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Dr. Adviye Ahenk Aktan
https://orcid.org/0009-0004-8835-2461
Independent Researcher, İzmir / TURKİYE

Building a New Research Field: A Conceptual Evaluation of the Effects of Artificial Intelligence on Interorganizational Trust

Yeni Bir Araştırma Alanının İnşası: Yapay Zekanın Örgütlerarası Güven Üzerindeki Etkilerine Dair Kavramsal Bir İnceleme

ABSTRACT

The digital transformation process brought about by Industry 4.0 has ushered in a new era of decision-making by robots. One of the most important technological components used to accomplish digital transformation in all aspects of Industry 4.0 is the notion of artificial intelligence. Artificial intelligence is the capacity of systems to make judgments and rationally resolve complex problems by analyzing their environment. Human-machine contact will therefore undoubtedly change as a result of this transition process, where machines now make the majority of decisions. Furthermore, previous studies indicate that organizations are expected to develop and operate in completely new ecosystems where digital reliance becomes significant. This describes digitally intensive contexts where business ecosystems are so closely linked that firms are unable to develop their company policies independently from the business ecosystem. The importance of the impact of digitalization and artificial intelligence on interorganizational trust will therefore become more significant in these newly emerging complex webs of interdependent actors in the future, where this interaction is anticipated to create synergistic systems where everything is mutually dependent, necessitating mutuality and trust. In addition to this, a lot of study being done on the impact of artificial intelligence on this shift from many angles, but there are not many studies looking at how it affects interorganizational trust. Besides, even though a lot of research has been done on the variables that affect interorganizational trust from a variety of perspectives, the impact of AI as a determinant factor on the development of interorganizational trust has not been adequately explored in these literature studies. This study focuses on the connection between interorganizational trust and the implementation of artificial intelligence by presenting an overall structure for understanding how AI affects interorganizational trust to make a conceptual contribution to the literature for future research. To uncover research gaps in the field, earlier studies examining the connection between artificial intelligence and interorganizational trust are analyzed through a literature review.
Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, Interorganizational Relations, Trust, Interorganizational Trust.

ÖZET

Endüstri 4.0'ın getirdiği dijital dönüşüm süreci, robotlar tarafından karar alma konusunda yeni bir çağa öncülük etmektedir. Bu anlamda, Endüstri 4.0'ın tüm yönlerinde dijital dönüşümü gerçekleştirmek için kullanılan en önemli teknolojik bileşenlerden biri de yapay zeka kavramı olmaktadır. Yapay zeka, sistemlerin çevrelerini analiz ederek, yargılarda bulunma ve karmaşık sorunları rasyonel bir şekilde çözme kapasitesini ifade etmektedir. Dolayısıyla, makinelerin artık kararların çoğunu aldığı bu geçiş sürecinin bir sonucu olarak insan-makine etkileşiminin şüphesiz olarak değişmesi beklenmektedir. Ayrıca, önceki çalışmalar örgütlerin dijital bağımlılığın belirgin hâle geldiği tamamen yeni ekosistemler içinde gelişmesi ve faaliyet göstermesinin beklendiğini göstermektedir. Bu durum, işletme ekosistemlerinin birbirleriyle son derece yakın biçimde bağlantılı olduğu ve firmaların kurumsal politikalarını iş ekosisteminden bağımsız olarak geliştiremedikleri, dijital yoğunluk içeren bağlamları işaret etmektedir. Ortaya çıkan bu yeni ve karmaşık, karşılıklı bağımlılık içeren aktör ağlarında, etkileşimlerin her unsurun birbirine bağımlı olduğu sinerjik sistemleri ortaya çıkaracağı ve bu sistemlerin karşılıklılık ve güven gerektireceği öngörülmektedir. Dolayısıyla, dijitalleşme ve yapay zekânın örgütler arası güven üzerindeki etkisinin öneminin gelecekte daha da belirgin hâle gelmesi beklenmektedir. Bununla birlikte, yapay zekanın bu değişime olan etkisi birçok açıdan incelenmekte, ancak örgütler arası güven kavramı üzerine olan etkisinin incelendiği araştırmalar nispeten az düzeydedir. Ayrıca, örgütler arası güveni etkileyen değişkenler üzerine çeşitli açılardan birçok araştırma yapılmış olmasına rağmen, yapay zekanın örgütler arası güvenin oluşmasında belirleyici bir faktör olarak etkisinin söz konusu literatür çalışmalarında yeterince incelenmediği görülmektedir. Bu çalışma, yapay zekanın örgütler arası güveni nasıl etkilediğini anlamak için genel bir kavramsal çerçeve sunarak; örgütler arası güven ile yapay zeka kavramı arasındaki bağlantıya odaklanmakta ve gelecekteki araştırmalar için literatüre kavramsal bir katkı sağlamaktadır. Bu anlamda, alanyazındaki araştırma boşluklarını belirlemek amacıyla, yapay zekâ ile örgütler arası güven arasındaki ilişkiyi inceleyen önceki çalışmalar literatür incelemesi yoluyla analiz edilmektedir.
Anahtar Kelimeler: Yapay Zeka, Örgütlerarası İlişