchange quality (substantive), emotional support (verbal)
Kim et al. (2012)	Social relations	Apology, denial (verbal)
3. Organizational level (prevalence in the sample 4/14%)		
Eberl et al., (2015); Gillespie et al., (2014)	Social relations, regulation and controls, ethical culture & sense-making	Explanations, apologies (verbal), penance, investigations (substantive), systemic reforms, cultural reforms, replacing senior leaders, organizational rule adjustments (organizational reforms)
Petriglieri (2015)	Social relations	Co-created positive social information (verbal)
Henderson et al. (2020)	Social relations & regulation and controls	Penance (substantive), denial, apology, excuse (verbal)

*) Kim et al. (2012) both, individual and team levels are involved

4.2 Publication II: Employee trust repair after organizational change

4.2.1 Background and objective

The second publication addresses the sub-question of which trust repair practices do organizational managers and members use to repair employee trust in the organization during and after organizational change. Trust-repair practices have not been extensively studied and in fact only the most recent articles talk about active and continuous trust-repair practices (Gustafsson et al., 2020). Thus, Paper II examines the trust-repair practices after organizational change and the objective is to develop an empirically informed theoretical understanding of how organizational trust repair practices can be implemented.

4.2.2 Results and contribution

This study identified that employee trust can be repaired after benevolence-based trust violations by enforcing ethical behaviour and fostering the managers' emotional intelligence and after competence-based violations by fostering the sense-making process and by involving third parties in trust recovery. In addition, transparent information sharing, and strong management actions predict positive trust outcomes in a change context. The paper makes three key contributions to the literature on organizational trust by (1) identifying trust violations after organizational change, (2) proposing a process model on trust repair, and (3) extending understanding of trust repair practices by revealing new elements. A summary of the findings and the integrated trust repair model is presented in Figure 6. The study also provides practical information from a real work context and can improve managers' understanding of active trust-repair practices. The paper outlines active trust-repair practices in an organizational change context and expands the current theory by presenting novel insights for organizational trust repair. In addition, the paper contributes to trust repair literature by proposing promising avenues for future trust repair research.

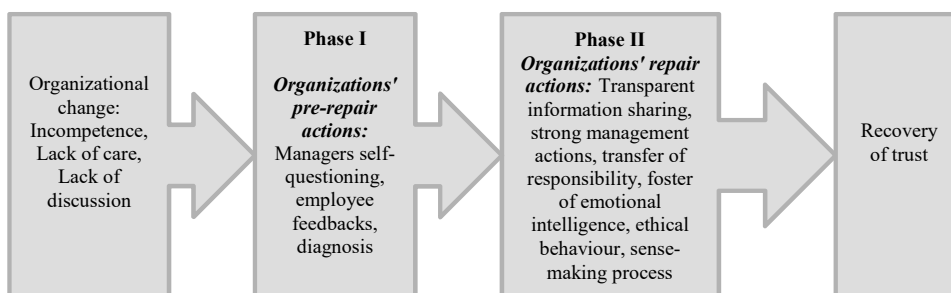


Figure 6. A summary of the findings presented in the integrated trust repair process model at organizational level

4.3 Publication III: Repairing trust within teams after organizational change

4.3.1 Background and objective

The third publication addresses the sub-question of which trust repair practices do team leaders and members use within teams after organizational change. Trust-repair practices have not been extensively studied at team level, and that the approach for repairing trust through various trust-repair practices is limited. Thus, Paper III examines the trust-repair practices after organizational change and the objective is to develop an empirically informed theoretical understanding of how organizational trust repair practices can be implemented at the team level. Team level needs to be considered in this study and is justified because line management can partially delegate trust repair to team leaders and a professional, empathetic team leader can significantly contribute to maintaining and repairing employee trust.

4.3.2 Results and contribution

Beyond previous research findings, this study found that after organization change, trust can be repaired at the team level by improving team leaders' information sharing and knowledge in change management, and by enforcing communication, collaboration and ethical behaviour among team members. The paper makes three key contributions by (1) identifying trust violations in teams, (2) proposing trust-repair mechanisms, and (3) extending the understanding of trust-repair and preservation at the team level following organizational change. A summary of the findings and the integrated trust repair model is presented in Figure 7. The study also provides practical information from a real work context and can improve managers' understanding of active trust-repair practices. The paper outlines active trust-repair mechanisms in an organizational change context and expands the current theory by presenting novel insights into organizational trust-repair at the team level. This study contributes to trust literature by proposing promising avenues for future trust-repair research.

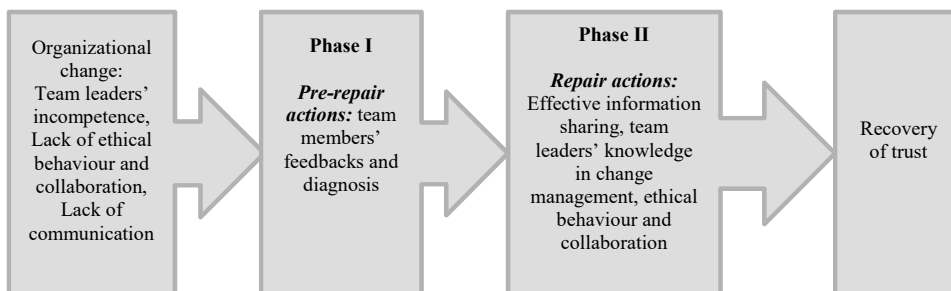


Figure 7. A summary of the findings presented in the integrated trust repair process model at team level

4.4 Publication IV: Employee trust-repair practices: scale development and validation

4.4.1 Background and objective

Paper IV outlines a stepwise approach used to develop the construct of organizational trust repair and an effective measurement scale designed to assess employee perceptions of the most effective trust-repair practices in an organization. Thus, the main objective is to develop a construct and a scale which can measure the effectiveness of trust-repair practices in organizations. Before this study, researchers were focused on one or a few trust repair practices through which, for example, actions/verbal statements positively influence trust levels or restore violated trust (Elangovan et al., 2015; Haesevoets et al., 2015; Webber et al., 2012). Thus, there was need to develop a validated trust repair scale in order to measure the effectiveness of the trust repair practices utilized in organizations.

4.4.2 Results and contribution

Employee Trust-Repair Scale (TRS) was completed by 282 employees of a non-profit organization and was validated by 101 employees of the administrative unit of the Finnish Army. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) confirmed the seven-factor model with a 14-item scale. The relevant question set is shown in the table 6. This scale was found to be reliable, valid, and stable across the sample. The study offers significant insights into the current literature on trust repair. For managers, findings provide a valuable instrument to assess the state of trust-repair practices in their organizations. This study is the first to demonstrate a wide-ranging valid measure of trust-repair practices within an organization.

The study offers several contributions to the trust-repair literature. First, the character of trust repair was explored, followed by the development of a conceptual model of trust-repair practices across seven factors: transparent information sharing, strong management actions, benevolent personnel policies, emotional support, apologies, third-party involvement, and constructive behaviour. The value of this model is that it integrates these focal elements to provide a comprehensive picture of trust-repair practices. Second, previous studies measuring organizational trust repair have principally focused on measuring the differences for two or only a few trust-repair practices, such as apologies vs. denial (e.g., Ferrin et al., 2007; Kim et al., 2004; Kim et al., 2012), with laboratory experiments. Thus, the study offers an important contribution to the research into trust-repair with the developed TRS. Third, the study provided empirical evidence that the TRS is both reliable and valid. This, in turn, provides a solid foundation on which other researchers can develop their own theoretical and empirical research on trust repair. The developed scale is justified for this dissertation because it contributes to the current literature on trust repair by presenting the first validated measure for employee trust repair. In addition, the findings provide a valuable instrument for practitioners to assess the state of employee trust-repair practices.

Table 6. Relevant employee trust repair scale (TRS)

	Sources for the scale	The following are statements related to your organization, the ways in which top management respond to situations of change, and their ability to respond to change. Please rate the statements using the scale: 1 = strongly disagree, 4 = neither agree nor disagree, 7 = strongly agree.
Transparent information sharing	Bachmann et al. (2015); Grover et al. (2014); Focus groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide timely information. • Provide honest information.
Strong management actions	Pate et al. (2012); Sørensen et al. (2011); Focus groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead changes well. • Know how to alleviate employees' uncertainty about the future.
Benevolent personnel policies	Davis et al. (2000); Dietz et al. (2011); Focus groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage staff fairly. • Ensure the well-being of employees at work.
Apologies	Kim et al. (2004); Krylova et al. (2016); Lewicki et al. (2016); Focus groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regret with respect. • Regret in time.
Constructive behaviour	Petriglieri (2015); Six and Skinner (2010); Focus groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow good manners. • Are not indifferent.
Emotional support	Grover et al. (2014); Monzani et al. (2015); Pate et al. (2012); Webber et al. (2012); Focus groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to me. • Understand my feelings.
Third-party involvement	Bachmann et al. (2015); Mueller et al. (2015); Coleman (1990); Focus groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strive to improve management through third-party evaluation (accreditation). • Provide practical support to staff from external parties.

4.5 A summary of the results of the whole study

Table 7 summarizes the main results of all four publications included in the dissertation. Publication I captured and integrated previous literature on employee trust repair; Publications II and III identified the trust-repair practices after organizational change; and validated employee Trust-Repair Scale (TRS) was developed in Publication IV.

Table 7. The summarized results of the four publications

	Publication I	Publication II	Publication III	Publication IV
Title	Employee trust repair: A systematic review of 20 years of empirical research, integrative framework and future research directions	Employee trust repair after organizational change	Repairing trust within teams after organizational change	Trust repair practices: scale development and validation
Sub-research question	What trust repair practices can be used in different organizational levels to repair trust?	Which active trust repair practices do organizational managers and members use to repair employee trust in the organization during and after organizational change?	Which active trust-repair practices can team leaders and members use within teams after organizational change?	What is the composition of employee trust repair practices and how they can be measured?
Main results	The study identified several trust repair practices. The synthesized information provided in this study together with the integrative framework is useful and valuable.	The study makes three key contributions to the literature on organizational trust by (1) identifying trust violations after organizational change, (2) proposing a process model on trust repair, and (3) extending understanding of trust repair practices by revealing new elements.	The paper makes three key contributions by (1) identifying trust violations in teams, (2) proposing trust-repair mechanisms and (3) extending the understanding of trust-repair and preservation at the team level following organizational change.	The study offers an important contribution to the research into trust-repair with the developed TRS.

In order to ensure an appropriate whole, it was justified first to carry out an extensive literature review, a qualitative research phase and finally a quantitative research phase in this dissertation. Identified trust repair practices and the synthesized information in Publication I provided the integrative and dynamic framework which is useful and valuable. After an extensive review of the research topic in Publication II at organizational level and Publication III at team level (1) trust violations after organizational change were identified, (2) a process model on trust repair was proposed, and (3) understanding of trust repair practices by revealing new elements was extended. Finally, in Publication IV an important contribution is offered to the research into trust-repair with the developed TRS.

5 Discussion and conclusions

This Chapter deals with overall contribution of the dissertation. It forms a synthesis of the current studies in relation to the previous knowledge in the field. First, this Chapter answers the research questions. Second, it discusses contributions to literature and practice and finally, presents limitations and future research avenues.

5.1 Answering the research questions

The main objective of this dissertation was to investigate how organizations can implement an effective employee trust repair process with trust repair practices and measurement tools in the context of change. Existing studies on organizational trust repair have primarily focused upon its conceptual development and are quite well developed (e.g., Bachmann et al., 2015; Lewicki & Bunker, 1996; Tomlinson & Mayer, 2009), but there are no empirical studies where multiple trust repair practices are integrated and then their effectiveness is measured. Previous studies have principally been reliant upon laboratory experiments of trust-repair practices such as apologies vs. denial (e.g., Kim et al., 2004; Kim et al., 2012), penance vs. regulation vs. apologies (Dirks et al., 2011), or apologies alone (De Cremer & Schouten, 2008; Maddux et al., 2011). Previous literature has shed light on specific aspects of organizational trust repair. However, no comprehensive instrument of measurement has yet been developed to demonstrate the effectiveness of various trust-repairing practices. Acknowledging the complex and multifaceted nature of employee trust repair as well as the change context, this study attempts to integrate and extend the existing knowledge on employee trust repair by focusing on active trust repair practices and developing the validated employee Trust-Repair Scale (TRS) for measuring the effectiveness of these practices. Individual publications, each addressing particular gaps related to employee trust repair help to enhance understanding of the topic and context. In order to solve main research question, four sub-questions were posed to produce evidence and increase knowledge concerning trust repair and to form measurable dimensions of trust-repair practices.

- **The first sub-question**

What trust repair practices are used on different organizational levels?

The integrated, multi-dimensional framework synthesised based findings from the studies included in this review i.e. what repair practices were used in different organizational levels in order to repair trust. The framework integrates information derived from the systematic review and categorization of trust violations, trust repair mechanisms, trust responses, moderators and contextual factors. In the first part of the framework, reasons are explained for the decline in employee trust. All trust violations were categorized based on the level of analysis they fall under. Next, the trust repair mechanisms, trust repair practices and response types studied were presented which were used in order to repair employee trust after trust violations. Third, the positive and negative moderators were integrated which may improve or diminish effectiveness of trust repair. Furthermore, the contextual dimensions were reported which existing literature has found and which affect trust repair. The developed framework is

dynamic and can be further expanded with new findings, serving as a theoretical basis to guide future research. The findings regarding trust violations and trust repair mechanisms from existing literature were organised into three categories. The first category, the individual level, incorporates all findings that relate to the individual level of analysis. The other two categories, the team/group level of analysis and organizational level of analysis, are treated in the same manner.

- **The second sub-question**

Which active trust repair practices do organizational managers and members use to repair employee trust in the organization during and after organizational change?

This research question was addressed by investigating the trust repair practices used in a Finnish non-profit organization during and after organizational changes. The study identified that employee trust can be repaired after benevolence-based trust violations by enforcing ethical behaviour and fostering managers' emotional intelligence and after competence-based violations by fostering the sense-making process and by involving third parties in trust recovery. In addition, transparent information sharing and strong management actions predict positive trust outcomes in a change context. Publication II also proposed a two-phase trust-repair process in which managers gather feedback from employees and make a situation diagnosis. After that, the necessary trust-repairing practices are implemented.

- **The third sub-question**

Which active trust-repair practices do team leaders and members use within teams after organizational change?

This research question was addressed by investigating the trust repair practices used in a Finnish non-profit organization during and after organizational changes. Study identified that team members trust can be repaired after benevolence-based trust violations by enforcing ethical behaviour and collaboration and after competence-based violations by improving effective information sharing and team leaders' knowledge in change management. Additionally, after integrity-based violations effective information sharing can improve trust. Publication III also proposed a two-phase trust-repair process in which team leaders gather feedback from team members and make a situation diagnosis. After that, the necessary trust-repairing practices are implemented.

- **The fourth sub-question**

What is the composition of employee trust repair practices and how they can be measured?

This research question was investigated using measurable factors and items developed based on the findings produced by Publication I, II and III. After the development of the scale instrument and after pretesting, the survey was published via the Webropol platform in May 2020 in a Finnish non-profit firm. Another new dataset was collected from the administrative unit of the Finnish Army in order to validate the results from the dataset 1. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) confirmed the seven-factor model with a 14-item scale. This scale was found to be reliable, valid, and stable across the sample.

- **The main research question**

What active trust repair practices can organizations use after organizational changes in order to repair employee trust?

The results related to the four sub-questions constituted the foundation for answering the main research question. The revealed trust repair practices and relevant processes in the context of change are integrated and shown in Figure 8. In summary, this means that trust repairing is a continuous process which requires constant attention in the organization. In **Phase I**, organizations' diagnostics performance and especially top management can identify violations of trust among employees caused by change. Diagnostics include managerial evaluation of the situation as well as discussion and feedback from employees. The main idea in diagnosis is that when managers develop work processes, they must be able to determine what the staff really thinks and expects. By conducting the diagnosis, managers can achieve better results in their attempts to maintain and repair trust. The diagnosis aims to systematically identify what contributed to the violation. The first step is to quickly identify what kind of trust violations may have occurred and acknowledging those violations. In addition, employee feedback, post-evaluations of the change and open discussions with employees give valuable information to managers. Employee feedback must be taken seriously among leaders and their results should also be responded to concretely. In **Phase II**, the trust-repair practices identified in this dissertation will be carried out. This means that top management in particular is making improvements in their transparent information sharing, strong management actions, benevolent personnel policies, constructive behaviour, emotional support and, in addition, taking advantage of apologies and the involvement of third parties in order to repair employee trust. In other words, the leaders form a relevant and conscious employee trust repair strategy which includes active trust repair practices. In **Phase III**, a feedback survey will be conducted for employees with TRS to assess the success and effectiveness of the trust-repair practices used. Good levels of trust within an organization require continuous and active trust-building, and this is a continuous cycle. This means that the best trust-repair practices and patterns of behaviour are adopted on an ongoing basis in the organization and a feedback survey will be repeated on a regular basis. The effective employee trust repair process with trust repair practices and measurement tools in the context of change and which organizations can implement has now been described and the research question answered.

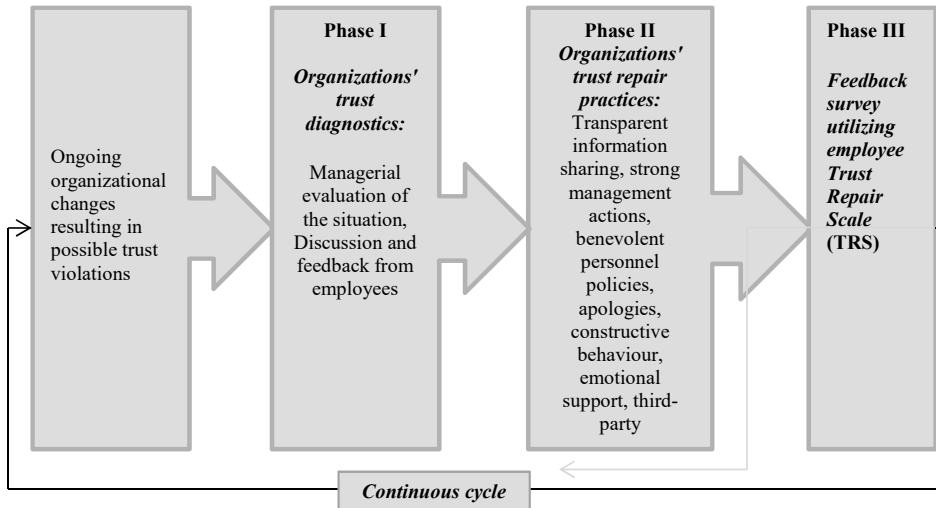


Figure 8: Integrated active trust repair process model in the context of change

5.2 Theoretical contributions

Trust is essential in human interaction and in working life and it can be argued that really nothing sustainable and functional can be built without trust. Trust is a multidisciplinary concept actively investigated in many scientific traditions and disciplines (e.g. Organization theory, Management, Sociology, Psychology and Philosophy). Thus, this dissertation is multidisciplinary because it utilizes research results and traditions achieved in different disciplines. Trust is such an important topic that it requires consideration from many different perspectives, and it greatly enriches research findings.

In the work context, employee trust plays a critical role in organizations as trusting employees are more committed to their work and remain with the organization longer than those lacking trust (Weibel et al., 2016; see also Andiappan and Treviño, 2010; Gillespie and Dietz, 2009; Lewicki and Brinsfield, 2017; Reina and Reina, 2015). Trust as a sustainable organizing principle (McEvily, 2003) provides many benefits to employees and their organizations enhancing employee cooperativeness, knowledge sharing, and effective problem solving even during disruptions (see, e.g., Fulmer and Gelfand, 2012; Tremblay et al., 2010). It is crucial that managers know how to handle trust and really pay attention to employee trust. When they develop work processes, they must be able to determine what the staff really thinks and expects. Employee trust repair should be a continuous process and part of a systematic HRM strategy. A high intra-organizational trust level increases employee job satisfaction, firm performance and productivity. Active trust repair can be seen as a mean through which organizations may operate to pursue their goals (e.g. preserving firm performance, employee

satisfaction and talent staff). Therefore, it is relevant to understand how different active trust-repair practices can repair violated trust and which of them are the most effective in the change context.

The research contribution of this dissertation relates to the discussion on the trust repair especially by demonstrating integrated trust repair practices and the validated scale for measuring them. First, a conceptual model of trust-repair practices across seven factors was developed in this study: transparent information sharing, strong management actions, benevolent personnel policies, emotional support, apologies, third-party involvement, and constructive behaviour. The value of this model is that it integrated these focal elements to provide a comprehensive picture of trust-repair practices. Previous research shows that there is need to combine different types of trust repair practices, for example, an apology with compensation (Dirks et al., 2011; Lewicki et al., 2016), but the most common practices applied to advance trust repair are still verbal, such as apologies (Haesovets et al., 2015), and the examination of multiple trust-repair practices simultaneously has been limited. In the organizational context where diverse violations and their effects diffuse easily across levels, trust recovery can be difficult after serious violations and might require multidimensional repair actions as Gillespie et al. (2014) proposed. In this dissertation, the gap was addressed by integrating trust-repair practices.

Second, this study developed a validated trust repair scale, which offers an important contribution to the research into trust-repair. In previous studies, organizational trust repair was measured which was principally focused on the differences of two or only a few trust-repair practices, such as apologies vs. denial (e.g., Ferrin et al., 2007; Kim et al., 2004; Kim et al., 2012), with laboratory experiments. Thus, this gap was addressed in this dissertation with the developed TRS. Third, this dissertation also provided empirical evidence that the TRS is both reliable and valid. This, in turn, provides a solid foundation on which other researchers can develop their own theoretical and empirical research on trust repair.

Fourth, previous studies on organizational trust repair focused mainly on a single level of analysis, even though Dirks et al. (2009) highlighted the need for a multilevel approach a many years ago. In this dissertation a multilevel and multi-referent framework was adopted as outlined by Fulmer and Gelfand (2012), investigating employee trust repair at individual, group and organizational levels (Bachmann and Inkpen, 2011; Barber, 1983; Gillespie and Dietz, 2009). Because employee trust is influenced by various social and impersonal referents at different levels of analysis (see Fulmer and Gelfand, 2012; Gillespie and Dietz, 2009; Gillespie and Siebert, 2018), such multilevel approach can provide a more diverse and reliable picture of repairing employee trust.

Fifth, in the current dynamic and unpredictable environment, trust violations are becoming more common and more complex in organizations, and these conditions put management in the position of needing to pay continuous and active attention to employee trust levels across the organization. Instead of major conflicts, there may be multiple little changes, events and signals which leaders must carefully diagnose, understand and react to. Change in our environment and in organizations is constant and change management must become a core competency for managers (Pasmore, Winby, Albers Mohrman and Vanasse, 2019). Previous studies revealed that research on the processes of trust violations and repair (Dirks et al.,

2009) is still relatively scarce. This dissertation has addressed this gap by proposing trust repair process presented in Figure 8.

Moreover, this dissertation supported the previous findings that there is a broad acceptance of the need to separate trust violations according to trust dimensions (ability, benevolence, integrity) and to target trust repair accordingly (Sørensen et al., 2011; Kim et al., 2012). Integrity-based trust violations at the organizational level have dominated the trust repair literature (Gillespie et al., 2014). The prior literature has fewer instances of research on employee trust repair after competence-based and benevolence-based trust violations; however, Petriglieri (2015) suggests that competence-based trust violations by management may erode employee trust in the organization. This study sees these findings similarly, but in addition, this dissertation suggests that changes made by organizations resulted in integrity-competence- as well as benevolence-based trust violations and the erosion of trust can also happen in an organizational context in an impersonal way.

5.3 Managerial implications

This study provides practical information from a real work context and can improve managers' understanding of active trust repair practices. Regarding management, the findings offer valuable practical insights concerning the relevant aspects of trust repair as well as an instrument that can be used for assessing the effectiveness of trust-repair practices. Management together with HR professionals can use this framework as a tool for developing employee trust within their organization and for measuring the effectiveness of trust-repair practices. Building employee trust in an organization is an ongoing process among managers and supervisors, and therefore attention must be paid to those practices that can best maintain and restore trust. The importance of trust-repair practices can only be expected to increase in the dynamic and unpredictable environments we see around us, in which trust violations are becoming increasingly complex and frequent, thereby requiring continuous attention and concerted action from top management, supervisors, and HR alike. Prior to this dissertation, there has been no clear integrated battery of trust-repair practices, nor has there been a measurement tool to measure whether the implemented trust-repair practices have been successful after change. This dissertation makes a significant practical contribution to enabling organizations to gain real tools to implement trust building and repairing in organizations. Thus, the novelty and high-level contribution of this dissertation relates to discussion on the active trust repair especially by demonstrating integrated trust repair practices and the validated scale for measure them.

This study provides indications that an impersonal violation of trust can be corrected in bilateral interaction if the violator (organization) transfers repair responsibilities to other participants, such as team leaders or trusted third parties. Employees can expect that major trust-repair practices take place at the level of top management where the change decision originated; however, professional team leaders also play an important role following organizational change (Kähkönen, 2020). Accordingly, this study revealed why it is important to recruit team leaders conscientiously because a professional and empathetic team leader can significantly contribute to maintaining and restoring employee trust. In addition, if an organization does not have sufficient experience with change management, it is recommended that it utilize external trusted parties, so staff can receive the necessary practical support.

It would be in the interest of organizations to shape a trust repair and building strategy. This means that organizations select and implement the concrete trust-repair practices that best build trust. Trust-building, maintaining, and corrective practices can be compared to human resource management (HRM) practices and focus on maintaining, building, or restoring employees' positive perceptions and expectations of organizational reliability and thus improving employee trust in management including the line management/organization level and the team leaders/middle management level. It would be beneficial for organizations to regularly measure the level of trust and the success of the chosen trust building strategy. The measurement results can form valuable employee feedback and longitudinal data for organization, in other words, the practical trust tools that allow line management to monitor the success of the trust-building and repair practices implemented and, if necessary, update the trust building strategy, taking into account the necessary areas for development.

5.4 Limitations and suggestions for further research

This dissertation has several limitations, which should be discussed and considered when interpreting its results and suggesting avenues for future research. The first limitation concerns the choice of databases in Publication I. The literature search was conducted using the citation databases Web of Science and Scopus. This choice of databases could be seen as a limitation, but according to Falagas et al. (2008), Scopus and Web of Science provide accurate and comprehensive documentation of high quality published academic literature in social sciences. Second, in reviewing articles, there is always the risk that the selected keywords could have caused some potentially relevant articles to have been omitted, although we did attempt to address the issue by extending the search terms and including synonyms. The exclusion phase was based on titles, abstracts, and full texts followed carefully pre-set criteria, yet the researchers' personal judgements might also have been an influence, although again we addressed the issue by having two independent researchers verify candidate articles during the selection process.

In publications II and III, in line with most qualitative studies, an in-depth analysis of a single phenomenon in a specific context was provided, and the findings cannot be generalized in a statistical sense; however, as Yin (2003) suggested, the results of qualitative studies are valuable in an analytical sense because they clarify and extend the understanding of existing theory. Similarly, the abductive research approach focuses on specific situations and their unique features (Kovács and Spens, 2005) in order to extend the previous theory. The aim of Papers II and III was to create items for the employee trust repair scale (Paper IV) and these aims were achieved. Thus, the results were very valuable and important for this dissertation.

In Publication IV, the data used were obtained from two non-profit organizations in Finland: one in the area of education and research, and the other in the area of national defence. Although the sample can be said to represent a cross-section of a large organization, it would be beneficial to explore a broader and more diverse sampling frame from other types of organizations e.g. in the business field, in other countries, and within other cultures. Given that the respondents' perceptions, attitudes, and behaviours are influenced by the cultures in which they are situated, it would be valuable to study whether existing trust-repair practice scales can be generalized to other cultures and countries. Replicating this study on a broader

scale in different contexts and national cultures would be greatly beneficial for further generalizations of the study findings.

There are several interesting research avenues for future research. First, it would be interesting to make an assessment of the generalizability of the TRS developed in this study to other contexts, for instance large or small businesses or different industries. With replicative research, it can be assumed that a more generalizable conceptual framework related to trust repair could potentially be developed in the future. Second, cultural differences in the organizational environments of different countries may have an impact on the types of trust-repair practices developed and adopted by companies, as well as the influence of these practices on trust. Third, it is important to note that various moderators—for example, communication and other personal skills, violators prior to wrongdoing, or the seriousness of the violation— as well as contextual issues may impact the effectiveness of the trust-repair practices. For example, not only the change context but also many other company-specific situations may have an effect when the organization tries to repair employee trust. After the organizations' structural changes (e.g. downsizing, new departments and team divisions), which might strongly increase the bad feelings and fears of the employees, different and more diverse trust-repair practices might be needed than after those changes where external reasons, e.g. current COVID-19, affect employee work designs. When lockdowns were imposed on countries around the world and restricted individual movements, it resulted in the emergence of working from home as the new normal. Remote work can be seen as a positive change for many employees (more positively than e.g. downsizing), but on the other hand, during remote work the conversation in leader-follower relationships takes place through electronic channels. Thus, there is a lack of face-to-face encounters, possibly resulting in an increase in the employee feeling that leaders do not always notice the followers' work feelings. More research on the impact of different moderators and contexts on trust and trust repair would definitely be needed. Fourth, the antecedents of trust repair necessitate both theoretical and empirical examination because managers require knowledge of how these antecedents, such as employee resilience, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions, influence the effectiveness of trust-repair practices in their firms. Fifth, recent discussion of stakeholder trust is highly relevant for future academic and practical interest in employee trust repair. This dissertation focused on intra-organizational employee trust repair, but the relationships between different organizational stakeholder groups (e.g., Bachmann et al., 2015) have an impact on employee trust repair. Trust breaches e.g. among suppliers will become known and have an effect on both buyers' and suppliers' employees and could be an interesting research topic. Again, transparency and interconnectedness mean that an organization must often consider several stakeholder groups in their employee trust repair strategies. It looks like time is now ripe for both trust researchers and practitioners to focus their efforts on trust-repair practices and further developments in this highly relevant field for employees and their organizations.

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Publication I

Kähkönen, T., Blomqvist, K., Gillespie, N. and Vanhala, M.
**Employee trust repair: A systematic review of 20 years of empirical
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Employee trust repair: A systematic review of 20 years of empirical research and future research directions

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ABSTRACT

Employee trust, and increasingly its absence, is a critical topic for researchers and practitioners interested in social relations in the context of work and organizing. Employee trust repair is particularly important in the current disrupted work environment, due to unpredictable changes such as the Covid-19 pandemic and the uncertainty those bring to our lives. It is not surprising that employee trust is attracting increasing interest among researchers and practitioners alike. In this article, we systematically review and take stock of the research on trust repair conducted in the past two decades to provide comprehensive insights and future research directions for researchers and managers. In our review, we propose that early use of trust repair strategies in response to small violations, prevents these violations escalating into larger violations, and hence, enhances the efficiency and effectiveness of trust repair with employees. We conclude by describing future directions.

1. Introduction

Technological, economic, and socio-political disruptions challenge contemporary organizations and heighten employee uncertainty and feelings of vulnerability (Gustafsson et al., 2020). Employee trust repair is particularly important in the current disrupted work environment, due to unpredictable changes such as the Covid-19 pandemic and the uncertainty those bring to our lives (Rudolph et al., 2020). Organizational responses to such disruptions such as through restructuring and downsizing are prevalent, leading to increased interest in how employee trust can be preserved and maintained in an increasingly complex work environment. Employee trust plays a critical role in organizations as trusting employees are more committed to their work and remain with the organization longer than those lacking trust (Weibel et al., 2016; see also Andiappan & Treviño, 2010; Gillespie & Dietz, 2009; Lewicki & Brinsfield, 2017; Reina & Reina, 2015). Trust as a sustainable organizing principle (McEvily et al., 2003) provides many benefits to employees and their organizations enhancing employee cooperativeness, knowledge sharing, and effective problem solving (see, e.g., Fulmer & Gelfand, 2012; Tremblay, Cloutier, Simard, Chenevert, & Vandenberghe, 2010).

Research shows that while it can take a considerable time to build trust, trust can be quickly eroded in employee–employer relationships

(Robinson, 1996). This realization has spurred increasing research interest in trust repair (see, e.g., Mishra & Spreitzer, 1998; Mishra & Mishra, 1994; Gillespie & Dietz, 2009). Previous journal special issues, such as the Academy of Management Review Special Issues in 1998, (Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt, & Camerer, 1998) and 2009 (Dirks, Lewicki, & Zaheer, 2009), the Organization Studies Special Issue in 2015 (Bachmann, Gillespie, & Priem, 2015), as well as reviews on trust repair (Bozic, 2017; Burke, Sims, Lazzara, & Salas, 2007; Fulmer & Gelfand, 2012; Gillespie & Siebert, 2018; Kramer & Lewicki, 2010; Lewicki & Brinsfield, 2017) illustrate the increased academic interest in this topic over the past two decades.

Researchers have investigated organizational trust repair empirically at the interpersonal and group levels (Bachmann et al., 2015; Lewicki & Brinsfield, 2017; Gillespie & Siebert, 2018), from the perspective of a number of different trustor viewpoints (e.g., those of employee, leader, customer, citizen, and negotiator) and in a number of trust referents (Fulmer & Gelfand, 2012) including leader failure in the context of dyadic leader–follower relationships (Haesevoets et al., 2015); customer trust in high-risk products after negative publicity (Ting, Guicheng, & Yanting, 2014); public trust in organizations (Poppo & Schepker, 2010); senior managers' attempts to rebuild employee trust (Pate et al., 2012); and the use of financial compensation in the aftermath of distributive

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harm between two parties (Desmet, De Cremer, & van Dijk, 2011). The focus of this article is on trust repair from the employee perspective.

Given the increasing challenges to building and maintaining employee trust in the contemporary work and organizing context, a systematic review of the literature seems warranted because it is important to develop a cumulative knowledge base from which to inform future research and practice on employee trust repair. In this paper, we conducted a systematic review of empirical research published over the past 20 years in peer-reviewed journals to analyse the state of the art in the field and propose a future research agenda. We also provide research insights for managers and human resources practitioners.

In comparison to earlier reviews on trust repair, we adopt a multi-level and multi-referent framework as outlined by Fulmer and Gelfand (2012), investigating employee trust repair at individual, group and organizational levels (Bachmann & Inkpen, 2011; Barber, 1983; Gillespie & Dietz, 2009). This is important because employee trust is influenced by various social and impersonal referents at different levels of analysis (see Fulmer & Gelfand, 2012; Gillespie & Dietz, 2009; Gillespie & Siebert, 2018). For example, employees can be informed about an organization's trustworthiness based on their interpersonal relationships with other individuals and groups, or information about the organizational structures, processes, and culture. The review in the current research focuses on the employee perspective, rather than those of external stakeholders such as customers, suppliers, shareholders, or regulators (see Gillespie & Siebert, 2018).

By synthesizing research findings on employee trust repair, and analysing the commonalities and differences in the findings across organizational levels and referents, we aim to improve the conceptualization of employee trust repair, as well as to identify the most commonly studied trust repair mechanisms and their effectiveness. We propose that early use of trust repair strategies in response to small violations, is likely to prevent those violations escalating into larger violations, and hence, enhances the efficiency and effectiveness of trust repair with employees. We also believe it would be useful to study various active trust repair practices and their effects on preserving and repairing employee trust. We begin our review by describing the key concepts and approaches used in research on organizational trust repair. We then specify our literature selection process, present the findings of our review, and finally discuss the implications of our review for research and practice and identify promising areas of further research.

2. Theoretical background

2.1. Conceptualization of organizational trust

Trust definitions vary according to disciplinary backgrounds and research context (Blomqvist, 1997; Castaldo, Premazzi, & Zerbini, 2010). One of the most widely accepted definitions of trust in the management literature, which is based on a cross-disciplinary review, is 'a psychological state comprising the intention to accept vulnerability based upon positive expectations of the intentions or behaviour of another' (Rousseau et al., 1998: 395). This definition is also commonly used for organizational trust (e.g., Lewicki & Brinsfield, 2017), and, in our study, we applied this definition when we investigated employee trust at the individual, team/group, and organizational levels of analysis (Fulmer & Gelfand, 2012).

Rousseau's definitions of positive expectations are typically captured by the three dimensions of trustworthiness identified by the seminal work of Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman (1995), namely: ability (or competence), benevolence, and integrity. At the organizational level, these dimensions mean that employees' assessments of their organization's trustworthiness are based on the organization's competencies, for example, to meet its goals and responsibilities, how the organization takes care of the well-being of its employees, and how committed the organization is to following moral principles such as honesty and

fairness (Gillespie & Dietz, 2009). Similarly, individuals and team members within an organization evaluate the trustworthiness of the other party (individual, team and organization) by paying attention to their competence, goodwill and honesty. This fits our focus on trust repair as Mayer et al. (1995) propose that trust is compromised when one party feels their expectations of the other party's trustworthiness have not been met, and such breach of trust has negative consequences for the continuation of the relationship. Accordingly, the employees' future-oriented expectations are a focal element in our review (see also Gillespie & Siebert, 2018). In line with Gillespie and Dietz (2009), we view employees' perceptions of their organization's trustworthiness as capable of being influenced by multiple sources of evidence and actors operating at different organizational levels.

2.2. Employee trust repair

Both conceptual and empirical research indicate that trust in work relationships can be repaired (e.g., Dirks et al., 2009; Gillespie & Dietz, 2009), although this process is not always easy (e.g., Bottom, Gibson, Daniels, & Murnighan, 2002). Lewicki and Brinsfield (2017) propose that repaired trust is structurally different from the pre-violation or pristine trust (Dirks et al., 2009; Lewicki & Bunker, 1996), and that, in some circumstances, no trust repair initiatives will be capable of fully restoring trust to its original level (Lewicki, McAllister, & Bies, 1998).

As with the concept of trust itself, prior research has also defined trust repair in several forms. At the organization level, Gillespie and Dietz (2009: 128) define organizational trust repair as 'employees' perceptions of the trustworthiness of their organization and the processes required for repairing these perceptions once they are damaged by an organization-level failure'. Also Dirks et al. (2009: 69) indicate that, 'relationship repair occurs when a transgression causes the positive state(s) that constitute(s) the relationship to disappear and/or negative states to arise, as perceived by one or both parties, and activities by one or both parties substantively return the relationship to a positive state.' These definitions of organizational and relationship repair can help understand employee trust repair.

Research reveals that when employee trust is damaged, employees become unwilling to apply trust-based behaviours promoting effective functional activities such as cooperation, discretionary effort, knowledge sharing, and effective problem solving. In addition, violators' (e.g. employers) future intentions may be unclear to employee and cause uncertainty (Dirks & Ferrin, 2001; Fulmer & Gelfand, 2012). Trust violations may also lead to a variety of retaliatory actions on the part of employees such as sabotage, theft, spreading rumours, and poor commitment to work in general (Bies & Tripp, 1996; Robinson, 1996), and escalate the breakdown of internal and external relationships (Gillespie & Dietz, 2009) critically affecting the organization's performance (Andiappan & Treviño, 2010). Thus, trust repair involves improving both trusting intentions and re-establishing trusting behaviour. Building on Bromiley and Cummings (1995) and McKnight, Cummings, and Chervany (1998; see also Vidotto, Massidda, Noventa, & Vicentini, 2012) we define trusting intentions as a solid willingness to depend upon the trustee to induce trusting behaviours. Whereas the trusting behaviours are the concrete actions demonstrating that a trustor relies a trustee without control.

Much of the research on trust repair has taken a contingency approach in that it studies how the nature of trust violation affects trust and trust repair (e.g., Grover et al., 2014; Kim, 2018; Sørensen et al., 2011). In this study the nature of trust violations has been distinguished based on the dimension of trustworthiness breached (e.g., was it a violation of ability, benevolence, or integrity). Recently researchers have increasingly paid attention to the effectiveness of trust-repair tactics and learned that, for example, the most suitable trust-repair tactic after an ability-based violation would not necessarily be effective for repairing trust following an integrity-based violation (see e.g., Grover et al., 2014; Sørensen et al., 2011).

The escalating and systemic nature of trust (Gillespie & Dietz, 2009) highlights the importance of studying trust repair from a multilevel and cross-level perspective. To advance both research and the practice of trust repair, it is important to understand if there are divergent or potentially common underlying principles and processes of trust repair across levels of analysis and interpersonal referents of trust. To explore these questions, and to ensure the current review is as comprehensive as possible, we focus on empirical research examining employee trust repair at three levels—individual, team, and organizational—and in multiple interpersonal referents (peers, supervisors, managers). It is also important to note that employee trust includes not only interpersonal referents but also impersonal referents, such as organizational structures and processes (on impersonal organizational trust, see e.g., Vanhala, Puumalainen, & Blomqvist, 2011). Hence, there is a need to understand trust repair strategies and principles that are effective in repairing trust as a multi-dimensional concept, at multiple organizational levels, and in various referents of trust.

2.3. Theoretical approaches on trust repair

The early literature on trust repair first emphasized process models illustrating the phases required for trust repair. Subsequent work has refined these models and conceptualized broader theoretical approaches to explaining and mechanisms for undertaking the repair of damaged trust.

In their early seminal paper, Lewicki and Bunker (1996) proposed a model of how trust is developed and repaired in work relationships. Their influential four-stage process model for trust repair includes the following stages: 1) recognizing the violation, 2) identifying the causes of violations and admitting culpability, 3) admitting that the act was destructive and 4) taking responsibility for the consequences. Later, Gillespie and Dietz (2009) took a systems perspective to propose a systemic, multilevel framework for understanding strategies to repair employees' trust in their employing organization after an organizational violation. They proposed four stages: 1) immediate response with verbal responses and actions, 2) diagnosis of the systemic causes of the trust failure, 3) reforming interventions across the organization's infrastructure to ensure a repeat future trust violation would not occur, and 4) evaluation of the effectiveness of the reforms. In contrast to Lewicki and Bunker (1996) dyadic view on trust breakdown and repair in interpersonal relationships, Gillespie and Dietz (2009) propose that the causes of and those responsible for an organizational-level failure are often unclear, and such failures require the input of several actors. They theorize how different internal and external components shape employees' perceptions of the organization's trustworthiness and can subsequently contribute to trust failures and effective trust repair (Gillespie & Dietz, 2009).

2.4. Theoretical principles and mechanisms explaining trust repair

Dirks et al. (2009) developed a process model for trust repair that emphasized the temporal nature of the process, distinguishing between: 1) pre-transgression and the state of trust prior to a transgression, 2) disruption, identifying what factors are changed by the transgression and how, 3) trust repair, identifying what actions are taken to repair violated factors, and 4) post-repair, identifying the state of trust after repair. They further identified three key theoretical mechanisms underlying relationship repair: 1) attributional, 2) structural, and 3) social-equilibrium perspectives (Dirks et al., 2009). The attributional mechanism draws on the principles of attribution theory (Heider, 1958) and can be applied to different levels of analysis and when the violator is an individual, a group, or an organization. From the perspective of attribution theory, the trustor tries to explain the situation by using sentiments, motives, and external factors and by changing attributions, the violator seeks to re-cast understanding of the violation events to present themselves in a more trustworthy light through tactics such as denials,

explanations and social accounts (Dirks et al., 2009; Tomlinson & Mayer, 2009). Second, the social-equilibrium perspective is suited to addressing negative affect and exchange, although it might indirectly address the repair of trust (Ren & Gray, 2009). Social equilibrium involves engaging in social rituals (e.g., apologizing, punishment and penance, and offering compensation) to atone for the violation and restore balance in the relationship and help to settle the account and re-establish the expectations of the relationship after the violation (Dirks et al., 2009). Third, from the structural perspective, trust violation leads to a breakdown in positive exchange and increases negative exchange. Therefore, trust is most effectively repaired when structural processes in which negative exchange is discouraged and positive exchange is encouraged are put in place (Dirks et al., 2009). Trust repair practices include legalistic remedies such as policies, procedures, contracts, and monitoring (Sitkin & Roth, 1993) that increase the reliability of future behaviour and therefore advance the rebuilding of trust (Gillespie and Dietz (2009) discuss a similar concept they term distrust regulation).

Building on and extending these three trust repair mechanisms, Bachmann et al. (2015) suggested an integrative framework of six mechanisms to repair trust among stakeholders after organizational and institutional trust failures. The first mechanism, *sense-making* (Weick, 1995), involves a collective learning process leading to a shared understanding and an accepted account of what went wrong and why. Sense-making incorporates the attributional trust repair mechanism and includes practices such as investigations, public inquiries, explanations, and accounts. Second, the *relational* mechanism incorporates the social-equilibrium approach and involves engaging in social rituals and symbolic acts aimed at addressing the negative emotions caused by the violation and re-establishing the social equilibrium between the parties (Dirks et al., 2009). Relational trust repair strategies include for example public explanations and apologies, punishment and penance, and also the compensation of victims (Bachmann et al., 2015). The third mechanism is that of *regulation and controls*, which involves formal rules and controls to constrain untrustworthy behaviour and prevent future trust violation. This incorporates the structural mechanism and includes practices such as laws, rules, policies, process and output controls, contracts, codes of conduct and sanctions, which serve to deter or constrain untrustworthy behaviour and/or incentivize trustworthy behaviour (Dirks et al., 2009; Gillespie & Dietz, 2009).

In addition to these first three mechanisms that overlap with the three trust repair mechanisms identified by Dirks et al. (2009), Bachmann et al. also identified three additional trust repair mechanisms. *Ethical culture* highlights that trust repair often requires informal cultural controls to constrain untrustworthy behaviour and promote trustworthy behaviour, rather than simply structural controls. Here organizational leaders can repair trust and signal organizational trustworthiness by developing and communicating a strong shared ethical culture. *Transparency*, that is, sharing relevant information about organizational decision processes and functioning with stakeholders, can also function as a mechanism to help restore trust. Transparent organizations share accurate, timely, relevant information in a way that allows stakeholders to make informed decisions on their relationships with the organization. Trust repair strategies include for example corporate reporting, external audits, public inquiries and protection of whistle-blowers. The final mechanism, *transference*, facilitates trust repair by transferring trust from a credible party to the discredited party. This concept encapsulates various ways in which trust can be transferred from one actor or institution to another: for example, through practices such as certification, membership, affiliations, awards, and endorsements.

3. Methodology

A systematic review of literature is designed to be replicable and transparent and provide a clear structure and approach to the literature selection and review process (Tranfield, Denyer, & Smart, 2003), and accordingly we took a number of steps to ensure our review process was

replicable and transparent. We followed the systematic literature review paper process published recently in the high-impact management journals on across research fields such as R&D internationalization and innovation (Vrontis & Christofi, 2019), service innovation (Snyder, Witell, Gustafsson, Fombelle, & Kristensson, 2016) and mental illness in the workplace (Follmer & Jones, 2018).

3.1. Conceptual boundaries

In order to set boundaries on review of trust repair literature, we included the studies that examine: 1) employee trust repair in organizational personal and impersonal relationships, 2) employee trust repair in leader–follower relationships, 3) employee trust repair in superior-subordinates relationships, 4) employee trust repair in employee-employee relationships, 5) employee trust repair within teams/groups, and 6) employee trust repair between teams/groups. Thus, we examine violators' responses and employee trust repair at: 1) individual, 2) team or group, and 3) organizational levels. Studies focusing on trust repair with organizations' external stakeholders such as customers, suppliers, shareholders, or regulators are excluded (see Gillespie & Siebert, 2018).

3.2. Search protocol

3.2.1. Formulation of the research question

According to Nguyen et al. (2018) a high-level review is based on clear research questions being developed at the start of the review process. When developing our research question we focused on the employee trust repair within organization. The research question was formulated through dialogue between the authors and other academic experts. Based on this question formulation process, the research question in this paper is: 'What repair mechanisms and responses were used in different organizational levels in order to repair trust?'

3.2.2. Inclusion and exclusion criteria

First, to be included, each research article had to meet our six inclusion criteria, namely: 1) offering empirical research providing evidence on trust repair, 2) including an employee perspective on trust repair or relationship repair, 3) conducted within the context of work or an organizational context, 4) being peer reviewed, 5) being available in English, and 6) located within the disciplines of business, management and accounting, social sciences, and/or psychology. We searched for literature published in the past two decades, from 2000 to 2020. We excluded 1) non-empirical papers, 2) papers that represented only external stakeholders (e.g., citizens, suppliers, customers, shareholders, and regulators) without an employee perspective, and 3) papers on trust repair between organizations. Papers were also excluded if it was unclear whether an employee perspective was included (e.g., experimental designs where the stakeholder role of the respondent was not clear).

3.2.3. Search strategy and selection process of relevant articles

We followed the structured literature review process proposed by Tranfield et al. (2003) which involves five stages and is shown in Fig. 1. Each stage served to select relevant articles according to the pre-defined criteria. In the first stage, we conducted a search of the relevant databases for literature published during the last two decades, the period during which the large majority of empirical research on intra-organizational trust repair has been conducted. To ensure a comprehensive search, we used two of the dominant databases in social sciences, Web of Science and Scopus (Falagas, Pitsouni, Malietzis, & Pappas, 2008). The search terms 'trust AND repair' OR 'trust repair' OR 'trust AND rebuild*' OR 'trust rebuild*' OR 'trust AND restor*' OR 'relationship repair' were used. The search strings were targeted at article titles, abstracts, and keywords. The first search produced 1285 potentially relevant articles, a number reduced to 947 after removing duplicates.

In the second stage of the literature selection process, 947 articles

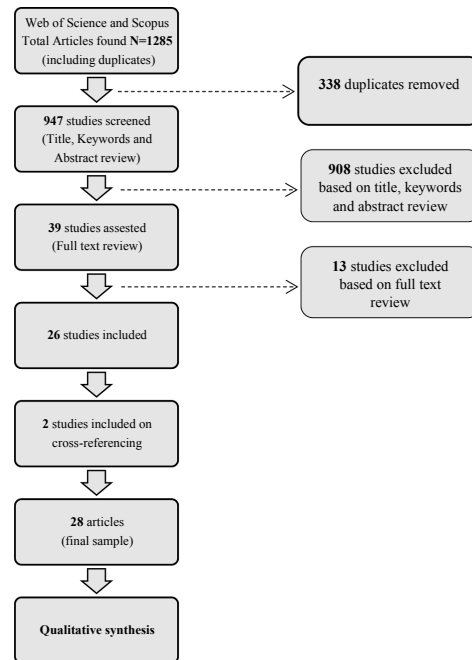


Fig. 1. The systematic literature selection process.

were screened by title, keywords and abstract. 908 studies excluded based on title, keywords and abstract review because it turned out that they 1) were not empirical papers, 2) papers represented only external stakeholders, 3) papers were without an employee perspective, or 4) trust repairing was focused between the two organizations. In the third stage 39 accepted papers were scanned, and articles that failed to meet the inclusion criteria were eliminated. In this stage 13 studies excluded based on full text review because papers did not include an employee perspective on trust repair or because the context was of trust repair but not within an organization.

In the fourth stage and after the full text examination, the number of relevant articles was reduced to 26. Our last stage of the selection process involved scanning the reference lists of the 26 accepted articles (Wohlin, 2014) as well as seven conceptual and review papers on trust repair (Bachmann et al., 2015; Dirks et al., 2009; Fulmer & Gelfand, 2012; Gillespie & Siebert, 2018; Kim, 2018; Kramer & Lewicki, 2010; Lewicki & Brinsfield, 2017), to locate additional suitable empirical works. This snowballing method increased the accepted number of relevant articles to 28 which was the final sample. In order to avoid possible selection bias, the screening and selection of the articles were verified independently by two researchers.

4. Findings

We start with a description of the articles and then discuss different types of trust repair responses and mechanisms. We then categorize past empirical research on trust repair into different levels of analysis: at an individual level, in groups and teams, and in organizations following integrity-based, competence-based, and benevolence-based trust violations.

4.1. Descriptive findings

Table 1 shows that classic laboratory experiments are the methods most often used to examine trust repair. Laboratory experiments were used in the early years (2004–2009) especially among North American scholars, when research on trust repair was still in its infancy. As the field matured, more qualitative studies emerged. The use of qualitative studies is understandable because applying an experimental design to trust repair beyond an individual referent of analysis can be challenging. Qualitative studies are especially useful in studying processes like trust repair and can provide rich empirical insights that can then guide further experimental research. We found qualitative studies were utilized in 32% of the articles reviewed. We also note that surveys (14%) and a combination of surveys and laboratory experiments (4%) were used to a lesser extent than laboratory experiments alone (50%).

Several of the selected articles were published in high quality journals such as *Administrative Science Quarterly*, *Human Resource Management*, *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *Journal of Business Ethics*, *Organization Studies* and *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*. These journals are presented on the current list of the top-tier journals the Financial Times use for business school rankings.

4.2. Level of analysis and response types

In terms of the level of analysis most trust-repair studies (20) have focused on the individual level (71%). Only five papers (18%) examine trust repair from the perspective of the team or group, and one of them was a comparison between teams and individuals. Furthermore, of the four papers that investigated trust at the organizational level (14%), most also examined external stakeholders' trust in the organization (for

example, they dealt with catastrophes or scandals, such as oil spills, fraud, or data manipulation). This is understandable as major catastrophes have wide-ranging effects that extend beyond those on employees.

The main trust repair mechanism (*Relational approach*, see Bachmann et al., 2015) was applied in twenty-four papers (86%). The other applied mechanisms were *regulation and controls* in five papers (18%), *ethical culture* in fourteen papers (50%) and *sense-making* in five papers (18%). We find that most empirical research (82%) has focused on *verbal trust repair responses* such as apology, denial, reticence, promise, explanation, excuse, creating clear and explicit expectations, constructive voice, resolving inconsistencies in speech, and emotional support. *Substantive responses* are not only verbal but also concrete actions taken to remedy damaged trust which often involve tangible elements. Substantive responses identified in our review included offering penance, financial compensation, open investigations, regulation, increasing the social exchange quality by renegotiating the psychological contract, preventive and repair actions focusing on increasing the social exchange quality and accepting responsibility for actions. Substantive trust repair responses have been studied less frequently than verbal responses and their prevalence in our review was 36%. The third approach to trust repair involves *organizational reforms*, which appeared in 18% of the reviewed papers. They mostly focused on the need to repair leadership and management practices (see Sørensen et al., 2011) and changing organizational structures, policies, and processes (see Gillespie et al., 2014). Organizational reforms identified in our review were for example, replacing senior leaders, goal-oriented leadership, amendments to organizational rules, and cultural reforms.

4.3. Qualitative meta-synthesis and integrated framework

In this section we synthesise findings from the studies included in this review into an integrated, multi-dimensional framework (Table 2). Our aim is to better understand and explain phenomena related to the present research topic. We look at selected studies in light of similarities and differences to build a convincing overall picture of the topic (Walsh & Downe, 2005). The framework integrates information derived from our systematic review and our categorization of trust violations, trust repair mechanisms, trust responses, moderators and contextual factors. In the first part of the framework, we explain reasons for the decline in employee trust. All trust violations are categorized based on the level of analysis they fall under. Next, we present the trust repair mechanisms, trust repair practices and response types studied that were used in order to repair employee trust after trust violations. Third, we integrate the positive and negative moderators that may improve or diminish effectiveness of trust repair. We also report the contextual dimensions that extant literature has found and which affect trust repair. The developed framework is dynamic and can be further expanded with new findings, serving as a theoretical basis to guide future research. We organize the findings regarding trust violations and trust repair mechanisms from extant literature into three categories. The first category, the individual level, incorporates all findings that relate to the individual level of analysis. The other two categories, the team/group level of analysis and organizational level of analysis, are treated in the same manner.

4.3.1. Repairing trust in individuals and leaders

We found that apologies were one of the most common forms of verbal response at the individual level and were studied in some form in each article either alone or in combination with another trust repair strategy. Researchers have found that the effectiveness of apologies in restoring trust often depended on different moderators and the context (see Table 2).

In the hiring context, researchers found that repairing trust was more successful when 1) the mistrusted parties apologized for violations concerning ability but denied culpability for violations concerning integrity (Kim et al., 2004), 2) mistrusted parties apologized for violations when there was subsequent evidence of guilt but denied culpability

Table 1
The research approach used and regional distribution in the sample.

Methodology (total prevalence/%)	Author(s), year of publication	Country
Laboratory experiment (14/50%)	Bagdasarov et al. (2019); Henderson et al. (2020); Kim et al. (2004, 2006, 2012); Krylova et al. (2016); Lewicki, et al. (2016); Schweitzer et al. (2006)	United States
	De Cremer (2010)	Netherlands
	Dirks et al. (2011); Ferrin et al. (2007)	United States and Singapore
	Hasevoets et al. (2015)	Belgium, Netherlands, United Kingdom, and United States
	Maddux et al. (2011)	Japan and United States
	Monzani et al. (2015)	Spain
	De Cremer and Schouten (2008)	Netherlands, United States
	Pate et al. (2012); Webber et al. (2012)	United States
	Elangovan et al. (2015)	Austria, Germany
	Grover et al. (2019)	France
Survey and laboratory experiment (1/4%)	Gillespie et al. (2014)	United Kingdom
	Goodstein et al. (2015)	United States
	Petriglieri (2015)	United Kingdom, United States
Qualitative case study (3/11%)	Goodstein et al. (2015)	United States
	Petriglieri (2015)	United Kingdom, United States
Qualitative grounded theory approach (2/7%)	Grover et al. (2014)	France, New Zealand, Germany
	Eberl et al. (2015)	Germany
Qualitative illustration (1/4%)	Six and Skinner (2010)	Netherlands
	Sørensen et al. (2011)	Denmark
Longitudinal multimethod case study (1/4%)	Sørensen et al. (2011)	Denmark
	Holten et al. (2016)	United States, Denmark, Sweden
Longitudinal qualitative study (2/7%)	Sverdrup and Stensaker (2018)	Norway

Table 2
Integrative framework.

1. Individual level (prevalence in the sample 20/71%)*					
Author(s) and year	Reason for the decline in trust (freq)	Violated dimension of trustworthiness	Trust repair mechanism <i>Bachmann et al., (2015)</i>	Trust repair response used (response type)	Moderators/variables that can affect efficiency of trust repair (+ positive effects, - negative effects)
<i>Ferrin et al. (2007); Kim et al. (2004); (2006; 2012); Krylova et al. (2016); Maddux et al. (2011)</i>	Employees' previous errors in the hiring context (6)	Ability, integrity	Social relations	Apology, denial, reticence, excuse (verbal), accepting responsibility (substantive)	Prior wrong doing (-), guilty (-) or not (+), apology after competence (+) or integrity-based violation (-), repentance (+) or indifference (-), cultural differences: relevant (+) or insignificant (-) apology, repairing trust with groups (-) or individuals (+), accepting responsibility (+) or excuse-making and denial (-) Respectful (+) or disrespectful (-) behaviour
<i>De Cremer and Schouten, (2008)</i>	Disrespectful behavior even when presented with an apology (1)	Benevolence, integrity	Social relations	Apology (verbal)	Series of trustworthy actions used (+) or not used (-), prior (-) or no prior deceptions (+), trust never fully recovers (-)
<i>Schweitzer et al., (2006)</i>	Untrustworthy actions and deception (1)	Integrity	Social relations	Apology, promises (verbal)	Losses (-) or gains (+) in bargaining, apologies with more components (+) or with fewer components (-), apologies following competence-based trust violations (+) or apologies following integrity-based violations (-)
<i>De Cremer (2010); Lewicki et al. (2016)</i>	Violations in negotiation context (2)	Ability, benevolence, integrity	Social relations	Apology (verbal), financial compensations (substantive)	Clear (+) or unclear (-) expectations, positive (+) or negative (-) interactions by both individuals, perceived repentance (+) or no any repentances (-)
<i>Six and Skinner (2010); Dirks et al. (2011)</i>	Troubles between two employees (2)	Ability, integrity	Social relations, regulation and controls	Apology (verbal), penance, regulation (substantive)	Intentional (-) or unintentional (+) violation, serious (-) or minor (+) violation, remedies implemented (+) or not implemented (-), timely (+) or delayed (-) apology, followers' emotional competencies are high (+) or low (-), mistrusted party's empathy (+) or absence of empathy (-).
<i>Bagdasarov et al. (2019); Grover et al. (2014, 2019); Haesevoets et al. (2015); Monzani et al. (2015)</i>	Managers violations and weaknesses in decision-making and goal-setting (5)	Ability, benevolence, integrity	Social relations, ethical culture	Apology, denial, emotional support (verbal)	Remedies implemented (+) or not implemented (-), ability (+) or inability (-) to forgive, motivation of violators' to repair trust is high (+) or low (-), quality of social exchange is high (+) or weak (-), guilty (-) or not (+), strong (+) or weak (-) communications and other personnel skills, financial (+) or non-financial (-) responses
<i>Elangovan et al. (2015); Goodstein et al. (2015); Holten et al. (2016)</i>	Various internal disturbances (3)	Ability, benevolence, integrity	Social relations, regulation and controls, ethical culture, sense-making	Increasing the social exchange quality, penance (substantive), explanations, apology (verbal)	Active attempts to protect trust (+) or low trust turns into distrust (-), successful (+) or failed (-) change management
2. Team/group level (prevalence in the sample 5/18%)*					
<i>Sorensen et al. (2011); Sverdrup and Stensaker (2018)</i>	Organizational change (2)	Ability, benevolence, integrity	Ethical culture	Strong management actions (organizational reforms), increasing the social exchange quality (substantive)	Competence-based violation (+), integrity-based violation (-), repairing trust with individual (+) or groups (-)
<i>Kim et al. (2012)</i>	Employees' previous errors in the hiring context (1)	Ability, integrity	Social relations	Apology, denial (verbal)	Strong (+) or weak (-) communications and other personnel skills, emotional intelligence strong (+) or weak (-)
<i>Pate et al. (2012)</i>	The founding principle of respect had been contravened in an organization (bullying, harassment) (1)	Ability, benevolence, integrity	Ethical culture	Strong management actions (organizational reform), emotional support for employees (verbal)	Perceived repentance (+) or no any repentances (-)
<i>Webber et al. (2012)</i>	The lack of support (1)	Ability	Ethical culture	Emotional support for employees (verbal)	Procedural modifications (+), new rules were difficult to implement in practice (-), number of trust remedies used is high (+) or low (-)
3. Organizational level (prevalence in the sample 4/14%)*					
<i>Eberl et al. (2015); Gillespie et al. (2014)</i>	Fraud, data manipulation and corruption scandals (2)	Integrity	Social relations, regulation and controls, ethical culture, sense-making	Explanations, apologies (verbal), penance, investigations (substantive), systemic reforms, cultural reforms, replacing senior leaders, organizational rule	

(continued on next page)

Table 2 (continued)

Petriglieri (2015)	Oil rig explosion and spill (1)	Ability	Social relations	adjustments (organizational reforms) Co-created positive social information (verbal)	Positive (+) or negative (-) attitudes
Henderson et al. (2020)	Psychological contract breach in the employer-employee relationship (1)	No specifications	Social relations, regulation and controls	Penance (substantive), denial, apology, excuse (verbal)	Repentance (+) or indifference (-), denial (-) or granting with apology (+)
*) Kim et al. (2012) Both, individual and team levels are involved					

for violations when there was subsequent evidence for innocence (Kim et al., 2004), and, 3) job applicants apologized for their past wrongdoing and accepted responsibility instead of attempting to make excuses for or deny their past behaviour (Krylova et al., 2016). In a hiring context, on the contrary, researchers found that the apology was not always effective for trust repair. For example: 1) In some cultures an apology was regarded as “cheap talk”, while in others it implied guilt (Maddux et al., 2011). 2) After an integrity-based violation, reticence was a suboptimal response because, like apology, it failed to address guilt, and after a competence-based violation, it was a suboptimal response because, like denial, it failed to signal atonement (Ferrin et al., 2007). 3) Being guilty of an integrity-based violation could be so detrimental to trust that there was no response at all capable of mitigating the damage caused (Kim et al., 2006).

De Cremer and Schouten (2008) found that the tone of the apology matters too, and that after an individual employee’s benevolence-based and integrity-based trust violations (disrespectful behaviour), apologies enhanced perceptions of fairness only when the authority was perceived as respectful. Later, De Cremer (2010) studied the effect of apologies versus offers of financial compensation in a bargaining context and found that apologies can have positive effects on trust behaviour after a transgression has occurred but that effects depended on moderators (losses or gains in bargaining). However, similarly in a bargaining context, Lewicki et al. (2016) proposed that especially after an integrity-based trust violation, a mere apology is not likely to be sufficient to repair trust but would require more tangible methods.

In leader–follower relationships, researchers have found: 1) After leaders’ inadequate or incorrect decisions, when a long time has already passed, followers express the greatest need for an apology, but, at the same time, expect an apology to be less effective at enhancing trustworthiness than when one is offered in a timely manner (Haesevoets et al., 2015). 2) In the recovery process, leaders must first openly discuss the violation(s), apologize and demonstrate support for followers, but similar to Kim et al.’s (2006) proposal, some trust violations destroyed trust to such a degree that it cannot be restored and cause followers to withdraw from the relationship (Grover et al., 2014). 3) The effectiveness of apologies depends on the leaders’ intentionality and the severity of the consequences of the violation of trust. Moderate combinations of severity and intentionality accommodate a greater likelihood of forgiveness compared to mild or intense violations (Grover et al., 2019). 4) When violations are of a personal nature, apologies and empathy demonstrated by the mistrusted party aid the repair of trust more effectively than if there is no evidence of empathy and, when coupled with a denial of culpability, produce markedly increased perceptions of the violator’s integrity (Bagdasarov et al., 2019). 5) Followers’ emotional competencies have largely positive effects on followers’ trust in leadership, and only setting goals in a directive way compensates low levels of followers’ emotional clarity and repair (Monzani et al., 2015). 6) Apologies with explanations by the trustee significantly reduced the erosion of trust compared to efforts that did not employ such behaviours. Erosion of trust was minimized when the trustee engaged in more trust repair behaviour (Elangovan et al., 2015).

In bilateral relationships, researchers have found: 1) Clear and explicit expectations and constructive voices by both parties help repair trust when troubles arise between two employees (Six and Skinner,

2010). 2) Penance and regulation can be effective to the extent that they elicit the crucial mediating cognition of perceived repentance (Dirks et al., 2011). 3) Specific preventive and repair actions focusing on increasing the quality of social exchanges could offer a remedy for trust violations (Holten et al., 2016). 4) Promises to change behaviour can significantly speed the trust recovery process (Schweitzer et al., 2006). 5) Moderators such as communications skills and the response type (financial/nonfinancial responses) affect trust repairing (Goodstein et al., 2015). Schweitzer et al. (2006) noted that prior deception hinders the effectiveness of a promise in accelerating trust recovery. They also argued that trust never fully recovers, even when deceived participants receive a promise or an apology, if promises made by a violator are not kept and trust harmed again with the same untrustworthy actions and deception as before.

The above review reveals that, at the individual level, by far the most commonly studied trust-repair strategies are verbal responses, especially apologies. Studies conducted outside of laboratory contexts are needed and future research should examine trust repair with field studies and sampling of the real working environment. Future investigations should also examine trust repair tactics other than apologies. A mere apology is often not effective, at least on its own, to repair trust and can be experienced as “cheap talk”. For example, Krylova et al. (2016) found substantive responses to be more effective than verbal ones. In terms of verbal responses, the findings indicate that the type of apology plays a role in the success of trust repairing, and some components of an apology are particularly important, for example, an acknowledgement of responsibility. Thus, more concrete trust repair strategies than an apology are required at the individual level. In future studies, there is a need to focus on moderators and contextual variables that may improve the effectiveness of the trust repair practices used.

4.3.2. Repairing trust in groups and teams

Kim et al. (2012) investigated trust repair in the work group context and found that it is not sensible to deny guilt especially after a competence-based trust violation. Both groups and individuals were less trusting when trustees denied culpability for a competence-based violation rather than apologized for it. Importantly, Kim et al. (2012) found that repairing trust is usually more difficult with groups than with individuals because groups can share their opinions in a way that can further reinforce negative feelings.

Webber et al. (2012) investigated the lack of top management support for the group of managers (34 supervisory managers and 8 department directors) in the hotel industry. Their results demonstrate that after competence-based trust violations, perceived organizational support was significantly and positively related to trust in top management. Similarly, Pate et al. (2012) found that after employees’ perceived bullying and harassment, a senior management group’s support provided to employee had a significant effect on trust. Further, Pate et al. (2012) found that strong management actions demonstrating integrity, competence, consistency, loyalty, openness, and respect had positive trust outcomes on employee loyalty, benevolence and openness and thus, improved employee trust in management in the trust dimension of benevolence, but no significant changes found in other trust dimensions (ability and integrity).

In the context of strategic change Sverdrup and Stensaker (2018)

proposed that the trust restoration process is a three-stage process consisting of (1) restoring reciprocity, (2) renegotiating the transactional terms of the psychological contract, and (3) extending the psychological contract to include relational terms. In the organizational change context, similarly than Pate et al. (2012) in the bullying context, Sørensen et al., (2011) found that strong management actions conveying integrity, competence, and benevolence can rebuild trust in such situations.

Current research on trust repair in groups suggests that verbal responses such as apology and denial, and organizational reforms such as strong management actions can rebuild trust at the group level. However, repairing trust in groups is more challenging than repairing individual trust, and thus a combination of trust repair mechanisms could be a useful approach. Overall, much more research is needed at the team level and e.g. Sørensen et al., (2011) found that more qualitative trust repair studies are needed in the change context in particular for understanding the process of distrust and the possible means of breaking the negative cycle it creates. In conclusion, similarly to the individual level, team level studies also need to focus on moderators and contextual variables that may underpin the effectiveness of trust repair practices used.

4.3.3. Repairing trust in organizations

Particularly at the organizational level, effective trust repair seems to require a move beyond verbal responses to substantive responses and perhaps even organizational reform. There is also an interesting dyadic perspective that may warrant research attention. Petriglieri (2015) examined during and after the 2010 Gulf of Mexico oil rig explosion and spill whether and how the relationship between an organization and its executives can be repaired once damaged. She found that the incident destabilized executives' organizational identification, leading them to doubt the alignment between their own identity and organization, and generated feelings of ambivalence toward the organization and their role in it. Executives resolve their ambivalence only when active co-creation takes place between executives and the organization. Co-created positive social information was key mechanism to resolving executives' ambivalence and destabilized identification.

Gillespie et al. (2014) found that verbal, substantive and organizational reforms played an important role in organizational trust repair after an integrity violation. The case studies conducted by Gillespie et al. (2014) suggest that after large-scale scandals, such as fraud and data manipulation, substantive trust repair, for example, open investigations and penance, and combining multiple and concrete trust-repair remedies can deliver the optimal trust outcomes. The study further highlighted that even if the focus is on organizational reforms in trust repair, verbal and substantive responses are also required to restore trust. The study contributes seven trust-repair practices including open investigations, accurate explanations, apologies, penance, replacing senior leaders, systemic reforms and cultural reforms. Finally, Gillespie and colleagues note that trust violations related to fraud and data manipulation affect the functioning of an organization in a systemic way that also undermines external stakeholders' trust in the organization.

Eberl et al. (2015) studied a corruption scandal and confirmed the need to rebuild trust by reorganizing organizational structures, policies, and processes. The study found that following integrity violations organizational rules adjustments are an appropriate signal for external stakeholders despite the fact that for employees the rule adjustments were a source of dissatisfaction because they were often difficult to implement. Eberl et al. (2015) contribute particularly to research on trust repair by paying attention to an effective interplay between formal and informal rules in order to safeguard and repair trust and satisfaction among both employees and external stakeholders.

Henderson et al. (2020) studied psychological contract breach in the employer–employee relationship by investigating six general repair tactics (full penance, partial penance, denial, apology, excuses, a combined apology/excuse) in terms of whether they improve trust and

diminish the negative emotions following a breach. The study concluded that in breaches of trust, all five other tactics than denial, are capable of repairing trust. Similarly to what Kim et al. (2006) and Grover et al. (2014) proposed at the individual level, Henderson et al. (2020) argued that at the organizational level avoiding breach altogether would be optimal as even after a repair tactic was used, trust did not return to its pre-breach level.

Furthermore, organizations' external reputation and image also often require restorative treatment after violations by organization or line management. Among other things, employees may worry about their employer's ability to continue employing them if the organization acquires a poor reputation among the public. Therefore, after an organizational-level violation, an apology is unlikely to be sufficient (see also De Cremer and Schouten, 2008 at the individual level) and more rigorous and holistic ways to repair trust that take all levels of the organization into account are likely to be required. We conclude that at the organizational level, there are multiple trust-repair strategies capable of restoring trust. Most effective trust repair mechanisms combine informal and formal, verbal and substantive practices and confer agency to both the trustee and the trustor.

5. Discussion

We organized our review based on the multilevel approach to organizational trust (Fulmer & Gelfand, 2012). Based on the framework presented in Table 2, we offer a critical analysis of the trust-repair mechanisms and responses used within organizations to enable future scholars clarify the various trust-repair responses and their effectiveness at different organization levels. Next, we discuss the state-of-the art in empirical research on employee trust repair to provide a point of departure for future research. Further, we highlight promising new research avenues and discuss the managerial implications for HR and management involved in the everyday practice of work and organizing.

5.1. State-of-the art and point of departure for research on employee trust repair

The largest number of empirical studies on trust repair have focused on the individual level. Most of those studies highlighted integrity-based and competence-based violations (e.g., Kim et al., 2004; 2006), with fewer addressing benevolence-based trust violations (e.g., Goodstein et al., 2015). At the team level, trust repair practices were studied mostly following competence-based violations (e.g., Webber et al., 2012). It seems that both integrity-based and benevolence-based trust violations are still under-researched (Pate et al., 2012). Interestingly, at the organizational level, there are more trust repair studies focusing on integrity-based trust violations (e.g., Gillespie et al., 2014) but far less research on employee trust repair after competence-based and benevolence-based trust violations. Benevolence and competence are typically personal attributes. If there is an erosion of trust in bilateral interactions, it does not necessarily undermine trust in the whole organization. However, as Petriglieri (2015) suggests, competence-based and benevolence-based trust violations by management might also erode employee trust in the organization. We also noticed that research on the processes of trust violations and repair (Dirks et al., 2009) is still relatively scarce.

5.2. Multilevel trust repair practices

The analysis we conducted reveals much of the past research on organizational trust repair focused on a single level of analysis, even though Dirks et al. (2009) highlighted the need for a multilevel approach a decade ago. We propose that understanding how different types of employee trust violations are linked to trust-repair actions merits further examination, especially at the team and organizational levels. At the individual level, it is important to note that forgiveness following a trust violation depends on bilateral relations: that state encompasses how

heartfelt the apology is and how receptive the trustor is to forgiving the trustee and continuing the interaction (Kim, 2018). Past research also suggests that individual and organizational trust repair practices such as the repair of trust in top management requires complementary actions and organizational support (Webber et al., 2012). As trust is a concept that integrates micro- and meso-levels (psychological process and group dynamics) with macro-level (organizational and institutional forms, see e.g., Gillespie & Dietz, 2009; Rousseau et al., 1998) access to various repair strategies is necessary, because diverse violations and their effects diffuse easily across levels. Therefore, trust repair between an employee and a leader should be approached in the broader context of a group or a team, and trust repair at the team level in the organizational context.

5.3. Towards more comprehensive trust repair practices

Past research shows the need to combine different types of trust repair practices, for example, an apology with compensation (Dirks et al., 2011; Lewicki et al., 2016). The most common practices applied to advance trust repair are still verbal, such as apologies (Haesevoets et al., 2015). However, empirical studies on employee trust repair suggest substantive measures are also important, in this specific field and especially in the context of more severe trust violations (De Cremer, 2010; Gillespie et al., 2014). Substantive responses, such as financial compensation, provide an important signal of repentance and thereby repair trust (Dirks et al., 2011; Gillespie et al., 2014; Gillespie & Siebert, 2018).

5.4. Early action to address common trust violations

A notable issue in past research on trust repair is also the focus on catastrophes and scandals. Our research offers illustrative cases on trust repair yet we want to emphasize that in the current dynamic and unpredictable environment trust violations are becoming far more common, reported more frequently in the media and demanding frequent attention from HR and the management of organizations. Instead of major transgressions and failures of trust we propose that there may be multiple little events and signals that may build up to undermine trust if they are not carefully monitored, understood, and addressed.

There is evidently a need for future research to investigate strategies for dealing with more mundane and smaller trust violations before they escalate to become major trust transgressions; acting early to redress transgressions also requires less costly and extensive measures. In parallel with the need for trust repair mechanisms to become more comprehensive, and the need for ordinary management practices to deal with potentially severe consequences, we advocate for trust repair to focus on minor and potentially trust-harming issues.

5.5. Limitations

As in all research, there are limitations to our review. The first limitation concerns the choice of databases. The literature search was conducted using the citation databases Web of Science and Scopus. This choice of databases could be seen as a limitation, but according to Falagas et al. (2008), Scopus and Web of Science provide accurate and comprehensive documentation of high quality published academic literature in social sciences. In reviewing articles, there is always the risk that the selected keywords could have caused some potentially relevant articles to have been omitted, although we did attempt to address the issue by extending the search terms and including synonyms. The exclusion phase based on titles, abstracts, and full texts followed carefully pre-set criteria, yet the researchers' personal judgements might also have been an influence, although again we addressed the issue by having two independent researchers verify candidate articles during the selection process.

5.6. Further research directions

During the analysis of the review findings we identified several research gaps that provide fruitful research avenues for scholars to further research. We classified research gaps as follows: 1) research methods, data and sample, 2) contextual issues, and 3) moderators. The latter two are the most important as they can play a crucial role in the success of a trust repair.

5.6.1. Focus on research methods and data

Several researchers have proposed that there is a need for qualitative field studies and case studies on trust repair in different relationships (see, e.g., Kim et al., 2004; Ferrin et al., 2007; Gillespie et al., 2014). Qualitative research such as focus groups could provide an understanding of how employees perceive different trust repair practices in various contexts, as well as offering a basis on which to build measures for trust repair practices. It is not easy to explain the extent to which trust violation affects trust, and which trust repair tactics are effective. We agree with Gillespie et al.'s (2014) proposal that a longitudinal design using multiple methods to collect data would be especially helpful in understanding the trust repair process because this approach takes better into account the dynamic nature of trust and measures trust at multiple points in time. We also suggest mixed designs that first acquire contextual understanding through qualitative research, then take the knowledge to lab experiments to isolate the causal effect of specific repair practices, and/or test qualitative insights through empirical field studies.

It is also clear that gaining timely access to organizations struggling with trust repair issues can be challenging for researchers. For this reason, experimental laboratory studies dominate early empirical studies on trust repair (see, e.g., Ferrin et al., 2007), and data were often collected from students. Given the contextualized nature of trust repair, we suggest future research complement laboratory studies with field studies within organizations in which method and sampling are based on the real working environment (Webber et al., 2012).

5.6.2. Focus on contextual issues

Researchers have proposed that more trust repair studies are needed in the contexts of organizational change and negotiations (Lewicki et al., 2016; Sørensen et al., 2011). Thus, we suggest that future research on employee trust repair pay attention to various organizational changes. There are already some studies on organizational changes and their impact on employee trust (e.g., Sørensen et al., 2011; Saunders, Dietz, & Thornhill, 2014), as well as some new investigations regarding trust repair following negotiations in which negotiators do not keep their promises (see, e.g., Lewicki et al., 2016). However, we currently have little research to inform the understanding of employee trust repair in the context of (and after) organizational change. In addition, change processes often do not proceed as planned; for example, new technologies and organizational changes often affect employee work design, yet we found no studies addressing this aspect of trust repair. Organizational changes related to workplace automation can cause employees to become wary and undermine their trust. Another timely issue is the lack of transparency and questions related to bias when artificial intelligence is used in recruitment and HR processes. How can HR and management repair employee trust in such increasingly common situations?

Organizational changes also often lead to restructuring and employee layoffs. How does the repair of trust differ for those who keep their jobs and those who lose them? Increasingly, organizations pursue flexibility and use temporary task forces and freelancers on short-term contracts. How can an organization's positive image and trustworthiness remain sufficiently strong in the eyes of temporary workers to ensure they are willing to return to the same employer in the future? What combination of trust repair practices offers the best strategy to repair trust in this context?

Technological change is not only impacting work design,

interpersonal interaction, and communication, but also transparency and immediacy in communications. Organizational trust issues may become public and transparent with a single post on social media by one employee. This means that the time span for trust repairing actions can reduce to hours instead of days or weeks. Future research and HR should also consider how to observe levels of trust and related incidents closer to real time, and what kind of trust repair practices can be launched immediately? This field of research could draw from crisis communications. Who are the organization's spokespersons, and what are the messages? How can apologies be sincere, and what are the trust repair actions following breaches of trust?

5.6.3. Focus on moderators

Researchers have suggested several moderators that should be further explored. For example, Lewicki et al. (2016) called for more information about whether the number of apology components depends on other potential moderators, and Goodstein et al. (2015) proposed more studies regarding the relationships between the severity of the wrongdoing and the willingness to forgive. Dirks et al. (2011) proposed that future research could consider whether and how penance and regulation change when stronger emotion between parties is involved. Also Schweitzer et al., (2006) and Dunn and Schweitzer (2005) have emphasized the scarce research on the relationship between emotions and trust in trust recovery. Similarly, Monzani et al. (2015) found that in terms of trust formation, a leader's ability to understand and manage others' emotions elicits positive affective states in followers, which is essential for the formation of trust in followers. However, researchers have proposed that there is still a great need to further investigate the role of emotions in the trust recovery process as well as the role of emotional competencies and emotional intelligence in trust repair (Monzani et al., 2015). We also believe that there is a great need for future work investigating the impact of emotions on trust formation and repair.

Another issue that is becoming pertinent is the impact of the macro level and institutional trust outside the organization, that is, how macro-level forces affect trust dynamics at the organizational level (Bachmann et al., 2015; Gillespie & Dietz, 2009). There is already some evidence that different external events and conditions affect employees' levels of trust even if there were no negative signs or trust breaches within organization. Technological change (e.g., automation and loss of jobs), lack of industry renewal, lack of predictability in national politics, or even pandemics, may influence reducing employee trust within organizations. The role of the media in covering more negative and sensational news or even so-called fake news also has an impact on people, whether in their private capacity or as employees.

We acknowledge the diversity of employees and their differing access to information, power and vulnerabilities having a possible impact on how they perceive and interpret breaches of trust and the repairing mechanisms deployed. Further, we acknowledge that not only intra-organizational, but also extra-organizational factors such as an organization's reputation and institutions, such as regulation and control may have an effect on the employee's perception of organizational trust (Gillespie & Dietz, 2009; Gillespie & Siebert, 2018). Gillespie and Dietz (2009) note that external governance such as laws, rules, regulations, and public reputation can be critical to organizational trust. Compliance with general rules and regulations, including ethical behaviour, reflects the reliability of the organization both within the organization and in to external stakeholders.

Finally, recent discussion of stakeholder trust is highly relevant for future academic and practical interest in employee trust repair. The relationships between different organizational stakeholder groups (e.g., Bachmann et al., 2015) have an impact on employee trust repair: for example, trust breaches among suppliers will become known and have an effect on both buyers' and suppliers' employees. Again, transparency and interconnectedness mean that an organization must often consider several stakeholder groups in their employee trust repair strategies.

5.7. Implications and conclusion

In this study, several trust repair practices are identified and synthesized. Thus, we contribute to the trust repair literature, and we believe that the synthesized information provided in this study together with the integrative framework presented in Table 2 will be useful and valuable for future researchers. Here in the context of employee trust repair, we define trust repair practices as active organizational and managerial practices to repair employee trust. They are thus comparable to HRM practices and focus on restoring employee positive perceptions (Gillespie & Dietz, 2009) and expectations of the trustworthiness of the organization, team, or an individual (see e.g., Gillespie & Siebert, 2018; Kramer & Lewicki, 2010). Currently, researchers have measured levels of trust pre- and post-violation, generally focusing on one or a few trust repair practices through which, for example, actions/verbal statements positively influence trust levels or restore violated trust (Elangovan et al., 2015; Haesevoets et al., 2015; Webber et al., 2012). We suggest the need to develop a validated 'trust repair practices scale' in order to measure the effectiveness of the trust repair practices identified and synthesized in this study. This validated trust repair practices scale can be used in further trust research and applied also by practitioners. Researchers could also study the contingencies and how various trust repair practices fit different situations, comparable to research on HR practices as bundles (see e.g., Guest, Conway, & Dewe, 2004; MacDuffie, 1995). Researchers' close collaboration with HR practitioners and managers operating in the everyday context of work and organizing could provide mutual benefits in the form of data access and improving practices to support the repair of employee trust.

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Publication II

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Employee trust repair after organizational change

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Employee trust repair after organizational change

Employee trust repair

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Abstract

Purpose – This study examines the trust-repair practices after organizational change.

Design/methodology/approach – Previous research on this topic is limited, so an abductive qualitative research approach was adopted. The data were collected from key informants through focus group discussions and interviews.

Findings – Beyond previous research findings, this study identified that employee trust can be repaired after benevolence-based trust violations by enforcing ethical behavior and fostering managers' emotional intelligence and after competence-based violations by fostering the sense-making process and by involving third parties in trust recovery. In addition, transparent information sharing and strong management actions predict positive trust outcomes in a change context.

Research limitations/implications – This paper makes three key contributions to the literature on organizational trust by (1) identifying trust violations after organizational change, (2) proposing a process model on trust repair and (3) extending understanding of trust repair practices by revealing new elements.

Practical implications – This study provides practical information from a real work context and can improve managers' understanding of active trust-repair practices.

Originality/value – This paper outlines active trust-repair practices in an organizational change context and expands the current theory by presenting novel insights into organizational trust repair. In addition, this paper contributes to the trust-repair literature by proposing promising avenues for future trust repair research.

Keywords Organizational change, Trust repair, Trust repair practices, Trust violations

Paper type Research paper

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Introduction

In today's challenging economic and social climate, an organization's internal crises, alongside external societal crises, conflicts and pandemics can quickly weaken the organization's ability to survive. Simultaneously, organizational changes, like new technologies, restructuring, mergers, employee layoffs, working from home, e-leadership and many other changes, have increased significantly. At the most general level, "*change is a phenomenon of time. It is the way people talk about the event in which something appears to become, or turn into, something else, where the 'something else' is seen as a result or outcome*" (Ford and Ford, 1994, p. 759). Organizational change creates a new situation and affects work environments in ways that create uncertainty among employees, feelings of vulnerability and employees distrusting an organization (Sørensen *et al.*, 2011). The importance of trust raises the pertinent question of how organizational managers and other members can repair trust after change. This question is currently highly relevant because organizations are facing many changes that can arise quickly (Morgeson *et al.*, 2015).

Theoretical trust repair models are well developed (Bachmann *et al.*, 2015; Gillespie and Dietz, 2009; Lewicki and Bunker, 1996; Tomlinson and Mayer, 2009). However, empirically, most organizational trust repair research has focused on the individual level (Kim *et al.*, 2006;



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Lewicki *et al.*, 2016), and there is less research at the organizational level and most of that has focused on accidents or scandals, such as fraud and data manipulation (Gillespie *et al.*, 2014). Generally, it also seems that trust repair after organizational change is underresearched. In addition, organizational trust repair has focused mainly on laboratory experiments to measure the differences between a few trust repair practices, like apologies versus denial (Kim *et al.*, 2012) and dealing with integrity-based trust violations (De Cremer, 2010; Schweitzer *et al.*, 2006). Little is known about benevolence- and competence-based violations at the organizational level. The current research investigates trust-repair practices in a change context with a qualitative research method and also addresses benevolence-based and competence-based trust violations.

Trust-repair practices have not been extensively studied, and I argue that the approach for repairing trust through various trust-repair practices is limited. In fact, only the most recent articles talk about active and continuous trust-repair practices (Gustafsson *et al.*, 2020). For the purpose of this article, I defined trust-repair practices as *active organizational and managerial practices to restore employee trust to a past state*. This paper makes three key contributions to the literature on organizational trust by (1) identifying trust violations after organizational change, (2) proposing a process model on trust repair and (3) extending the understanding of trust practices by revealing new elements.

Theoretical background

One definition used for interpersonal trust is “a psychological state comprising the intention to accept vulnerability based upon positive expectations of the intentions or behavior of another” (Rousseau *et al.*, 1998:395), and this definition is commonly used for organizational trust too (Lewicki and Brinsfield, 2017). Mayer *et al.* (1995) identified three dimensions of trustworthiness: ability (or competence), benevolence and integrity (the ABI model). For this study, I have adopted the positive expectations from the trust definitions of Rousseau *et al.* (1998) and also the ABI model of Mayer *et al.* (1995) is useful when an employee's expectations of an organization's competence, benevolence or integrity have not been met. Employees with future-oriented expectations rely heavily on this definition (Gillespie and Siebert, 2018).

A trusting relationship is a prerequisite of positive exchanges between employees (Gould-Williams, 2007) because it enables cooperation, open communication and smooth interaction between individuals (Weick and Roberts, 1993). Binci *et al.* (2012) found in the change context that the announcement of the change generated a state of anxiety and fear among employees, and the employees' response to change was emotionally negative at the point the change began. When trust among employees is low, individuals will be cautious about exchanging information and ideas with one another and activities and projects will suffer (Collins and Smith, 2006). Thus, trust repair is a very critical aspect in the change context if trust has declined as a result of the change.

Dirks *et al.* (2009) defined trust repair as occurring “when a transgression causes the positive state(s) that constitute(s) the relationship to disappear and/or negative states to arise, as perceived by one or both parties, and activities by one or both parties substantively return the relationship to a positive state” (p. 69). This general definition of relationship repair can be used to understand trust repair within an organization. However, organizational trust is a complex concept within a system that demands basic trust from both the institution and its members (Luhmann, 1979), and organizational trust violations can occur on many different organizational levels (Fulmer and Gelfand, 2012).

Recognizing several previous theoretical views, like the social exchange theory, attribution theory and social equipment, Dirks *et al.* (2009) combined the three key theoretical principles (attributional, structural and social equilibrium) into a process model to

repair violated trust. In the same year, Gillespie and Dietz (2009) also proposed a process based on systems theory that viewed organizations as multilevel systems. Later, Bachmann *et al.* (2015) drew on and extended prior frameworks to propose six trust repair mechanisms containing different trust-repair practices. The first mechanism, sense-making (Weick, 1995), involves a collective learning process leading to a shared understanding and an accepted account of what went wrong and why. Second, the relational mechanism incorporates the social-equilibrium approach and involves engaging in social rituals and symbolic acts aimed at addressing the negative emotions caused by the violation and reestablishing the social equilibrium between the parties (Dirks *et al.*, 2009). The third mechanism is that of regulation and controls, which involves formal rules and controls to constrain untrustworthy behavior and prevent future trust violation. The fourth mechanism, ethical culture, highlights how trust repair often requires informal cultural controls (rather than just structural controls) to constrain untrustworthy behavior and promote trustworthy behavior. The fifth mechanism is transparency, that is sharing relevant information about organizational decision processes and functioning with stakeholders can also function as a mechanism to help restore trust. The final mechanism, transference, facilitates trust repair by transferring trust from a credible party to the discredited party. Kähkönen *et al.* (2017) suggested that there is a need to revise theories and practices to address organizational trust by including *more active and systemic elements to take into account ongoing societal changes*. In order to see more clearly, it is important to understand the changing organizational context and simultaneously adopt a perspective that illuminates the broader connections across disciplines and theories.

Gillespie and Dietz (2009) proposed that, after being subjected to organizational-level violations, employees will perceive their organization to be trustworthy only if the organization demonstrates competence in overcoming further violations, and the organization's responses or actions are multidimensional and address all three of the trust dimensions of ABI. Kähkönen *et al.* (2017) followed the structured literature review process proposed by Tranfield *et al.* (2003) and found 28 relevant articles on organizational trust repair with several trust repair practices intended to return the relationship to a positive state (Dirks *et al.*, 2009), and the different response types and trust-repair practices after integrity-, competence- and benevolence-based trust violations (Mayer *et al.*, 1995) at organizational, team and individual levels (Fulmer and Gelfand, 2012). This paper adopts the approach of Kähkönen *et al.* (2017) that focuses on active trust-repair practices at organizational and individual levels which is justified when an organization's managers are responsible for repairing employee trust.

At the organizational level, the following trust-repair practices have been studied: *rule adjustments* (Eberl *et al.*, 2015), *constructive behavior* (Petriglieri, 2015), *changing of the guard*, *cultural reforms*, *systemic reforms*, *apologies*, *penances*, *explanation*, and *open investigations* (Gillespie *et al.*, 2014). At the organizational level, trust-repair practices are mainly studied after integrity-based trust violations following scandals or crises. In contrast to many studies focusing on the individual level where laboratory experimental studies are implemented, investigations focusing on the organizational level required qualitative methods expressing the systemic nature of trust within companies (Kähkönen *et al.*, 2017). Employee trust repair at the organizational level, especially after an organization's benevolence- and competence-based violations, is still underresearched, as shown in Table 1.

At the individual level, the trust-repair practices that have been studied are mainly verbal. *Apologies* are the most common form of verbal response, especially in bilateral interactions after an integrity-based violation (Kim *et al.*, 2006; Krylova *et al.*, 2016; Lewicki *et al.*, 2016; Schweitzer *et al.*, 2006). Other verbal responses include *denial*, (Kim *et al.*, 2004), *explanations*, *constructive behavior* (Elangovan *et al.*, 2015), *promises* (Schweitzer *et al.*, 2006), *clearly stated goals* (Monzani *et al.*, 2015), *explicit expectations*, *constructive voices*, *positive interactions* (Six and Skinner, 2010), *quality of social exchange* (Holten *et al.*, 2016), *correction of morality*

	Ability	Benevolence	Integrity
<i>Organizational level</i>	Constructive behavior (s/v)		Changing of the guard (or)
Verbal (v) Substantive (s) Organizational reforms (or)			Cultural reforms (or) Systemic reforms (or) Apology (v) Explanation (v) Open investigation (s) Organizational rule adjustments (or) Apology (v) Denial (v)
<i>Individual level</i>	Apology (v) Denial (v)	Apology (v) Correction of morality (v) Explanation (v)	Promise (v)
Verbal (v)			
Substantive (s)	Constructive behavior (s/v)	Increasing the social exchange quality (v)	Financial compensation (s)
Organizational reforms (or)	Clear and explicit expectation (v) Emotional competence (v) Penance (s) Regulation (s) Explanation (v) Mental and emotional support (v) Clearly stated goals (or)	Mental and emotional support (v)	Penance (s) Regulation (s) Taking responsibility (v) Explanation (v) Increasing the social exchange quality (v) Mental and emotional support (v)

Table 1. Trust-repair practices studied in the previous empirical literature

(Goodstein *et al.*, 2015), *leaders' self-questioning* and *constructive steps* (Grover *et al.*, 2014). Krylova *et al.* (2016) found that *taking responsibility* for one's actions is more effective than making excuses, and that *denial* is an impediment to being trusted and respected by others. Dirks *et al.* (2011) studied more concrete actions and conducted four laboratory experiments that examined *penance* and *regulation*, and De Cremer (2010) proposed that *financial compensation* offered within a bargaining context can have positive effects on trust behavior after an integrity-based trust violation.

In sum, little is known about organizationals' benevolence- and competence-based violations and trust-repair practices utilized after organizational change. Thus, I aim to develop an empirically informed theoretical understanding of how organizational trust-repair practices can be implemented by asking: *Which trust-repair practices do organizational managers and members use to repair employee trust in the organization during and after organizational change?* The dimensions of trust (Mayer *et al.*, 1995) and trust-repair practices identified in the current literature (Table 1) act as guiding principles in this study. With abductive analysis based on logical thinking, cause-and-effect relationships will be identified and the trust repair model will be developed by targeting trust repair practices appropriate to the violated trust components.

Methodology

Research approach and context

This study was conducted in a Finnish nonprofit organization that operates within the field of education and research. The organization is in a state of constant change. Personnel reductions took place in 2008, 2013 and 2015. The current organization is a result of a merger of three organizations that was a long time in preparation and finally took place in 2020.

Technological and structural changes are constantly present. The views of several different staff groups were considered to ensure a multifaceted perspective. An abductive research approach was chosen because it is a fruitful method when the goal of the research is to make discoveries and extend the previous theory (Dubois and Gadde, 2002). Abduction is systematized intuition for developing new knowledge, and particularities can be distinguished from generalities. Because it aims to understand a topic in a new way, it is suitable when the research is conducted in a change context (Dubois and Gadde, 2002). In abductive research, the previous theory serves as a pillar and provides guidelines, but it does not explain all the perspectives within the specific context under study (Dubois and Gadde, 2002). An in-depth single case study was performed with qualitative data to discover trust-repair practices utilized in the case organization. Case studies are particularly useful when one is trying to understand diverse social phenomena in real-life environments, such as in business management situations (Yin, 2003).

Data collection

The study used semistructured focus group discussions and interviews as data sources. The semistructured interviews were useful because they allowed the researcher more freedom to follow up on different perspectives and also gave the researcher a voice in the conversation (Leavy, 2014). The discussion groups were formed by inviting key informants, which ensured that information came directly from knowledgeable people and the interviews and focus group discussions provided data and insights that could not be obtained by other methods (Tremblay, 1957). Each participant's background information was collected on a registration form, and the 16 participants were divided into three internally homogeneous groups based on their work unit and position in the organizational hierarchy. The focus group guide was pilot tested on two informants from the target organization and adjusted accordingly. Focus group discussions were conducted in May and June 2018. The first focus group comprised employees, the second middle managers and the third union representatives. There were five–six participants in each group who were involved in group-specific discussions. A total of five participants were in the 31–40 age group, five were aged between 41 and 50, two were aged between 51 and 60 and four were over 61 years old. The questions addressed included the following: “What kinds of practices were implemented in your organization during and after the change situation?” and “What kinds of practices would you have liked to have seen implemented but were not?” Each focus group discussion lasted about 90 minutes, and the discussions in total comprised 264 minutes. Focus groups proved very useful for determining which practices were used after organizational changes. The facilitator played a central role in the discussion by not only managing existing relationships but also creating a relaxed environment for the participants (Kitzinger, 1994), which ensured the focus groups engaged in rich discussions. All the focus group discussions were recorded and fully transcribed, and the first was analyzed together with another researcher with experience in focus group research. Key informants were also invited to interview (Tremblay, 1957). In total, six semi-structured interviews were conducted in May and June 2018, and they shared the same themes as the focus group discussions. Among the key informants, three were in the 31–40 age group, two were aged between 41 and 50 and one was over 61 years old. Two informants were middle managers, one was a union representative and three were employees. Each interview lasted about 30–45 minutes, and the total interview time was 214 minutes. All interviews were recorded and fully transcribed.

Data analysis

The data analysis involved thematic coding and analysis. The study followed an analytical process, arranging the data into first- and second-order codes and then aggregating it into theoretical dimensions (Gioia et al., 2012). The use of this method is justified because it is a

straightforward analytical process that enhances the credibility of qualitative research by clearly demonstrating the progression from raw data to theoretical dimensions (Zimmermann *et al.*, 2015). First, all the data material was studied and sorted into general groupings describing the informants' experiences of organizational violations in the case organization. Next, the first-order codes were organized into second-order codes based on similarities. Finally, comprehensive theoretical dimensions were formed based on the second-order codes.

Findings

This study identified types of trust violations and trust-repair practices utilized in the case organization. These findings are discussed in more detail alongside the propositions formulated in the next section. Table 2 illustrates the data analysis framework and identified trust violations. Lack of information sharing, management incompetence and lack of caring are the major problems experienced in all respondent groups.

Trust violations after organizational change

Lack of information sharing. A lack of information sharing was a major source of trust violation. The data analysis revealed that all the informants in the focus groups agreed that the employer did not provide enough information about changes and information sessions could have been timed better. The content of the information was not completely satisfactory to the employees, and one employee asked, "How many were happy with what [the employer's] information contained? Yes, there was something, but rarely anything concrete." During information events, employees were informed about information sessions at short notice (e.g. an information session held on Monday was announced the preceding Friday). Consequently, reports of staff stress rose because employees were burdened with work matters over the weekend. One employee stated, "I think it's pretty cruel that late Friday afternoon, it's announced that there will be an information session on Monday at 9 a.m.—it's like the staff is being erratically bossed around."

The employer organization often partially transferred the discussion to superiors, who were given formal rules and guidelines to follow when discussing the situation with subordinates. Most superiors felt that this guidance had been adequately organized, but some felt they could not speak openly. It was only more difficult for staff members and superiors to communicate when it was known that there was more going on in the background than the staff members knew. One superior said, "We did get the ready-made communication formats, the template, and discussion guidance, and it was really good that there was at least something we could have in our hands in that situation." One employee described the problematic situation as follows: "The units are certainly different, but our unit no longer had any separate internal communication, which would have been necessary in this situation. If you went to ask something of your superior, they would flee."

Incompetence in management. A lack of change management expertise resulted in competence-based violations. Almost every informant thought that there were some problems with the skills of line managers. One employee observed, "I think that line management did not have any experience with downsizing, middle management or lower management did not have any experience with downsizing, and very rarely is there any management training or experience. They just do not have the skills." These abilities, (especially the ability to lead change) did not matter in the earlier stages, but the lack was clearly visible in the change context. The staff expected that things would be done more successfully in expert organizations than in other types of organizations. Some felt there were great weaknesses in decision-making, the management chain and how certain changes

First-order codes	Second-order themes	Aggregated dimensions	Employee trust repair
(1) Information provided by the employer was inadequate (2) Information about events was announced too late	Lack of adequate, transparent and timely information	Lack of information sharing	
(1) Information provided by superiors was inadequate (2) Superiors avoided answering questions (1) Employer gave the superior formal rules and guidelines about how to discuss the downsizing with a subordinate (1) There was a lack of discussion within the HR committee (2) Cooperation and discussion between actors were not continuous (3) There was a lack of attitudes favoring development	Lack of adequate, transparent and timely information Guidelines regarding how a superior should discuss the downsizing with a subordinate Discussion culture in the organization		
(1) Employees hoped that an open evaluation would be performed (2) Superiors needed to perform aftercare (3) It was somewhat unclear what the downsizing achieved in terms of performance	Lack of ex-post evaluation		
(1) Employer had not experienced downsizing (2) In an expert organization, leaders emerge from within the organization (and thus lack management skills) (3) The organization lacked goals (4) Decision-making failed (5) There was a lack of change in management (6) Good ideas and strategies proposed by line management did not reach employees (7) The obligation to work for six months after notice of dismissal was considered a bad and unfair solution (8) Downsizing events were outsourced to a board member	Lack of professional leadership skills among management	Incompetence	
(1) Superiors had not experienced downsizing (2) There was a lack of supervisory training and experience (3) Supervisory work was incompetent (1) Dismissed employees' tasks were transferred to the survivors (2) Survivors' tasks were unevenly distributed (3) Survivors' workload increased	Lack of professional leadership skills among superiors Lack of reorganizing tasks and staff		
(1) Fear and uncertainty remain; can they be removed? (2) Employees moved to another employer	Failure to mitigate fear and uncertainty		

Table 2.
Identified trust violations in the change organization

(continued)

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First-order codes	Second-order themes	Aggregated dimensions
(1) Superiors did not to provide support dismissed employees (2) Superiors did not provide support for any subordinates	Lack of emotional support	Lack of care
(1) Superior used power in an unpleasant way (2) Good manners were forgotten by line managers	Lack of constructive behavior	
(1) The HRM strategy was not visible to employees (2) HR was administrative and bureaucratic (3) The personnel policy required a strategic vision	Lack of strategic HRM	
(1) The employer did not always value the employees enough (2) The employer saw employees as just cost items (3) HR did not acknowledge that a subordinate might be right sometimes and could advise the employer	Lack of goodwill toward employees	
(4) Support was outsourced		

Table 2.

flowed to the employee level. One employee stated, “Trust in the organization’s ability to manage change smoothly is pretty weak. In my case in particular, the downsizing has fundamentally weakened my trust in the ability of this organization to make decisions and manage changes.”

After employee dismissals in the case organization, there were discussions about not excessively increasing the staff workload. Instead, if needed, tasks that were not critical to the organization’s operations would be eliminated; however, the employees, superiors and union representatives all agreed that all tasks redistributed to the remaining employees rather than eliminating any. The way in which this was done was perceived as inequitable and led some people to experience considerable work-related pressure. One superior said,

I would need clearer policies, sometimes we should just say that we’re not going to get into that because we simply do not have the people. In my opinion, it’s not a sustainable option that we reduce staff and imagine that we can do all the same things that we’ve done before with a smaller group of people.

Some information events were transferred to third parties; for example, the last downsizing in 2015 was partially led by a board member with previous business experience. Traditional functions and processes organized by the human resources (HR) department, such as occupational health services, were taken on by an external company. Information about employment or other practical support for dismissed employees implemented by an outside consultant was well organized; however, the staff expected that not everything would be outsourced and that some gentler and more humane practices would be carried out in-house. The external sparring consultant was praised by the dismissed employees, but the in-house support was somewhat lacking. One dismissed employee said, “They outsourced the unpleasant tasks to somebody else so that nobody in-house went through these things with us.”

Lack of care. The absence of caring was a major source of trust violation after organizational change. It became apparent during the focus group discussions that many of

the informants felt that the HR strategy was not visible enough to the employees in their daily work. It was expected that human resource management (HRM) would put more effort into developing employees' skills and promoting self-development. Issues like this may not be viewed sufficiently from the perspective of the staff, and they can believe that HRM is not doing enough to support staff members. For example, HRM was viewed as an administrative function that was distant and bureaucratic. One superior commented, "We have a fairly administrative HR function, not one that does skills development and self-development."

Employee trust
repair

Some interviewees thought there was a lack of goodwill toward employees, and that the employer did not value employees enough. The employees were offended when viewed as cost items and not as important intangible capital. Long-term employees accumulate a significant amount of expertise and, among other things, tacit information about work tasks and their sudden departure can greatly affect the organization's ability to function. One employee stated,

When you have been directly told that your work team, you are just cost items to us, then that is honest, but whether that's good HR policy is a different matter altogether. And nobody will ever forget that they were called just a cost item.

Because HRM did not give enough support to staff members and benevolence-based violations occurred, superiors were left to deal with this issue alone; some were unable to provide emotional support and one of the interviewed employees stated the following: "People were really wounded here. They were ignored, they immediately became like riffraff, and it was horrible. To my way of thinking, the superiors really failed to take them into consideration." Most superiors and the union representative viewed the situation similarly. However, one superior said,

The support from my own superior who must be involved in this is extremely important. I noticed the difference very clearly in 2015, when there was a superior with whom cooperation worked, and we kept each other informed and agreed on the steps and other issues. On the contrary, in 2008, I was completely alone.

Trust repair after organizational change

Phase 1: manager self-questioning, employee feedbacks and diagnosis. When managers develop work processes, they must be able to determine what the staff really thinks and expects. By conducting the diagnosis, managers can achieve better results in their attempts to maintain and repair trust. The diagnosis aims to systematically identify what contributed to the violation. The first step is to quickly identify what kind of trust violations may have occurred and acknowledging those violations. In addition, employee feedback, post-evaluations of the change and open discussions with employees give valuable information to managers. Feedback must be taken into account, as one employee stated the following: "When conducting a variety of surveys, e.g. a feelings meter, their results should also be responded to concretely."

Phase 2: organizations' repair actions. It looked like the organization had chosen, in addition to their own remedies, a trust repair mechanism where responsibility was partially transferred to superiors and trusted third parties. As employee trust in the organization continues to weaken, it may be wise to partially assign the act of trust repairing to be implemented in bilateral interactions by third parties. The next section discusses the identified trust-repair practices in more detail.

The sense-making process and transparent information sharing. A lack of open discussion caused integrity- and competence-based violations in the case organization. Transferring communication to superiors can be a good solution to recover employee trust in the organization, but its success depends on the level of professionalism of the superiors. If the

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superiors communicate effectively with their subordinates, they can foster the recovery of employee trust, but if that communication fails, the trust in the organization may be further eroded. Almost all interviewees highlighted the importance of open discussion, even if the implementation was not perfect. The financial figures presented during the downsizing events, and thus the justification for the downsizing, were generally understood, but there was a desire for a more thorough explanation of some financial figures. However, there was a lot of information on the internal website. One employee stated, "The information came through just fine from Intra. If people were interested in the matter, then yes, the information was available." The findings also show that continuous trust-building practices within a culture that emphasizes discussion can repair trust. All the participants in the focus group discussions said they expected to have an opportunity to evaluate the changes after they were made and also to be involved in open discussions. For example, the union representative said "Yes, ex-post evaluation in the whole organization, here is perhaps the greatest need for improvement. Could this be... a learning experience?"

Even if one follows laws, regulations and agreements intended to promote cooperation, trust can increase only when the cooperation is continuous, reciprocal and intended to promote the long-term development of operations. In the case company proposed that the personnel committee might foster the recovery of employee trust following organizational change if the cooperation between union representatives and the employer is structured and regular. A union representative said,

That's one topic for improvement that would help a lot, if it [the human resources committee] worked openly and if the topics covered in the committee could also be discussed at a unit level, to get suggestions for improvement. And everything that's covered in the committee should be communicated to the staff.

Proposition 1a. Managers providing adequate, open and timely information can repair employee trust in a changing organization after integrity-based violations.

Proposition 1b. A sense-making process and learning together about change can repair employee trust in a change organization after competence-based violations.

Strong management actions. Strong management actions play a significant role in a change context, and employees expect that managers have the ability to make smart decisions; however, in the case organization, competence-based violations occurred. Although the ability to lead change did not matter earlier in the process, the lack of leadership was clearly visible in the change context. All the focus groups expressed that supervisory development should be a form of continuous training and not just in response to acute change. Many superiors had only recently acquired supervisory roles, and the change situation was entirely new to them. Therefore, their skills in handling the situation were not as good as they might have been. An inspiring and knowledgeable superior has the primary role in daily operations. If a superior does not have the necessary skills to manage a subordinate employee, there is a risk that cooperation between the superior and employee will fail, making all other actions intended to improve work satisfaction and confidence futile. In regard to this, a superior stated, "Supervisory training could be continuous. It helps us understand what kinds of practices we have, and how we solve various problems, and how we bring the management's message to our own people."

All participants in the focus groups were unanimous in their belief that fair and equal treatment is very important. The employees, superiors and union representatives all agreed

that none of the tasks were eliminated in the change situation but were instead redistributed among the remaining employees. The way in which that redistribution of tasks was done was perceived as inequitable and led to considerable work-related pressure experienced by some staff. All informants felt that employees had to work harder than before to complete their assigned tasks. Some employees felt bad because they could see their levels of service declining due to a lack of time and increasing workload, even though they wanted to serve their clients more quickly. It therefore seems that reorganization, which is the management's ability to distribute work to employees in an appropriate manner, is especially difficult in the change context. One superior stated, "People were not treated equally, and it bothered me tremendously. . . not a good thing."

Proposition 2. Strong management actions can repair employee trust in a change organization after competence-based violations.

Transfer of responsibility. A management decision to transfer some operations to a trusted third party might maintain and repair employee trust in management after competence-based violations. It may be better to outsource operations in the change organization than operate internally without the proper knowledge and capabilities. When some functions were transferred to a trusted entity, such as an occupational health-care professional or external psychologist, this was seen as an attempt to demonstrate care for employees if the organization lacked the appropriate knowledge. In addition, information about employment or other practical support for dismissed employees implemented by an outside consultant was well organized in the case organization; one employee said the following: "The external sparring consultant was good."

Proposition 3. The involvement of third parties can repair employee trust in a change organization after competence-based violations.

Emotional intelligence. This study found that making HRM strategies more visible and available to employees can help to repair employee trust. Large organizations may struggle with this and with implementing benevolent personnel policies, but superiors can play an important role in solving this dilemma. The HR function is most visible when tangible benefits are provided to employees, such as occupational health services and sports facilities to promote well-being at work. These benefits are widely recognized among employees and are often well managed or outsourced to a third party. Functions that are not so straightforward, such as continuous training of superiors or providing sufficient support for employees in crisis situations, often offer more room for improvement. Employees expect the HR function to put more effort into skills development and self-development of staff. In addition, some informants wondered why new people were visibly hired so soon after the downsizing; the fact that the number of employees seemed to quickly return to the pre-dismissal level diminished trust. One superior stated,

Within two years, you could see that all around the organization, people were hired unabated after the hiring ban on dismissed positions had been lifted. And now we are back at the same or higher staff numbers. This has certainly weakened my trust in this process. Non-profits can have a negative result some years, without it causing erratic HR policies.

Proposition 4. Managers' emotional intelligence including benevolent personnel policies and emotional support can repair employee trust in a change organization after benevolence-based violations.

Ethical behavior. Ethical and constructive behavior, especially a benevolent attitude toward other parties, plays an important role in an employee's evaluations of another party's

trustworthiness. In a crisis, it is common for members of an organization to be incapable of fully exhibiting constructive behavior. The ability to be constructive is also attached to an individual's personality. The employees expected benevolent behavior, but some managers and superiors seemed to forget the fundamentals of good public behavior. One union representative stated, "I trust the government and the current MD. But how the decisions were made available to the staff, and how some of the staff and some superiors behaved. . . ." Some employees also felt that the superiors used their power in an unpleasant manner, and there were instances of abuse use of power over employees. One employee said, "My experience of the goodwill of the superior took a hit during the change. On a personal level, my superior said something that I will never forget, something somewhat offensive, through which to show power."

At the organizational level, how well internal laws, rules, policies and processes (Sitkin and Roth, 1993) are implemented embody the ethics of the organization and determine what is considered acceptable or unacceptable conduct. Continuous changes take energy, reduce commitment and may cause people to consider other places of employment, but an employer with good ethical behavior that clearly values its employees is always more attractive to employees than one where these things are not distinct.

Proposition 5. Ethical behavior can repair employee trust in a change organization after benevolence-based violations.

Trust violations and trust repair model summary. This study developed a model for trust repair first by examining three types of trust violations: (1) incompetence, (2) lack of care and (3) lack of discussion. Second, it identified trust repair mechanisms: (1) transparent information sharing, (2) strong management actions, (3) transfer of responsibility, (4) foster of emotional intelligence, (5) ethical behavior and (6) a sense-making process. The most significant idea is the integrated trust repair model. Summary of the findings presented in the integrated trust repair model are shown in Figure 1.

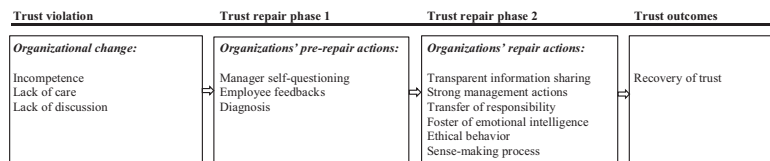
Discussion

The main contributions of this study were as follows: (1) to identify trust violations following organizational change, (2) a proposed process model on trust repair and (3) proposed trust repair practices that expand on the currently available theory. Trust can be recovered after organizational change if the organization's trust repair strategy includes not only actions by top management but also the involvement of superiors and a trusted third party in the trust-repair process. Table 3 summarizes identified trust-repair practices that expand on the currently available theory.

Violation types at the organization level

Previous research on trust repair at the organizational level has mainly focused on catastrophes and scandals (Eberl et al., 2015; Gillespie et al., 2014; Petriglieri, 2015) in which

Figure 1. Summary of the findings presented in the integrated trust repair model



	Ability	Benevolence	Integrity	Employee trust repair
<i>Organizational level</i> Verbal (v)	Constructive behavior (s/v) <i>Strong management actions (or)</i>	<i>Benevolent personnel policies (or)</i>	Changing of the guard (or) Cultural reforms (or)	
Substantive (s)	<i>Involvement of third parties (l)</i>	<i>Ethical behavior (s/v)</i>	Systemic reforms (or)	
Organizational reforms (or) Transferring (t)	<i>Sense-making with explanations (v/or)</i>		Apology (v) Explanation (v) Open investigation (s) Organizational rule adjustments (or) Adequate and open information (v) Apology (v) Denial (v)	
<i>Individual level</i> Verbal (v)	Apology (v) Denial (v)	Apology (v) Correction of morality (v)	Denial (v)	
Substantive (s) Organizational reforms (or)	Constructive behavior (v) Clear and explicit expectation (v) Emotional competence (v) Penance (s) Regulation (s) Explanation (v) Mental and emotional support (v) Clearly stated goals (or) <i>Strong management actions (or)</i> <i>Sense-making with explanations (v/or)</i>	Explanation (v) Improving the quality of social exchange (v) Mental and emotional support (v) <i>Ethical behavior (s/v)</i>	Promise (v) Financial compensation (s) Penance (s) Regulation (s) Taking responsibility (v) Explanation (v) Improving the quality of social exchange (v) Mental and emotional support (v) <i>Adequate and open information (v)</i>	

Table 3.
Summary of trust repair practices that expand on the current theory

the decisions and actions of organizations have become, among other things, dishonest. An overall lack of honesty seems to be a common problem when an organization has trust issues. However, in the current dynamic and unpredictable environment, trust violations are becoming more common and more complex in organizations, and these conditions put management in the position of needing to pay *continuous and active attention to employee trust levels across the organization*. Instead of major conflicts, there may be multiple little changes, events and signals that leaders must carefully diagnose, understand and react to. The coevolution of social and technical systems will not stop. Change is constant and change management must become a core competency for managers (Pasmore et al., 2019).

Competence and benevolence versus integrity violations

Based on the previous literature, there is a broad acceptance of the need to separate trust violations according to trust dimensions and to target trust repair accordingly (Sørensen et al., 2011; Kim et al., 2012). Integrity-based trust violations at the organizational level have dominated the trust repair literature (Gillespie et al., 2014). Trust recovery can be difficult after serious integrity-based violations and might require multidimensional repair actions as Gillespie et al. (2014) proposed. I agree that various repair strategies are needed at the organizational level because diverse violations and their effects diffuse easily across levels. The prior literature has fewer instances of research on employee trust repair after

competence-based and benevolence-based trust violations; however, [Petriglieri \(2015\)](#) suggests that competence-based trust violations by management may erode employee trust in the organization. This study found that not only changes made by organizations resulted in integrity-based violations but also to a larger extent in competence- and benevolence-based trust violations that eroded employee trust in their organization. The erosion of trust can also happen in an organizational context in an impersonal way. This study provides indications that an impersonal violation of trust can be corrected in bilateral interaction if the violator (organization) transfers repair responsibilities to other participants, such as superiors and third parties.

Who takes the first step toward trust repair?

First, it is crucial that managers know how to handle trust. When they develop work processes, they must be able to determine what the staff really thinks and expects. If they can do that, managers can achieve better results in their attempts to maintain and repair trust, which should be a continuous process and part of a systematic HRM strategy. This study has outlined six trust-repair mechanisms that managers can apply after organizational changes. The results indicate that time alone ([Gillespie and Siebert, 2018](#)) cannot repair trust after change, but employees expect management to implement benevolent personnel policies. Generally, employees expect that major trust-repair practices will take place at the level of top management where the change decision originated. Trust-repair practices are comparable to HRM practices and focus on restoring positive employee perceptions ([Gillespie and Dietz, 2009](#)) and expectations of the trustworthiness of the organization ([Kramer and Lewicki, 2010](#); [Gillespie and Siebert, 2018](#)).

Trust repair after organizational change

Information sharing is defined by a readiness to be mentally open to new ideas, to freely share information and to be receptive to and accepting of new ideas ([Butler, 1991](#)). Conceptually, researchers have assumed that transparently sharing information about organizational decision-making processes can repair trust ([Bachmann et al., 2015](#)). Empirically, researchers have proposed that the fair and open provision of information can repair trust ([Fisher and White, 2000](#)). Similarly, this study revealed that adequate, open and timely information might repair employee trust, and even when this fails at the organization level, the involvement of superiors and third parties can improve the situation. [Kotter \(1996\)](#) points out that communicating a vision for change can be remarkably difficult. The vision may be brought up at meetings, featured in the company newsletter and included in training for new employees, but it might not be reinforced in personal interactions. This study contributes to trust-repair theory by proposing that adequate and open information, not only from the employer but also especially when conveyed in personal conversations in superior-subordinate relationships, and a well-developed discussion culture throughout the organization are critical aspects in repairing employee trust in the change context.

In a longitudinal multimethod case study in the context of Danish industry, [Sørensen et al. \(2011\)](#) found that organizational change creates uncertainty among employees, and strong management actions conveying integrity, competence and benevolence can rebuild trust in such situations. Similarly, this study illustrates the importance of strong management actions that combined with competence, skill and knowledge is capable of instilling trust in the working relationship ([Butler, 1991](#)). Employees expect managers to have the ability to make smart decisions and to lead change. Thus, effectively implemented and strong management actions can repair employee trust following organizational change.

The involvement of third parties to help repair trust has rarely been studied, aside from the study performed by [Mueller et al. \(2015\)](#), which examined auditing as an expert business

process after the global financial crisis. Trust transferability is identified as the central trust-repair mechanism in the paper by [Mueller et al. \(2015\)](#). Third-party involvement in trust repair is a promising idea. Indeed, it has long been recognized that third parties can act as intermediaries to broker trust ([Coleman, 1990](#)). Similarly, this study revealed that outsourcing some processes and services may be wise after organizational change because a third party with specific expertise might help to maintain trust within an organization. Trust repairing at multiple organizational levels (at organizational and individual levels) as well as transferring responsibilities highlight the inherently multilevel nature of organizational trust repair, as [Bachmann et al. \(2015\)](#) suggested. The involvement of third parties can repair employee trust after organizational change especially after competence-based violations.

[Schwartz \(1992\)](#) proposed that benevolence is a self-transcendent value that shows a willingness to transcend selfish concerns for the benefit of others. In the field of HRM, benevolence implies that one is helpful, forgiving, honest, loyal and responsible, especially in relation to people who are frequently contacted. For example, superiors can promote the preservation and enhancement of subordinates' welfare and make the organization's HR strategy visible to staff in their everyday routines ([Mayer et al., 1995](#)). Smart managers do good things for their employees without any egocentric or opportunistic motives ([Mayer et al., 1995](#); [Mishra, 1996](#)). With emotional intelligence, an organization can facilitate change in a positive climate and influence the culture to be more adaptive and agile. The result can be an organization that demonstrates sensitivity even during significant change transformations ([Chrusciel, 2006](#)). Accordingly, managers' benevolent behavior and emotional intelligence show that they are interested in employee welfare and, by implementing benevolent personnel policies and providing emotional support for employees, managers can repair employee trust after benevolence-based violations.

Ethical behavior encompasses the attributes of empathy and humility—which are primarily virtues of the heart—as well as more practical attributes, such as wisdom, courage, self-restraint and justice, which are primarily virtues of the mind and will; in combination these attributes form a foundation of leadership ([Havard, 2007](#)). Additionally, external and internal laws, rules, policies and processes ([Sitkin and Roth, 1993](#)) are components that help in the governance of behavior and embody the ethics of an organization and, as [Bachmann et al. \(2015\)](#) assert, determine what is considered acceptable or unacceptable conduct. [Six and Skinner \(2010\)](#) proposed that clear and explicit expectations, constructive voices and positive interactions by both parties help to repair trust in interpersonal relationships between employees. This study highlights the importance of superiors providing emotional support for their subordinates if there is a lack of care in an organization; that importance stemming from empathy being more likely to occur between individuals who interact more frequently ([Levenson and Reuf, 1997](#)). Moreover, employees expect benevolence and good public behavior from all levels of an organization. In summary, ethical behavior can repair employee trust after benevolence-based violations.

Change can also be a learning experience. If a change situation can be evaluated together after the event, the whole organization can learn and open discussion can help to make sense of the change decisions. Sense-making ([Weick, 1995](#)) involves a collective learning process leading to a shared understanding and an accepted account of what went wrong and why. Sense-making incorporates the attributional trust repair mechanism and includes practices such as explanations, which help to understand the necessity of change. The sense-making process and learning together about change increase knowledge and can thus repair employee trust in a change organization following competence-based violations.

Practical considerations

Employees expect major trust-repair practices to take place at the level of top management where the change decision originated; however, professional superiors also play an important role following organizational change. Accordingly, this study revealed why it is important to

recruit superiors conscientiously because a professional and empathetic superior can significantly contribute to maintaining and restoring employee trust. In addition, if an organization does not have sufficient experience with change management, it is recommended that it utilize external trusted parties, so staff can receive the necessary practical support.

Limitations and conclusion

In line with most qualitative studies, this paper provides an in-depth analysis of a single phenomenon in a specific context, and the findings cannot be generalized in a statistical sense; however, as Yin (2003) suggested, the results of qualitative studies are valuable in an analytical sense because they clarify and extend the understanding of existing theory. Indeed, the purpose of a case study is to increase one's understanding, not to make generalizations. Similarly, the abductive research approach focuses on specific situations and their unique features (Kovács and Spens, 2005) in order to extend the previous theory. Therefore, even if this study does not yield statistically generalizable findings, the results are analytically rich and valuable.

Generally, qualitative research involves less data than quantitative research, has data that is always unique and incorporates the researcher's interpretations. In this study, data collection methods, key informants (Tremblay, 1957), the Gioia data analysis procedure (Gioia et al., 2012) and previous theory were used to guide and improve the credibility and validity of the data and the robustness of the results (Lincoln and Guba, 1985), and moreover, saturation points were achieved.

Guo et al. (2017) see trust and distrust as separate concepts. Initially, a relationship might involve trust or distrust. When trust is violated, different approaches for repairing it may have varying levels of effectiveness due to the unique factors associated with trust and distrust (Guo et al., 2017). A promising avenue for future research is to examine the effectiveness of trust-repair practices after organizational change when the initial situation in an organization is marked by distrust. It also could be fruitful to investigate how previolation factors, such as levels of work engagement, job satisfaction, or resilience among employees, impact trust repair. Further, future research should quantitatively measure the trust-repair practices identified herein. This qualitative study developed measurable dimensions of trust repair that provide valuable information and insights into the topic, and it would be useful if the identified practices could be statistically tested and generalized to develop a scale.

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Repairing trust within teams after organizational change

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Repairing trust within teams after organizational change

Repairing trust
within teams

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Abstract

Purpose – This study examines trust-repair practices at the team level after organizational change.

Design/methodology/approach – A qualitative research approach was adopted, and data were collected from key informants through focus group discussions and interviews. The data analysis involved thematic coding and followed the structured procedure.

Findings – This study found that after organization change, trust can be repaired at the team level by improving team leaders' information sharing and knowledge in change management, and by enforcing communication, collaboration and ethical behaviour among team members.

Research limitations/implications – This paper makes three key contributions by (1) identifying trust violations in teams, (2) proposing trust-repair mechanisms and (3) extending the understanding of trust-repair and preservation at the team level following organizational change.

Practical implications – This paper provides practical information from a real-work context and can improve managers' understanding of active trust-repair.

Originality/value – This paper outlines active trust-repair mechanisms in an organizational change context and expands the current theory by presenting novel insights into organizational trust-repair at the team level. This study contributes to trust literature by proposing promising avenues for future trust-repair research.

Keywords Organizational change, Trust-repair practices, Teams, Knowledge management, Collaboration, Information sharing

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1. Introduction

Organizational changes, such as downsizings or other structural changes, have increased significantly. Organizations' internal crises, along with external societal crises, conflicts and even pandemics as at present with COVID-19, can quickly weaken an organization's performance. Organizational changes create a new situation throughout an organization and can affect uncertainty and feelings of vulnerability among employees (Kähkönen, 2020). Change also challenges trust among team members, can hinder efficient operations and impact team performance (Costa *et al.*, 2017). The high importance of trust raises the question of how team leaders and other team members can repair trust in teams when organizations are facing many rapid changes (Morgeson *et al.*, 2015).

On the theoretical side, several trust-repair models are proposed (Bachmann *et al.*, 2015; Gillespie and Dietz, 2009; Lewicki and Bunker, 1996; Tomlinson and Mayer, 2009). Empirically, however, there is less research at the team level (Kim *et al.*, 2006; Lewicki *et al.*, 2016). Most of the scant research that does exist at that level has dealt with competence-based trust violations (Sverdrup and Stensaker, 2018). In addition, organizational trust-repair research at the team level has dominated mainly on laboratory experiments to measure the differences among a few trust-repair practices, for example, the effect of apology vs denial

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(Kim *et al.*, 2012). In this study, I adopt a multilevel approach used by Costa *et al.* (2017) that encompasses both individual- and team-level conceptualizations in order to reflect the dynamic nature of trust in teams. In addition, this research investigates trust-repair mechanisms in a change context using a qualitative research method, with the focus on integrity-based, benevolence-based and competence-based trust violations at the team level.

This study includes interviews and focus groups with 22 key informants, consisting of team members, union representatives and team leaders. The main contributions are (1) identifying trust violations in teams, (2) proposing trust-repair mechanisms and (3) extending the understanding of trust-repair and preservation at the team level following organizational change.

2. Theoretical background

One definition of interpersonal trust is “a psychological state comprising the intention to accept vulnerability based upon positive expectations of the intentions or behaviour of another” (Rousseau *et al.*, 1998, p. 395). I adopt this definition at the team level as well (Lewicki and Brinsfield, 2017) because scholars researching trust in teams have largely proposed trust as a psychological state (Fulmer and Gelfand, 2012) that is affected by the complex interrelations among intentions, dispositions and expectations (Mayer *et al.*, 1995; Rousseau *et al.*, 1998). Mayer *et al.* (1995) identified three dimensions of trustworthiness: ability, benevolence and integrity (the ABI model) and I have adopted that same ABI model. The model suits well when team members’ expectations regarding another member’s competence, benevolence or integrity have not been met. I also adopted the multilevel approach used by Costa *et al.* (2017), which encompasses both individual- and team-level conceptualizations to reflect the dynamic and emergent nature of trust in teams. The approach treats trust within a team as based on the relationships among the individuals who comprise that team.

Dirks *et al.* (2009, p. 69) reported that trust-repair occurs “when a transgression causes the positive state(s) that constitute(s) the relationship to disappear and/or negative states to arise, as perceived by one or both parties, and activities by one or both parties substantively return the relationship to a positive state”. This general definition of relationship repair can be used to understand trust-repair within teams and I adopted it for this study. This study focuses on trust-repair after organizational change at the team level, taking into account the individuals within a team, but it does not address trust-repair at the organizational level (e.g. employer–employee relationship). Further, this research focuses only on employee perspectives, rather than those of external stakeholders such as customers, suppliers, shareholders or regulators.

Next, I discuss the state of the art in conceptual and empirical research on employee trust-repair with a particular focus on empirical research at the team level. Trust in teams involves a continuous social process of sense-making (Weick, 1995), interpreting, signalling and reciprocating, which highlights the dynamic nature of trust including active trust (Giddens, 1990, 1994; Luhmann, 1979, 1988; Möllering, 2013). The conceptualization of active trust emphasizes the active role of organizational members in the constitution of trust (Gustafsson *et al.*, 2020). Accordingly, maintaining high trust levels within a team requires deliberate and continuous action from team members. In teams, trust-repair seems to revolve around improving information sharing and social relations among team members (Sverdrup and Stensaker, 2018). Social exchange theory has been successfully applied in research on trust at the team level (Serva *et al.*, 2005) and also applies to this research.

I carefully reviewed the previous literature in order to capture all relevant empirical studies on employee trust-repair. A systematic review of previous literature followed the structured literature review process proposed by Tranfield *et al.* (2003) and involving five stages. To ensure the literature search was comprehensive, I used two of the dominant databases in social sciences, Web of Science and Scopus (Falagas *et al.*, 2008) and pre-defined

criteria. In order to avoid possible selection bias, the screening and selection of the articles were verified independently by two researchers. After all those stages, 28 relevant articles were identified and five of those dealt with employee trust-repair at the team or group level are integrated and presented in Table 1.

At the team level, Kim *et al.* (2012) investigated *apologies vs denial* in the hiring context and they found that repairing trust is generally more difficult with groups than with individuals because groups can share their opinions in a way that can reinforce negative feelings. The same study also found that after competence-based violation groups were less trusting when trustees denied culpability, thus an apology was suggested. However, after integrity-based violation groups were less trusting when trustees apologized, because it confirmed guilt.

Pate *et al.* (2012) investigated a senior management team's attempt to regain trust through addressing workplace bullying. The study found that strong actions by the senior management, for example openly and honestly providing *emotional support*, had a significant effect on perceptions of bullying in the UK public sector, where organizational surveys had indicated a downward trend in trust in senior management teams, in parallel with growing concerns about bullying and harassment. Similarly, between middle managers and the top management in the hotel industry context, Webber *et al.* (2012) found that after competence-based trust violations, the perceived emotional support was significantly and positively related to trust in the top management.

In the change context Sverdrup and Stensaker (2018) found that *increasing the quality of social exchange* at work by renegotiating the psychological contract could help recover trust between the broader groups of senior management and employees. Sørensen *et al.* (2011) studied and analysed how trust dynamics developed over time in two Danish manufacturing firms affected by major change programmes. They found that organizational change creates uncertainty among employees and that *strong management actions* can rebuild trust in such situations. Thus, active attempts to protect trust can lead to positive trust outcomes but if low trust turns into distrust without any trust-repair practices, the result may be deadlock that both parties find difficult to break.

There are reasons to believe that little is known about how teams can actively repair trust after organizational change and after competence-, benevolence- and integrity-based trust violations. Thus, my aim is to develop an empirically informed theoretical understanding of how organizational trust-repair can be implemented by first identifying the violations and then asking the following question: Which active trust-repair mechanisms do team leaders and team members can use within teams after organizational change? Mayer *et al.* (1995)

Author(s) and year	Methodology	Reason for the decline in trust	Trust-repair responses and types
Kim <i>et al.</i> (2012)	Laboratory experiment	Employees' previous errors in the hiring context	Apology, denial (verbal)
Pate <i>et al.</i> (2012)	Survey	The founding principle of respect had been contravened in an organization (bullying, harassment)	Emotional support (verbal/substantive)
Sørensen <i>et al.</i> (2011)	Longitudinal multimethod case study	Major change programmes	Strong management actions (organizational reforms)
Sverdrup and Stensaker (2018)	Longitudinal qualitative study	Strategic change	Increasing the social exchange quality (substantive)
Webber <i>et al.</i> (2012)	Survey	The lack of support	Emotional support (verbal/substantive)

Table 1.
Integrated findings on previous trust-repair literature at team/group level

dimensions of trust as well as trust-repair practices identified in the current literature act as guiding principles in this study. My aim is with abductive analysis construct the best available explanation for the research problem (Dubois and Gadde, 2002).

My philosophical position in this study is *post-positivism*. The main difference of post-positivism to positivism is that it epistemological recognizes that we cannot be absolutely certain of truth when studying the behaviour of humans (Creswell, 2009). Post-positivism relies on the ontological position of *critical realism* (Guba and Lincoln, 2005) which assumes that there is a real and objective reality out there, but that our understanding of it is limited by human cognition and subjective views (Guba and Lincoln, 2005). Critical realism is useful in case studies because it is suitable for the analysis of complex entities, such as organizations and relationships of organizations (Easton, 2010).

3. Methodology

3.1 Research approach

This study was conducted in a non-profit organization in Finland. In the case organization downsizing took place in 2008, 2013 and 2015. In addition, technological and internal structural changes (e.g. new team and department divisions) have been ongoing. The views of the several staff groups are considered to ensure a multifaceted perspective on how organizational change has affected the teams. This study also captured the perspective of those employees who left the organization after the staff reductions because the treatment of exiting employees may affect team dynamics. An abductive research approach was chosen. This approach is a fruitful method when the goal of the research is to make discoveries and extend previous theory (Dubois and Gadde, 2002). I used previous theory as a pillar which provides guidelines, but previous theory does not explain all the perspectives within the specific change context under this study (Dubois and Gadde, 2002). An in-depth single case study was performed with qualitative data to discover the trust-repair practices utilized at the team level in the case organization. Case studies are particularly useful in organization studies and when the aim is to understand diverse social phenomena in real-life environments (Yin, 2003).

3.2 Data collection and analysis

The study used semi-structured focus group discussions and interviews as data sources. Six interviews were implemented and found useful because they allow the researcher freedom to follow up on different perspectives (Leavy, 2014). Three discussion groups were formed by inviting key informants. This approach ensured that information came directly from knowledgeable people and that the interviews and focus group discussions provided data and insights that could not be obtained by employing other methods (Tremblay, 1957). All key informants had worked in the case organization for a long time, at least ten years; thus, they had a long-term view of changes over time. What is more, the most significant changes were clearly remembered because the rate of change had accelerated in recent years.

Sixteen participants were divided into three internally homogeneous groups based on their work unit and hierarchical position. The focus group guide was pilot-tested on two informants within the target organization and adjusted accordingly. Two focus group discussions were conducted in May and one in June 2018. The first focus group included team members, the second included team leaders and the third included union representatives. Five to six participants from each group participated in the group-specific discussions.

The questions included the following examples: "If you have felt that your faith in one or more of these dimensions (ability, benevolence, integrity) deteriorated during or after change, indicate which dimension deteriorated at the team level" and "What do you think are the best acts, practices, or behaviors to exhibit when there is a need to protect or repair trust during

and after change at team level?” Each focus group discussion lasted approximately 90 min, for a total length of 264 min. All the focus group discussions were recorded and fully transcribed, and the first was analysed with the aid of another researcher experienced in using focus groups.

Similar to the focus group approach, key informants were invited to participate in interviews (Tremblay, 1957). Four interviews were conducted in May and two in June 2018. These were semi-structured interviews, and had the same themes as the focus group discussions. Two informants were team leaders, one was a union representative and three were team members. Each interview lasted about 30–45 min, for a total of 214 min. All interviews were recorded and fully transcribed. Data collection stopped when the same opinions began to recur, indicating a saturation point had been reached.

Next, the data analysis was implemented. Analysis involved thematic coding and followed an analytical structured process. First, the data arranged into first-codes, after this into second-order codes and finally aggregated into theoretical dimensions (Gioia *et al.*, 2012). This method was justified because it is a straightforward analytical process that increased the credibility of qualitative research by clearly demonstrating the progression from raw data to theoretical dimensions (Zimmermann *et al.*, 2015).

4. Findings

Table 2 illustrates the data analysis framework and identified trust violations. Lack of communication, incompetence of the team leaders and an absence of ethical behaviour and collaboration were the major problems cited in all respondent groups.

4.1 Effective information sharing

Lack of communication affected trust levels and caused both competence- and integrity-based trust violations in teams. In some cases, participants were dissatisfied with their work

First-order codes	Second-order themes	Aggregated dimensions
(1) Information provided by team leaders was inadequate (2) Team leaders avoided answering questions	Lack of information sharing and communication	Lack of communication
Team leaders had not experienced in change management (1) There was a lack of team leaders' experience (2) Team leaders' supervisory work was incompetent	Lack of knowledge in change management Lack of leadership skills	Incompetence of the team leaders
(1) Dismissed team members were angry or behaved improperly (2) Team leader used power in an unpleasant way	Lack of constructive behaviour	Lack of ethical behaviour and collaboration
(1) Team leaders did not to provide support to dismissed team members (2) Only colleagues provided emotional support for dismissed team members (3) Team leaders did not provide support for team members	Lack of support	
Collaboration between team members was not continuous	Lack of collaboration	

Table 2.
Identified trust violations at the team level after organizational change

JOCM

team's approach to implementing internal communication. The limitations of communication were especially reflected in the interactions between individual team members and the team leader, in which the former felt the latter did not provide enough information. One team member described: "Our team leader clearly avoided team members' questions". This was probably partly because the employer had given the team leaders guidelines to follow when discussing the situation with team members. The team leaders felt that this guidance had been quite well organized, but some also felt that they could not speak openly with their team members. When the parameters regarding what could be communicated to, or discussed with, team members remained unclear, some team leaders passed on information about the status of the process but communicated little else. One team leader stated, "It was a little unclear if one could say if a team members' job was safe, and then nothing was really related to anyone, and everyone was in a state of fear for a very long time." Accordingly, I propose the following: P1. Team leaders' effective information sharing can repair violated trust among team members after organizational change.

4.2 Knowledge in change management

Team leaders' incompetence in change management affected competence-based trust violations in the teams. All the informants in the focus groups agreed that none of the team leaders had experience of change management and lacked any training on the issue. Downsizing was a new situation in the case organization, and as one team member observed, "I think that team leaders did not have any change management experience". Ability to lead change did not matter previously in the case organization, but their absence was clearly visible in the downsizing context.

All the focus groups expressed how supervisory training should be continual. Many team leaders had only recently stepped into a new role, and also the downsizing situation was an entirely new one. Therefore, their skills in the downsizing situation were not as strong as they could have been. Team members expect team leaders to be able to handle change. Thus, effectively implemented management actions expressing the leaders' competence, skills and knowledge can protect team members' trust. In accordance with the findings, I propose the following: P2. Team leaders' knowledge of change management can repair violated trust among team members after organizational change.

4.3 Ethical behaviour and collaboration

A lack of ethical behaviour and collaboration were a major source of trust violations and caused benevolence-based trust violations in particular in teams. Constructive behaviour, and especially a benevolent attitude towards other team members, plays an important role in actors' evaluations of another party's trustworthiness. In a crisis, team members are frequently not fully capable of constructive behaviour. For example, some dismissed team members directed their anger at being dismissed at their colleagues. One team member said, "When she [colleague] came with the signed slip, I was a little taken aback when she asked me to explain why I got to stay and why she did not". Interviewees pointed out that cooperation among team members was not consistent. Team members felt that they were in the same situation as other team members during the changes, but at the same time the sense of competition seemed to intensify. Some team members remained silent, while others felt the need to discuss the changes. Dismissed team members and other team members worked together in the same office several months after downsizing because the redundant team members were required to work a six-month notice period. Many felt that the atmosphere was uncomfortable, and discussions were less open and positive than before. However, those team members able to continue open discussions protected the trust among team members more effectively than those who were unable to engage in such discussions. One team member

stated, "It was just a terribly stressful time trying to work in the same room, and the other team member was in a bad mood".

Repairing trust within teams

Emotional support plays a significant role in change contexts, especially in team leader–team member relationships. The data analysis revealed that in some team leaders were unable to provide emotional support. This was especially common in cases of dismissed team members; some team leaders admitted that facing employees who were to be dismissed was difficult, stressful and even a cause of anxiety because many dismissed employees wanted to know who had made the decision to dismiss them. One interviewed team member perceived the team leaders' support for dismissed team members as follows: "The team leaders really failed to provide support". One team leader viewed the situation similarly: "Humanity was forgotten after the dismissals in that in a way, those who had been in the building for 20 years became ruffraff overnight". The union representatives agreed: "And yes, it was noticeable after the downsizing that team members would have required help in many instances; they would have needed support from their team leader. Team leaders did not realize that, and instead they even began to get scared to go among their team". Somewhat surprisingly, none of the dismissed interviewees stated that the support they had received from their own team leader was insufficient. Rather, they stated that other team members were incapable of giving emotional support to their dismissed colleagues. In fact, their immediate team leaders were described as quite empathetic. One dismissed team member was very surprised at how her colleagues reacted; some essentially stopped greeting her in the corridor, and this lack of empathy stung: "It felt really awful that for some colleagues it was apparently so difficult to face me that they were clearly trying to walk past me along the wall of the corridor". Another team member saw the matter differently in his own team: "Without support from colleagues, the dismissed ones would have been really alone". Accordingly, I propose the following: P3. Ethical behaviour and collaboration between team members can repair violated trust within teams after organizational change.

4.4 Summarized findings

This study proposed a trust-repair model at the team level by, first, examining three types of trust violations: (1) lack of communication, (2) incompetence on the part of team leaders and (3) lack of ethical behaviour and collaboration. Second, the study identified mechanisms that can be used to repair trust: (1) effective information sharing, (2) knowledge in change management and (3) ethical behaviour and collaboration. The most significant ideas are shown in [Figure 1](#), which presents the integrated trust-repair model at the team level after organizational change. This means that when repairing team members' trust, it takes place in two phases. Trust-repair phase 1 includes team members' feedbacks and then diagnosis about trust violations after change. Trust-repair phase 2 includes trust-repair mechanism identified and implemented.

[Table 3](#) summarized extended findings at team/group level and theoretical contributions. After competence-based trust violations team leaders' knowledge of change management can repair violated trust among team members. Both, after integrity and competence-based trust violations team leaders' effective information sharing can repair violated trust among team members. After benevolence-based trust violations which may occur between all team members, ethical behaviour and collaboration between team members can repair violated trust within teams.

5. Discussion

Organizational changes have increased significantly and challenge trust among team members. This study aimed to understand how team leaders and other team members can

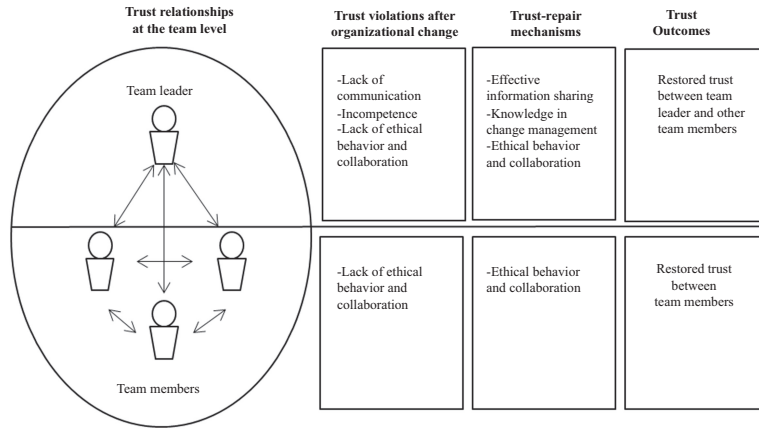


Figure 1. The integrated trust-repair model at the team level after organizational change

Ability	Benevolence	Integrity
<p>Strong management actions (or) increasing the social exchange quality (s)</p> <p>Emotional support (v/s)</p> <p>Apology (v)</p>	<p>Strong management actions (or) increasing the social exchange quality (s)</p> <p>Emotional support (v/s)</p> <p><i>Ethical behaviour and collaboration (or/s)</i></p>	<p>Strong management actions (or) increasing the social exchange quality (s)</p> <p>Emotional support (v/s)</p> <p>Apology (v)</p>
<p>Denial (v)</p> <p><i>Effective information sharing (v)</i></p> <p><i>Knowledge of change management (or)</i></p>		<p>Denial (v)</p> <p><i>Effective information sharing (v)</i></p>

Note(s): Verbal (v), Substantive (s), Organizational reforms (or), new insights in italic

Table 3. Summary of extended findings at team/group level

repair trust after changes. This research is theoretically valuable because despite previous research on building and repairing organizational trust, the understanding of how to repair trust within teams is still limited. This paper offers three key contributions to trust theory. First, it contributes to trust theory by advancing the understanding of trust violations at the team level. At that level, in situations of change, there may be competence-based, benevolence-based and integrity-based trust violations (Sørensen *et al.*, 2011; Sverdrup and Stensaker, 2018).

Because change is usually organized by the top management (employer), employees expect the most significant of trust-repair actions to be implemented among the top management (Kähkönen, 2020). However, because organizations operate systematically, the effects of change also flow to the team level. It would appear that at the team level, the most impactful trust violations occur within individuals' social interactions. Negative verbal and behavioural expressions and actions, such as lack of collaboration and lack of ethical behaviour, cause trust violations among team members. Team leaders' incompetence regarding knowledge of change management also easily affects competence-based trust violations among team members.

The second contribution is the integrated model of trust (Figure 1). Trust within a team demands continuous and successful social processes (Möllering, 2013) between team members, taking into account the dynamic nature of trust including active trust (Giddens, 1990, 1994; Luhmann, 1979, 1988). This means that a high trust level within a team requires active and continuous work by team members and trust-repair mechanisms to be introduced. I therefore define trust-repair mechanisms at the team level as “active and continuous interactive practices to restore team members’ violated trust to a past state”. Such acts require team members to show goodwill towards each other and to possess the desire to forget past violations by improving social exchanges with effective information sharing, ethical behaviour and collaboration. Based on the previous literature, researchers broadly accept separating trust violations according to trust dimensions and target trust-repair accordingly (Sørensen *et al.*, 2011; Kim *et al.*, 2012). By increasing their constructive voices and positive interactions, team members can help restore trust within a team (Six and Skinner, 2010). If team members are capable of ethical behaviour, including a benevolent attitude towards other team members, and can work together constructively even during changes, they can even avoid benevolence- and integrity-based trust violations and ensure trust remains at its existing level despite the change situation. This means that every team member needs to be heard and seen, and team members should also have the right to express their opinions regarding appropriate activities. All team members should feel that they are valued members of the team, regardless of education, position or role. In addition, employees in particular expected that team leaders possess conversation and interaction skills, support capabilities and the ability to take strong management actions that reflect honesty, benevolence and fairness (see also Sørensen *et al.*, Webber *et al.*, 2012). If a team leader has strong skills and the ability and knowledge to handle change, competence-based violations can be avoided. If a violation of trust has already occurred, additional efforts will be required. Increased, timely communication and increased team leader knowledge of change management can help restore a team member’s trust in the team leader.

Kim *et al.* (2012) found that repairing trust is generally more difficult with groups than with individuals because group members can share their opinions in a way that can further reinforce negative feelings. Further, I suggest that repairing trust within a team after organizational change is always more difficult than protect existing trust during a period of change. Proactively avoiding trust violations is the best approach. Accordingly, the third contribution is an extended understanding of active trust (Giddens, 1990, 1994; Luhmann, 1988) at the team level. I believe that, in a similar manner as attempts to preserve trust during organizational disruption in the employer–employee relationship (Gustafsson *et al.*, 2020), active and conscious attempts to preserve trust during organizational change are needed at the team level too. If team members cannot actively and consciously protect trust within a team during the change itself, trust may have to be repaired after the change. Without trust-preservation practices or trust-repair practices there is a significant risk that the performance of the work team and the results achieved in the team will also be weakened.

5.1 Limitations and future research

Qualitative findings cannot be generalized in a statistical sense. However, this paper has provided an analysis in a change context, and the results are theoretically valuable because they clarify and extend the understanding of existing theory (Yin, 2003). In this study, focus group discussions and interviews proved to be suitable methods, and the information obtained in the discussions was true and clearly described the informants’ experiences. Key informants (Tremblay, 1957), the Gioia data analysis procedure (Gioia *et al.*, 2012) and previous theory acted as guidelines to improve the credibility and validity of the data and the robustness of the results (Lincoln and Guba, 1985), and saturation was achieved.

A promising avenue for future research would be to examine the effectiveness of trust-repair mechanisms in an organizational change context while taking into account pre-violation factors. Employees' work engagement, job satisfaction, resilience and stress levels (even additional stress caused by Covid-19) might influence how well individuals and teams can protect and repair trust during and after organizational changes. Furthermore, it is highly recommended that future research quantitatively measure the trust-repair mechanisms identified in this article. This qualitative study developed measurable dimensions of trust-repair at the team level that provide valuable information and insight into the topic, and it would be useful to statistically test and generalize the identified practices to further develop validated trust-repair scale. This research was implemented in the non-profit Finnish organization. It would be useful investigating trust-repair practices at the team level also in other fields, example in industry or business as well as in other contexts and cultures.

5.2 Conclusions

This paper outlined active trust-repair mechanisms at the team level in an organizational change context. The results expand the current theory by presenting novel insights into organizational trust-repair practices at the team level. This study highlights that trust-repair after organizational change takes place in two phases. In the first phase team members' give feedbacks and diagnosis about trust violations can be carried out. In the second phase suitable trust-repair mechanism will implement within team. This study also provides practical information from a real-work context at the team level which can improve managers' and team leaders' understanding of active trust-repair within teams. In addition, this paper contributes to trust-repair literature by proposing promising avenues for future trust-repair research.

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Publication IV

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Trust repair practices: scale development and validation

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Trust-repair practices: scale development and validation

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Abstract

Despite increasing research attention to the concept of trust repair, no valid and comprehensive measure for trust-repair practices has yet been developed. In this study, we developed a construct and scale to measure trust-repair practices in organizations. The initial Trust-Repair Practices Scale (TRPS) was completed by 282 employees of a non-profit organization and was validated by 101 employees of the administrative unit of the Finnish Army. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) confirmed the seven-factor model with a 14-item scale. The scale was found to be reliable, valid, and stable across the sample. This study contributes significant insights to the current literature on trust repair. For managers, our findings provide a valuable instrument to assess the state of trust-repair practices in their organizations. To the best of our best knowledge, ours is the first study to demonstrate a comprehensive and operationally valid measure of trust-repair practices in the organizational context.

Keywords: employee trust repair, trust-repair practices, Trust-Repair Practices Scale, scale development

1. Introduction

Trust is a fundamental factor influencing almost all aspects of social and economic activities, including their effective and efficient organization. Likewise, and to the same degree, trust impacts all organizations and their employees (McEvily et al., 2003; Schoorman et al., 2007). Although much is known about the antecedents and consequences of organizational trust, until now much less has been known about its dynamic aspects. During the last decade, researchers have turned their attention to understanding trust repair, an increasingly important research topic given the proliferation of dynamic and unpredictable environments involving constant change and even disruptions (Gillespie & Dietz, 2009; Kähkönen, 2020; Kramer & Lewicki, 2010; Lewicki & Brinsfield, 2017). However, despite such increased scholarly and applied interest in trust-repair practices, a comprehensive understanding of their effectiveness remains elusive.

In the contemporary organizational context of fast-paced socio-technical and economic change, trust repair has become a highly relevant issue for many organizations. With ever-increasing economic and social pressures around the world, even profitable businesses are undergoing staff reductions and other structural changes. The 2020 Edelman Trust Barometer reveals that despite a strong global economy and near full employment, employees (and people in general) fear the future and their role in it, and none of the four fundamental societal institutions that this study measured—

government, business, NGOs, and media—are trusted. The 2020 Edelman Trust Barometer proposed that institutions must embrace a new way to effectively build trust: balancing competence with ethical behavior (20th Annual Edelman Trust Barometer). In addition, the Covid-19 pandemic has enhanced general uncertainty and accelerated the ongoing development of new work practices, such as technology-mediated communication and remote work, which have become the “new normal” for knowledge workers. Hand in hand with organizational and environmental changes has emerged the need to focus on repairing employee trust after numerous trust violations.

In the current dynamic and unpredictable environments, trust violations are becoming more complex, requiring not only attention but also concerted action from management. Extant research on organizational trust repair, however, has primarily focused on its conceptual development (e.g., Bachmann et al., 2015; Gillespie & Dietz, 2009; Lewicki & Bunker, 1996; Tomlinson & Mayer, 2009), and as such empirical studies on trust-repair practices are limited (Kähkönen, 2020). For the purpose of this article, trust-repair practices are defined as “active organizational and managerial practices to repair employee trust to the past state” (Kähkönen, 2020, p. 2) (i.e., to restore positive expectations of trustworthiness; see Gillespie & Siebert, 2018; Kramer & Lewicki, 2010).

Research with the purpose of measuring organizational trust repair has mainly relied on laboratory experiments of trust-repair practices like apologies vs. denial (e.g., Ferrin et al., 2007; Kim et al., 2004; Kim et al., 2012), penance vs. regulation vs. apologies (Dirks et al., 2011), or apologies alone (De Cremer & Schouten, 2008; Kim et al., 2006; Maddux et al., 2011). Previous literature has shed light on specific aspects of organizational trust repair, but no comprehensive measurement instrument has yet been developed to demonstrate the effectiveness of various trust-repairing practices. In addition, most research on organizational trust repair has been performed at the individual level. Trust repair has been studied, for example, in the context of the erosion of trust between managers and top management (Elangovan et al., 2015), with regard to the dyadic trust relationships between two employees (Six & Skinner, 2010), and with respect to employee trust in groups of managers after organizational change (Sørensen et al., 2011). At the organizational level, trust repair has been studied much less often, typically after a major crisis, such as organizational fraud, a data manipulation scandal (Gillespie et al., 2014), or a corruption scandal (Eberl et al., 2015), utilizing qualitative methods.

In this paper, we describe the step-by-step approach used to develop the construct of organizational trust repair and a valid measurement scale for assessing employee perceptions of the most effectiveness trust-repair practices in an organization. First, we discuss the role and nature of organizational trust and trust-repair practices. Second, we develop the construct and scale on which organizational trust and trust-repair practices were measured. Finally, we conclude with a discussion of the theoretical and practical implications of our research.

2. Background and previous research

2.1 Organizational trust and trust repair

At its simplest, trust is the willingness to be vulnerable (Mayer et al., 1995). However, organizational trust is a complex concept involving the demand for some basic level of trust both in the institution and in being a member thereof (Luhmann, 2017). When an organizational trust violation occurs, it can encompass a variety of different organizational levels or referents (Fulmer & Gelfand, 2012). Trust repair may be needed, for example, in bilateral interactions comprising subordinate–superior pairs, in relationships between colleagues or working teams, or in relationships between middle management and senior management. Organizational-level trust also entails impersonal elements confined not to a particular person but to the trustworthiness of the organization more generally (Vanhala et al., 2011). In their definition of relationship repair, Dirks et

al. (2009, p. 69) specified that it “occurs when a transgression causes the positive state(s) that constitute(s) the relationship to disappear and/or negative states to arise, as perceived by one or both parties, and activities by one or both parties substantively return the relationship to a positive state.” They added that this definition is also applicable in the organizational context.

2.2 Trust repair concept

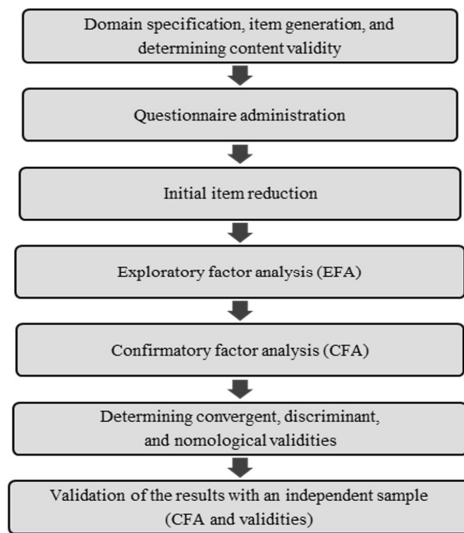
Dirks et al. (2009) developed a process model for trust repair that emphasizes the temporal nature of the process, distinguishing between: (1) pre-transgression and the state of trust prior to a transgression, (2) disruption, which identifies what factors are changed by the transgression and how, (3) trust repair, which specifies what actions are taken to repair the violation, and (4) post-repair, which clarifies the state of trust after the repair. They further identified three key theoretical mechanisms underlying relationship repair: (1) attributional, (2) structural, and (3) social-equilibrium (Dirks et al., 2009). The attributional mechanism draws on the principles of attribution theory (Heider, 1958) and can be applied to different levels of analysis, particularly when the violator is an individual, a group, or an organization. From the perspective of attribution theory, the trustor tries to explain the situation by using sentiments, motives, and external factors and by changing attributions, whereas the violator seeks to re-cast the understanding of the transgression to present themselves in a more trustworthy light through tactics such as denial, explanation, and social testimonies from sympathizers (Dirks et al., 2009). The social-equilibrium mechanism, on the other hand, addresses negative affect and exchange, although it might indirectly address the repair of trust itself (Ren & Gray, 2009). Social equilibrium involves engaging in social rituals (e.g., apologizing, punishment and penance, and offering compensation) to compensate for the violation and restore balance in the relationship, as well as to help resolve the conflict and re-establish the expectations of the relationship after the violation (2009). Lastly, from the structural perspective, trust violation leads to a breakdown in positive exchanges and increased negative exchanges. Therefore, trust is most effectively repaired when structural processes are put in place in which negative exchanges are discouraged and positive exchanges are encouraged (2009). Trust-repair practices include legalistic remedies, such as policies, procedures, contracts, and monitoring (Sitkin & Roth, 1993), that increase the reliability of future behavior and therefore facilitate the rebuilding of trust. In a complex organizational environment in which several types of trust-repair practices occur at multiple organizational levels (Fulmer & Gelfand, 2012), we applied a perspective that considered all these proposed theories (Dirks et al., 2009).

2.3 Trust-repair practices

For this study, we defined trust-repair practices as “*active organizational and managerial practices to restore employee trust to a past state*” (Kähkönen, 2020, pp. 2). Organizational trust repair involves a continuous social process of sense making (Weick, 1995), interpreting, signaling, and reciprocating, thereby highlighting the dynamic nature of trust, including active trust (Giddens, 1990, 1994; Luhmann, 1988, 2017; Möllering, 2013). The conceptualization of active trust emphasizes the active role of organizational members in the constitution of trust (Gustafsson et al., 2020). In contemporary dynamic and unpredictable environments, management can benefit greatly by paying continuous and active attention to employee trust levels across the organization (Kähkönen, 2020). Trust-repair practices can be compared to human resource management (HRM) practices when they focus on restoring positive employee perceptions (Gillespie & Dietz, 2009) and improving employee trust in management (Gillespie & Siebert, 2018; Kramer & Lewicki, 2010). In this paper, we discuss our development of a reliable and valid trust-repair practices scale. Below, we outline our empirical research, including our research methods and procedures.

3. Methods and procedures

This study adopted a two-phase—i.e., qualitative–quantitative—mixed-methods approach to scale development (Creswell, 2009). First, we developed the components for our Trust-Repair Practices Scale (TRPS). This phase involved an extensive literature review and meta-synthesis as well as a qualitative study employing focus groups and interviews. Then, based on the combined results from past literature, focus groups, and interviews, scale items were generated, and a questionnaire was created and administered to respondents. Next, in the quantitative phase, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was implemented to test the reliability of the TRPS (DeVellis, 2012; Harman, 1976), although it was initially employed to test the factor structure of the TRPS. Lastly, the main studies were conducted and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was performed. Our approach to scale development followed a procedure utilized widely in the literature (see, e.g., Hinkin, 1995, 1998): (1) domain specification, item generation, and establishment of content validity, (2) questionnaire administration, (3) initial item reduction, (4) EFA, (5) CFA, (6) determination of convergent, discriminant, and nomological validity, and (7) validation of the results with an independent sample (CFA and validities). In the following, we explain each phase in more detail. The scale development procedure is shown in Figure 1.



Note: EFA in Study 1, CFA in Studies 1 and 2

Figure 1. Scale development procedure (Hinkin, 1995, 1998).

3.1 Phase 1. Studies and measures before main quantitative tests

3.1.1 Domain specification

Domain specification involves clarifying the construct to be measured (DeVellis, 2012). This is important when describing intangible phenomena that cannot be observed directly, such as trust repair. We implemented domain specification with a systematic literature review, focus groups, and interviews.

We first carefully reviewed the previous literature in order to assess all relevant empirical studies on employee trust repair. Our systematic review of the previous literature followed the structured

literature review process proposed by Tranfield et al. (2003). To ensure that the literature search was comprehensive, we used two of the dominant databases in the social sciences—Web of Science and Scopus (Falagas et al., 2008)—and predefined criteria. In order to avoid possible selection bias, the screening and selection of the articles were verified independently by two researchers. After following the five stages proposed by Tranfield et al. (2003), the final sample contained 28 relevant articles. In addition, we analyzed several conceptual and review papers on trust repair (e.g., Bachmann et al., 2015; Dirks et al., 2009; Fulmer & Gelfand, 2012; Gillespie & Siebert, 2018; Kim, 2018; Kramer & Lewicki, 2010; Lewicki & Brinsfield, 2017) in order to identify additionally relevant empirical works and enhance our conceptual understanding.

After the literature review, three moderated focus groups and six semi-structured interviews with individuals were conducted. Perceptions of trust-repair practices were discussed in the focus groups and semi-structured interviews, which comprised employees from one non-profit organization. A total of 16 people participated in the three focus groups, while six people participated in the interviews. The first focus group consisted of subordinate employees (6), the second focus group of superior employees (5), and the third focus group of union representatives (5). All focus group discussions and interviews were recorded and fully transcribed, after which they were analyzed together with another researcher who had experience conducting focus group studies. The saturation point was reached in both the interviews and focus groups when no more novel information was generated. The data analysis was conducted via thematic coding and analysis (Gioia et al., 2012), which enhanced the credibility of the qualitative research by clearly demonstrating the progression from the raw data to the theoretical dimensions of interest (Zimmermann et al., 2015). To begin the analysis, all of the data were examined and then sorted into first-order codes describing the informants' experiences of organizational violations in the case organization. Next, the first-order codes were organized into second-order codes based on which codes were of theoretical interest. Lastly, aggregates were formed based on the second-order codes.

Based on the findings from the past literature, focus groups, and individual interviews, we integrated the results and developed the TRPS, which comprises seven relevant trust-repair factors, as shown in Table 1. Below, we discuss each factor in more detail.

Table 1. Trust-repair factors based on past literature, focus groups, and interviews

Trust-repair factors	Definition	Example of authors/FG
Transparent information sharing	The ability to be mentally open to new ideas, to freely share information, and to be receptive to and accept new ideas (Butler, 1991).	Bachmann et al. (2015); Grover et al. (2014); Focus groups
Strong management actions	Series of competence, skills, and knowledge which are realized as having the capacity to instill employee trust in management (Butler, 1991).	Pate et al. (2012); Sørensen et al. (2011); Focus groups
Benevolent personnel policies	Benevolence is a self-transcendent value that shows a willingness to transcend selfish concerns for the benefit of others (Schwartz, 1992).	Dietz et al. (2011); Focus groups
Emotional support	Expressions of care, concern, affection, and interest, especially during periods of stress or distress (Cutrona & Russell, 1990).	Grover et al. (2014); Monzani et al. (2015); Webber et al. (2012); Focus groups
Apologies	Expression of error or discourtesy accompanied by an expression of regret (Tavuchis & Culpa, 1991).	Kim et al. (2004); Krylova et al. (2016); Lewicki et al. (2016); Focus groups
Third-party involvement	A party who is not previously connected with the trust violation but can be considered a mutual friend of the offender and victim and who is invited by the offender to mediate the process of trust repair (Ying et al., 2017).	Bachmann et al. (2015); Mueller et al. (2015); Coleman (1990); Focus groups
Constructive behavior	Individuals' positive actions and attitudes which lead to optimal use of organizational resources (Einarsen et al., 2007).	Petriglieri (2015); Six and Skinner (2010); Focus groups

3.1.2 Transparent information sharing

Conceptually, researchers have assumed that transparently sharing information about organizational decision-making processes can repair trust (Bachmann et al., 2015). Empirically, researchers have further proposed that the fair and open provision of information can repair trust (Fisher & White, 2000). In the context of organizational change, Kähkönen (2020) found that adequate and open information and a developed discussion culture throughout the organization are aspects critical to repairing employee trust. Also, Grover et al. (2014) proposed that timely and honest information can repair employee trust in management.

3.1.3 Strong management actions

Sørensen et al. (2011) found that strong management actions conveying integrity, competence, and benevolence can rebuild trust in organizational change. Similarly, Kähkönen (2020) found that employees expect managers to have the ability to make fact-driven decisions and facilitate and effectively implement change. Thus, strong management actions can be valuable in repairing employee trust following organizational change. In addition, Pate et al. (2012) proposed that strong management actions can repair trust if the founding principle of respect has been contravened in an organization.

3.1.4 Benevolent personnel policies

In the context of HRM, benevolence implies that one is helpful, forgiving, honest, loyal, and responsible, especially in relation to people who are frequently in contact (Mayer et al., 1995). For example, superiors who promote the preservation and enhancement of the welfare of their subordinates make the organization's HR strategy visible to staff in their everyday routines (1995). Good managers do good things for their employees without any egocentric or opportunistic motives (1995). Benevolent behavior on the part of managers shows that they are interested in employee welfare at work and, by implementing benevolent and fair personnel policies, these managers can repair employee trust after the occurrence of benevolence-based violations (Davis et al., 2000, Kähkönen, 2020).

3.1.5 Emotional support

Emotional intelligence can facilitate change and make organizations more adaptive and agile (Chrusciel, 2006). Consequently, an organization can demonstrate sensitivity even during significant change-induced transformations (2006). Accordingly, emotional intelligence on the part of managers and their capacity to provide emotional support to employees can preserve and repair employee trust (Kähkönen, 2020). Emotional support for a subordinate means, among other things, that managers and other leaders understand the feelings of subordinates, listen to subordinates, and talk with them (Pate et al., 2012).

3.1.6 Apologies

By far the most commonly studied trust-repair strategies are apologies (e.g., De Cremer, 2010; Ferrin et al., 2007; Kim et al., 2004; Kim et al., 2006; Lewicki et al., 2016). However, a mere apology is often not sufficiently effective to repair trust and, without adequate actions, can be relegated to "cheap talk." For example, Krylova et al. (2016) found that substantive responses are more effective than verbal responses and that some components of an apology are particularly important, such as an acknowledgement of responsibility. De Cremer and Schouten (2008) found that an apology that conveys respect repairs trust far better than an apology lacking in respect. Moreover, Haesevoets et al. (2015) noted that an apology must be delivered in a timely fashion if it is to repair a violation of trust.

3.1.7 Third-party involvement

Third-party involvement in trust repair is a promising yet novel idea related to organizational trust repair. Indeed, it has long been recognized that third parties can act as intermediaries and broker trust between parties (Coleman, 1990). The involvement of third parties in trust repair has rarely been studied—one example is Mueller et al. (2015), who examined the involvement of third parties in the auditing process after the global financial crisis. Similarly, Kähkönen (2020) found that outsourcing some specific processes and services related to trust repair may be advisable after organizational change because a third party with specific expertise could support HR and management in maintaining trust within an organization.

3.1.8 Constructive behavior

Constructive behavior can be defined as positive actions and attitudes that culminate in the optimal use of organizational resources (Einarsen et al., 2007). Simultaneously, this kind of behavior can enhance the motivation, well-being, and job satisfaction of employees. Six and Skinner (2010) proposed that clear and explicit expectations, constructive voices, and positive interactions by both parties can help repair trust in interpersonal relationships between employees. Kähkönen (2020) found that employees also expect benevolence and good public behavior from all staff in their organization. Henderson et al. (2020) pointed out that it is detrimental to the restoration of trust if managers are indifferent to their employees' needs.

3.2 Item generation

Scale items can be generated inductively or deductively (Hinkin, 1998). Our approach, however, can be described as abductive insofar as it consisted of both literature and data derived from focus groups and interviews. Specifically, we constructed the TRPS based on a systematic literature review, focus groups, and interviews. We screened the literature and focus group/interview data carefully, paying close attention to trust-repairing practices and small details that have been studied and variously described in different studies, e.g., how moderators can affect the efficiency of trust repair as well as remedies implemented or not. We used a data extraction technique (Nguyen et al., 2018) to categorize trust-repair factors and identified items used in the past literature as well as evoked during the focus groups. The data extraction technique provided us with the tools needed to arrange items logically under the appropriate factors. In the first stage, we had 81 items. We reduced this number by removing similar items and balancing the remaining items such that all factors received a roughly even number (about six items per factor). We retained only the strongest items that appeared in both the previous literature and the focus groups. In the item generation stage, a total of 41 items were generated.

3.3 Questionnaire pretesting and initial item reduction

Together with five other researchers, we pretested the functionality of the items. None of the items were excluded in the initial item reduction, but we made some changes to improve the functionality of the questionnaire. The questionnaire, administered in both Finnish and English, was double translated by a professional language editing firm, as suggested by Brislin (1980), to ensure that the meanings of all items in the Finnish version of the questionnaire were the same as those in the English version.

4. Study 1

4.1 Sample and data collection

After pretesting, the survey was published via the Webropol platform in May 2020, and the response link was personally provided to each employee via email. The survey was conducted in a

non-profit, public-sector organization of 1,106 employees operating in education and research. A total of 282 completed surveys were returned, yielding a usable response rate of 25.5%. We applied a seven-point scale to measure trust-repairing practices in the target organization. The wording and anchoring of the items are presented in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2. The demographic information of the respondents is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Demographic information of the respondents (Study 1)

Background information	Category 1 (Freq. %)	Category 2 (Freq. %)	Category 3 (Freq. %)	Category 4 (Freq. %)	Category 5 (Freq. %)
Age	< 25 (8%)	26–35 (28%)	36–45 (23%)	46–55 (23%)	> 55 (18%)
Gender	Male (47%)	Female (52%)	Other (0%)	Not want to say (1%)	-
Highest level of education	Basic (1%)	Vocational (9%)	Univ. of applied sciences (14%)	University (76%)	-
Quality of work position	Fixed-term (46%)	Permanent (54%)	-	-	-
Working period	< 1 year (15%)	1–5 years (31%)	6–10 years (14%)	11–15 years (11%)	> 15 years (29%)
Working position	Leaders (10%)	Professors (8%)	Ass. Professors (18%)	Other researchers (32%)	Services/other (32%)
Superior	Yes (20%)	No (80%)	-	-	-
Time in the superior position	< 1 year (11%)	1–5 years (37%)	6–10 years (22%)	11–15 years (13%)	> 15 years (17%)

4.2 Scale purification and dimensionality

4.2.1 Exploratory factor analysis (EFA)

EFA was initially conducted to test the factor structure. JMP Pro 14. Ink software was used for the analysis. The objective was to highlight items that did not load on the appropriate factors of the TRPS. Items were loaded on six factors in the EFA (Table 3). Strong management actions and benevolent personnel policies loaded on the same factor. However, we decided to include all 41 items in the CFA, and as such no items were reduced at this stage.

4.2.2 Dimensionality – confirmatory factor analysis (CFA)

According to the theoretical conceptualization, the organizational trust repair construct should exhibit the seven-factor structure. We carried out CFA to test the dimensionality of the construct and scale in order to measure trust-repair practices. For this purpose, we conducted a random split for the data and utilized two sub-samples of 141 cases (sub-samples A and B). These two sub-samples were used separately for dimensionality testing and scale development. For both sub-samples, the 141 cases were processed by means of LISREL 8.80. PRELIS 2.80 was used to compute the covariance matrix, and the maximum likelihood estimation method was applied.

4.2.2.1 Sub-sample A

First, CFA was conducted separately for each factor (i.e., each trust-repair practice) to verify that the items were, in fact, grouped together. During this phase, four items were removed (one item at a time) because of their large standardized residuals with respect to the other items: one item from transparent information sharing, one from strong management actions, and two from emotional support.

In the next phase, all seven factors were tested together. In the analysis, the initial model fit indices indicated that the original model needed to be re-specified to better fit the sample data. Then, items were gradually removed according to the values of the standardized residuals.

From each pair of items with a large standardized residual, the item with a lower squared multiple correlation was removed, whereas the item resulting in greater improvement in model fit was retained. As a result, in this phase, 17 items were removed (see Appendix 2 for details).

In sum, after the analysis for sub-sample A, a measurement model with adequate fit indices was developed, and 20 items remained in the scale.

Table 3. Rotated factor loading

	Communality	Strong management actions	Transparent information sharing	Emotional support	Apologies	Third-party involvement	Constructive behavior
% of variance		15.847	13.298	12.066	11.810	9.163	5.632
Eigenvalue		22.576	1.907	1.765	1.419	1.159	1.033
POLICIE5	0.733	0.655					
POLICIE2	0.804	0.631	0.375	0.360			
MANAGEM2	0.822	0.615	0.465		0.302		
POLICIE1	0.755	0.607	0.369				0.312
MANAGEM6	0.758	0.606	0.395				
POLICIE3	0.690	0.578		0.319			
POLICIE4	0.456	0.547					
POLICIE6	0.558	0.542					
COMMUN5	0.681	0.524	0.395		0.317		
MANAGEM4	0.608	0.492	0.380				
MANAGEM1	0.581	0.473	0.394				
MANAGEM5	0.451	0.439	0.319				
APOLOGY6	0.477				-0.569		
COMMUN1	0.857		0.831				
COMMUN3	0.859	0.338	0.784				
COMMUN2	0.778	0.350	0.707				
COMMUN4	0.728	0.457	0.556				
MANAGEM3	0.729	0.466	0.543				
COMMUN6	0.644	0.445	0.491		0.327		
CONSTRU5	0.632	0.371	0.395	0.374	0.322		
EMOTSUP1	0.947			0.825			
EMOTSUP2	0.912			0.804			
EMOTSUP4	0.775	0.348		0.661	0.306		
EMOTSUP5	0.714			0.596			0.434
EMOTSUP3	0.649	0.329		0.590	0.335		
CONSTRU6	0.684	0.334	0.369	0.428			0.365
CONSTRU2	0.520	0.330	0.324	0.343			
APOLOGY5	0.121						
APOLOGY3	0.889				0.774		
APOLOGY2	0.863	0.312			0.773		
APOLOGY4	0.860				0.742		
APOLOGY1	0.736			0.336	0.680		
INVOLVE4	0.849					0.858	
INVOLVE5	0.616					0.683	
INVOLVE2	0.506					0.620	
INVOLVE3	0.500					0.571	
INVOLVE1	0.535	0.352				0.487	
EMOTSUP6	0.848	0.345		0.490			0.541
CONSTRU3	0.701	0.322	0.334	0.352			0.512
CONSTRU1	0.597	0.309			0.311		0.446
CONSTRU4	0.378		0.309				0.366

Note: Loadings under 0.30 are not presented

4.2.2.2 Sub-sample B

In sub-sample B, all seven factors and the 20 items covering these factors were tested together. Again, the initial model fit indices indicated that the model needed to be re-specified to better fit the sample data. The analysis was conducted in a way similar to that for sub-sample A, i.e., items were removed one by one based on standardized residuals as well as squared multiple correlations. In this phase, four items were removed, with the final scale consisting of 16 items.

Appendix 1 presents the final model and model fit indices for the structure of trust-repair practices. The following three absolute-fit measures were obtained: the likelihood-ratio chi-square value, the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), and the goodness-of-fit index (GFI). Even though all of the measures fell within acceptable levels, incremental measures, i.e., the non-normed fit index (NNFI), the comparative fit index (CFI), and the incremental fit index (IFI), were needed to ensure that the model was acceptable from other perspectives.

In sum, the various measures of overall goodness-of-fit lent sufficient support to the results to consider them an acceptable representation of the hypothesized construct (see Appendix 1).

It can be debated whether the structure of trust-repair practices is different than suggested in this study. For example, one could state that there are no distinct dimensions or that the structure corresponds to the results suggested by the EFA (i.e., strong management actions and benevolent personnel policies should not be examined separately). To further establish dimensionality, we compared three competing models.

- Model 1 – the seven correlated factors model: Covariance among the items is accounted for by seven first-order factors, with each factor representing a distinct trust-repair practice, and each item reflecting a single component. with each factor representing a distinct factor of trust-repair practices, and each item reflecting only a single component. The seven factors are correlated.
- Model 2 – the one-factor model: Trust-repair practices are conceptualized as a uni-dimensional construct, with the covariance among the 16 items accounted for by a single factor.
- Model 3 – the six correlated factors model (strong management actions and benevolent personnel policies are merged): Covariance among the items is accounted for by six first-order factors, with each factor representing a distinct trust-repair practice, and each item reflecting only a single component. The six factors are correlated.

Table 4 presents the summary statistics for these three models. Model 1 was found to outperform Models 2 and 3 on all measures.

Table 4. Model comparison

	Model 1 – seven correlated factors	Model 2 – one factor	Model 3 – six correlated factors
Chi-square (df)	125.37 (83)	487.30 (104)	144.05 (89)
p-value	0.00185	0.000	0.00020
RMSEA	0.060	0.162	0.066
GFI	0.899	0.697	0.886
CFI	0.992	0.931	0.990
NNFI	0.989	0.921	0.986
IFI	0.992	0.931	0.990

4.2.3 Construct reliability and validity

To test the reliability and validity of the construct, we utilized sub-sample B, consisting of 141 cases.

4.2.3.1 Reliability

The reliability of the items was evaluated by their path coefficients and squared multiple correlations (R²). Composite reliability (CR; also known as construct reliability) was used to assess the reliability of each factor. A complementary measure, the average variance extracted (AVE), was

used to directly show the amount of variance captured by the construct in relation to the amount of variance caused by measurement error.

The reliability statistics are shown in Appendix 1. All of the items were significantly related to their specified constructs, verifying the posited relationships among the indicators and constructs. The construct reliabilities ranged from 0.81 (for constructive behavior) to 0.95 (for transparent information sharing), both exceeding the minimum recommended level of 0.60. The AVE reached the recommended 50% (cf. Diamantopoulos & Siguaw, 2000; Hair et al., 2006) in all factors. In addition, the squared multiple correlations were also over the limit of 0.50.

4.2.3.2 Convergent validity

According to Bagozzi and Yi (1991), weak evidence of convergent validity results when the factor loading on an item of interest is significant. Strong evidence is obtained when the squared factor loading is greater than 0.5 (i.e., more than one-half of the total variation in the measures is due to the trait). Second, convergent validity can be assessed in terms of the degree to which the factors (which could be considered different measures of the construct) are correlated (Bagozzi & Yi, 1991; Smith et al., 1996).

As shown in Appendix 1, all of the item loadings were greater than 0.7 (the lowest loading being 0.744) and were statistically significant at the 0.01 significance level. In addition, all of the items ultimately had a squared factor loading (R²) greater than 0.5. Table 5 gives more evidence of convergent validity in that the correlations between the factors of trust-repair practices are all significant, ranging from 0.451 to 0.889. This suggests that the components all measured some aspect of the same construct.

Table 5. Correlation matrix and squared correlations (Study 1, sub-sample B)

	Mean	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Transparent information sharing	5.47	0.85	0.596	0.588	0.371	0.480	0.336	0.228
2. Strong management actions	4.73	0.772*	0.76	0.790	0.496	0.585	0.480	0.263
3. Benevolent personnel policies	4.97	0.747*	0.889*	0.82	0.412	0.682	0.523	0.284
4. Apologies	4.58	0.609*	0.704*	0.642*	0.86	0.437	0.370	0.237
5. Constructive behavior	5.37	0.693*	0.765*	0.826*	0.661*	0.68	0.421	0.240
6. Emotional support	4.65	0.580*	0.693*	0.723*	0.608*	0.649*	0.73	0.203
7. Third-party involvement	4.55	0.477*	0.513*	0.533*	0.487*	0.490*	0.451*	0.70

Note: *Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed); AVEs are presented at the diagonal; Squared correlations are presented at the upper triangle.

4.2.3.3 Discriminant validity

Discriminant validity was evaluated by two methods. The first method assessed whether the AVE was greater than the variance shared between focal construct and the other constructs in the model (i.e., the squared correlation between two constructs; Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Almost all of the constructs fulfilled this condition. Mostly, the AVE was greater than the squared correlation between the constructs (see Table 5). The only exception was the squared correlation between benevolent personnel policies and strong management actions, which was somewhat higher (0.79) than the AVE of strong management actions (0.76). However, discriminant validity was also evaluated with the method recommended by Anderson and Gerbing (1988). Two models were

compared for each possible pair of constructs. In the first model, the constructs were allowed to correlate freely; in the second model, the correlations were fixed to be equal to one. All chi-square difference tests were significant, which indicates that all pairs of constructs correlated at less than one. In sum, these two tests offer evidence of a sufficient level of discriminant validity.

4.2.3.4 Nomological validity

Nomological validity represents the ability of the construct to behave as expected with respect to other constructs to which it is theoretically related (e.g., Churchill, 1992). In other words, it refers to the degree to which the scale makes accurate predictions about other concepts in a theoretically based model. These theoretically supported relationships should be identified from prior research of accepted principles and then assessed in terms of whether the scale has corresponding relationships (Hair et al., 2006).

Generally, employees expect top management to put effort into repairing employee trust after organizational disruptions (Kähkönen, 2020), as time alone (Gillespie & Siebert, 2018) cannot effectively repair trust after a violation. Trust-repair practices are comparable to HRM practices insofar as they focus on restoring positive employee perceptions (2009) and expectations of the trustworthiness of top management (Gillespie & Siebert, 2018; Kramer & Lewicki, 2010). Thus, it is expected that if trust-repair practices are utilized, they will affect trust in top management.

To test the nomological validity of the scale, this study relied on structural equation modeling, and sub-sample B, which consisted of 141 cases, was utilized for this purpose. The predictive ability of trust-repairing practices was tested against the degree to which trust in top management has developed during different organizational changes. This was operationalized as the extent to which respondents' trust in the ability, integrity, and benevolence of the top management has changed by using the following anchoring system: 1 = significantly weakened, 4 = remained unchanged, 7 = significantly increased.

The results show (see Table 6) that trust-repair practices influence the development of trust in top management. Thus, based on this evidence, it can be concluded that the scale has nomological validity.

Table 6. Testing the nomological validity (Study 1, sub-sample B)

Path to development of trust in top management	Standardized parameter estimate	t-value
Transparent information sharing	0.55	6.93
Strong management actions	0.64	7.30
Benevolent personnel policies	0.58	7.33
Apologies	0.49	5.80
Constructive behavior	0.69	7.17
Emotional support	0.45	4.28
Third-party involvement	0.42	4.34

Chi-square (df) = 190.94 (124), p-value = 0.00011, RMSEA = 0.062, GFI = 0.874, CFI = 0.990, NNFI = 0.986, IFI = 0.990

5. Study 2

In order to validate the results from Study 1, we conducted an additional study with the new dataset and analyses. The survey was performed in a different organization, i.e., the administrative unit of the Finnish Army, which operates in the field of national defense. This organization is thus clearly different from the organization examined in Study 1, which operates in the field of education and research. The purpose here was to show that the results of Study 1 were not organization-specific by verifying them in a totally different organizational culture (e.g., in terms of hierarchical system or typical operating methods).

5.1 Sample and data collection

The survey was published via the Webropol platform in October 2020, and the response link was personally provided to 298 employees via email. A total of 101 completed surveys were returned, yielding a usable response rate of 33.9%. We applied a seven-point scale to measure trust-repairing practices in the target organization. The wording and anchoring of the items are presented in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2. The demographic information of the respondents is presented in Table 7.

Table 7. Demographic information of the respondents (Study 2)

Background information	Category 1 (Freq. %)	Category 2 (Freq. %)	Category 3 (Freq. %)	Category 4 (Freq. %)	Category 5 (Freq. %)
Age	< 26 (0%)	26–35 (6.93%)	36–45 (45.55%)	46–55 (41.58%)	> 55 (5.94%)
Gender	Male (78.22%)	Female (21.78%)	Other (0%)	Not want to say (0%)	-
Highest level of education	Basic (0%)	Vocational (8.91%)	Univ. of applied sciences (11.88%)	University (79.21%)	-
Quality of work position	Fixed-term (2.97%)	Permanent (97.03%)	-	-	-
Working period	< 1 year (2.97%)	1–5 years (4.95%)	6–10 years (6.93%)	11–15 years (14.85%)	> 15 years (70.3%)
Working position	Soldier (69.31%)	Civilian (30.69%)	-	-	-
Superior	Yes (35.64%)	No (64.36%)	-	-	-
Time in the superior position	< 1 year (11.43%)	1–5 years (14.28%)	6–10 years (11.43%)	11–15 years (20%)	> 15 years (42.86%)

5.2 Dimensionality – confirmatory factor analysis (CFA)

Again, we carried out CFA to test the dimensionality of the construct and the scale in order to measure trust-repair practices. A total of 101 cases were processed by means of LISREL 8.80. PRELIS 2.80 was used to compute the covariance matrix, and the maximum likelihood estimation method was applied.

All seven factors and the 16 items covering these factors (based on Study 1) were tested together. Again, the initial model fit indices indicated that the model needed to be re-specified to better fit the sample data. The analysis was conducted in a way similar to that applied in Study 1, i.e., items were removed one by one based on standardized residuals as well as squared multiple correlations. In this phase, two items were removed, with the final scale consisting of 14 items.

Appendix 1 presents the final model and model fit indices for the structure of trust-repair practices. In sum, the various measures of overall goodness-of-fit lent sufficient support to the results to consider them an acceptable representation of the hypothesized construct (see Appendix 1).

5.3 Construct reliability and validity

5.3.1 Reliability

Reliability was assessed in a manner similar to that introduced in Study 1. The reliability statistics are shown in Appendix 1. All of the items were significantly related to their specified constructs, verifying the posited relationships among the indicators and constructs. The construct reliabilities ranged from 0.75 (for transparent information sharing) to 0.90 (for apologies), both exceeding the minimum recommended level of 0.60. The AVE reached the recommended 50% (cf. Diamantopoulos & Sigauw, 2000; Hair et al., 2006) in all factors. In addition, the squared multiple correlations also exceeded the limit of 0.50, with the exception of one item for transparent information sharing (0.417).

5.3.2 Convergent validity

As shown in Appendix 1, in Study 2, the vast majority of the item loadings were greater than 0.7 (one item for transparent information sharing fell just under by 0.646), and all loadings were statistically significant at the 0.01 significance level. In addition, most of the items ultimately had a squared factor loading (R2) greater than 0.5 (again with the exception of one item, mentioned above). Table 8 gives more evidence of convergent validity in that the correlations between the factors of trust-repair practices are all significant, ranging from 0.368 to 0.808. This suggests that the components all measured some aspect of the same construct.

Table 8. Correlation matrix and squared correlations (Study 2)

	Mean	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Transparent information sharing	5.99	0.61	0.452	0.423	0.278	0.450	0.297	0.135
2. Strong management actions	5.24	0.672*	0.72	0.653	0.324	0.473	0.533	0.256
3. Benevolent personnel policies	5.57	0.650*	0.808*	0.79	0.376	0.533	0.489	0.239
4. Apologies	4.95	0.527*	0.569*	0.613*	0.81	0.438	0.354	0.251
5. Constructive behavior	6.00	0.671*	0.688*	0.730*	0.662*	0.81	0.444	0.158
6. Emotional support	5.32	0.545*	0.730*	0.699*	0.595*	0.666*	0.65	0.259
7. Third-party involvement	3.93	0.368*	0.506*	0.489*	0.501*	0.398*	0.509*	0.75

Note: *Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed); AVEs are presented at the diagonal; Squared correlations are presented at the upper triangle.

5.3.3 Discriminant validity

As in Study 1, discriminant validity was evaluated by two methods. First, it was assessed whether the AVE was greater than the variance shared between the focal construct and the other constructs in the model (i.e., the squared correlation between two constructs; Fornell & Larcker, 1981). In Study 2, all constructs fulfilled this condition (see Table 8). In addition, discriminant validity was evaluated by comparing each possible pair of constructs in two models (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988) in which the constructs were allowed to correlate freely and the correlations were fixed to be equal to one. All chi-square difference tests were significant, which indicates that all pairs of constructs correlated at less than one. In sum, these two tests verified the evidence of discriminant validity.

5.3.4 Nomological validity

As Study 1, also Study 2 relied on structural equation modeling to test the nomological validity of the scale, and 101 cases were utilized for this purpose. Again, the predictive ability of trust-repairing practices was tested against the degree to which trust in top management has developed during different organizational changes. The operationalization was similar to that used for Study 1, i.e., the extent to which respondents' trust in the ability, integrity, and benevolence of top management has changed by using the following anchoring system: 1 = significantly weakened, 4 = remained unchanged, 7 = significantly increased.

The results of Study 1 were validated, as the trust-repair practices influenced the development of trust in top management in this study (see Table 9). Thus, based on this evidence, it was verified that the scale had nomological validity.

Table 9. Testing the nomological validity (Study 2)

Path to Development of trust in top management	Standardized parameter estimate	t-value
Transparent information sharing	0.68	6.36
Strong management actions	0.68	6.69
Benevolent personnel policies	0.66	6.62
Apologies	0.54	5.35
Constructive behavior	0.61	5.92
Emotional support	0.68	6.55
Third-party involvement	0.50	4.52

Chi-square (df) = 120.40 (91), p-value = 0.02124, RMSEA = 0.057, GFI = 0.876, CFI = 0.991, NNFI = 0.987, IFI = 0.991

6. Discussion

This study developed a construct and a scale on which to measure the effectiveness of trust-repair practices in organizations. This scale, called the Trust-Repair Practices Scale (TRPS), was found to demonstrate reliability, validity, and stability across the sample. Despite increasing research attention to the concept of trust repair, no other valid and comprehensive measure of trust-repair practices has been developed. Thus, to the best of our knowledge, ours was the first study to provide a comprehensive and operationally valid measure of trust-repair practices in organizations.

6.1 Research implications

The present study made several contributions to the trust-repair literature. First, we explored the nature of trust repair and then developed a conceptual model of trust-repair practices with seven factors: transparent information sharing, strong management actions, benevolent personnel policies, emotional support, apologies, third-party involvement, and constructive behavior. The value of this model is that it integrates these focal elements to provide a comprehensive picture of trust-repair practices. Second, previous studies measuring organizational trust repair have focused mainly on measuring the differences between two or a few trust-repair practices, such as apologies vs. denial (e.g., Ferrin et al., 2007; Kim et al., 2004; Kim et al., 2012), with laboratory experiments. Thus, this study made a significant contribution to the trust-repair literature with the developed TRPS. Third, the study provided empirical evidence that the TRPS is both reliable and valid. This, in turn, provides a solid foundation on which other researchers can develop their own theoretical and empirical research on trust repair.

6.2 Managerial implications

For managers, our findings provide valuable practical insights into the relevant aspects of trust repair as well as an instrument that can be used for assessing the effectiveness of trust-repair practices. Management together with HR professionals can use this framework as a tool for developing employee trust within their organization and for measuring the effectiveness of trust-repair practices. Building employee trust in an organization is an ongoing process among managers and supervisors, and attention therefore must be paid to those practices that can best maintain and repair trust. The importance of trust-repair practices is only expected to grow in the current dynamic and unpredictable environments, in which trust violations are becoming more complex and frequent, thereby requiring continuous attention and concerted action from top management, supervisors, and HR alike.

6.3 Limitations

Although this study has provided relevant and interesting insights conducive to a fuller understanding of trust-repair practices, it is important to recognize its limitations. The data used in this study were obtained from two non-profit organizations in Finland: one in the field of education

and research, and the other in the field of national defense. Although it can be said that the sample represented a cross-section of a large organization, it would be useful to obtain a broader and wider sampling frame from other types of organizations, in other countries, and within other cultures. Since respondents' perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors are influenced by their cultures, it would be valuable to test whether existing trust-repair practice scales can be generalized to other cultures and countries. Replicating this study on a larger scale in different contexts and national cultures would be greatly beneficial for further generalizations of the study findings.

6.4 Directions for future research

First, it would be useful to assess the generalizability of the TRPS developed in this study to other contexts, such as large or small businesses or different industries. With replicative research, it is expected that a more generalizable conceptual framework related to trust repair can be developed in the future. Second, cultural differences in the organizational environments of different countries may influence the types of trust-repair practices developed and adopted by companies, as well as the impact of these practices on trust. Third, it is important to note that various moderators—for example, communication and other personal skills, violators' prior wrongdoing, or the seriousness of the violation—may impact the effectiveness of the trust-repair practices. Fourth, the antecedents of trust repair require both theoretical and empirical investigation because managers need to know how these antecedents, such as employee resilience, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions, influence the effectiveness of trust-repair practices in their firms. We believe that the time is ripe for both trust researchers and practitioners to focus their efforts on trust-repair practices, and we anticipate further developments in this highly relevant field for employees and their organizations.

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APPENDIX 1. Measurement items, factor loadings, and model fit indices (relevant TRPS after purification).

	Key sources for the scale	The following are statements related to your organization, the ways in which top management respond to situations of change, and their ability to respond to change. Please rate the statements using the scale: 1 = strongly disagree, 4 = neither agree nor disagree, 7 = strongly agree.	Non-profit firm, Finland (N = 141)	Administrative unit of the Finnish Army, Finland (N = 101)
Transparent information sharing	Bachmann et al. (2015); Grover et al. (2014); Focus groups	Provide timely information.	0.926 ^a	0.893 ^a
		Provide honest information.	0.932*	0.646*
		Provide adequate information.	0.915	-
		CR	0.95	0.75
		AVE	0.85	0.61
Strong management actions	Pate et al. (2012); Sorensen et al. (2011); Focus groups	Lead changes well.	0.887 ^a	0.842 ^a
		Know how to alleviate employees' uncertainty about the future.	0.855*	0.850*
		CR	0.86	0.83
		AVE	0.76	0.72
Benevolent personnel policies	Davis et al. (2000); Dietz et al. (2011); Focus groups	Manage staff fairly.	0.918 ^a	0.894 ^a
		Value their employees.	0.930*	-
		Take care of the well-being of employees at work.	0.864*	0.880*
		CR	0.93	0.88
		AVE	0.82	0.79
Apologies	Kim et al. (2004); Krylova et al. (2016); Lewicki et al. (2016); Focus groups	Regret with respect.	0.894 ^a	0.973 ^a
		Regret in time.	0.962*	0.822*
		CR	0.93	0.90
		AVE	0.86	0.81
Constructive behavior	Petriglieri (2015); Six and Skinner (2010); Focus groups	Follow good manners.	0.744 ^a	0.840 ^a
		Are not indifferent.	0.902*	0.956*
		CR	0.81	0.89
		AVE	0.68	0.81
Emotional support	Grover et al. (2014); Monzani et al. (2015); Pate et al. (2012); Webber et al. (2012); Focus groups	Listen to me.	0.914 ^a	0.868 ^a
		Understand my feelings.	0.795*	0.738*
		CR	0.85	0.79
		AVE	0.73	0.65
Third-party involvement	Bachmann et al. (2015); Mueller et al. (2015); Coleman (1990); Focus groups	Strive to improve management through third-party evaluation (accreditation).	0.803 ^a	0.771 ^a
		Provide practical support to staff from external parties.	0.863*	0.955*
		CR	0.82	0.86
		AVE	0.70	0.75
Model fit indices		Chi-square (df)	125.37 (83)	72.11 (56)
		p-value	0.00185	0.07237
		RMSEA	0.060	0.054
		GFI	0.899	0.907
		CFI	0.992	0.992
		NNFI	0.989	0.987
		IFI	0.992	0.992

Note: *Statistically significant at 0.01 significance level; ^a significance level is not available because the coefficient is fixed at 1.

APPENDIX 2. TRPS items (removed items in CFA).

	Key sources for the scale	The following are statements related to your organization, the ways in which top management respond to situations of change, and their ability to respond to change. Please rate the statements using the scale: 1 = strongly disagree, 4 = neither agree nor disagree, 7 = strongly agree.	Stage in CFA where item was removed: A= study 1 (sub-sample A); B = study 1 (sub-sample B); C = study 2)
Transparent information sharing	Bachmann et al. (2015); Grover et al. (2014); Focus groups	Provide adequate information.	C
		Promote the development of an open discussion culture.	A*
		Learn and develop from mistakes.	B
		Conduct ex-post evaluation in the work community after changes.	B
Strong management actions	Pate et al. (2012); Sørensen et al. (2011); Focus groups	Divide employees and work tasks in an appropriate way.	A*
		Make reasoned decisions.	B
		Withstand pressure well.	A
		Retain the selected direction.	A
Benevolent personnel policies	Davis et al. (2000); Dietz et al. (2011); Focus groups	Value their employees	C
		Try to save money from other resources than staff and protect staff until the last.	A
		Implement benevolent HR strategy prominently in everyday life.	B
		Familiarize staff with new tasks and actively train them.	A
Apologies	Kim et al. (2004); Krylova et al. (2016); Lewicki et al. (2016); Focus groups	Make self-reflections and apologize.	B
		Deeply regret if the situation is difficult.	B
		Regret hastily and half-heartedly.	A
		Never regret.	A
Constructive behavior	Petriglieri (2015); Six and Skinner (2010); Focus groups	Behave positively.	A
		Do not avoid discussing changes.	B
		Do not joke about serious things.	A
		Do not sweep problems under the carpet.	A
Emotional support	Grover et al. (2014); Monzani et al. (2015); Pate et al. (2012); Webber et al. (2012); Focus groups	Talk with me.	A
		Are present for me if necessary.	B
		Are easily approachable.	A*
		Are encouraging.	A*
Third-party involvement	Bachmann et al. (2015); Mueller et al. (2015); Coleman (1990); Focus groups	Procure for top management change training provided by external actors.	A
		Involve external parties in the practical implementation of change.	B
		Provide emotional support to staff from external parties.	A

Note: *) Removed one item at a time.

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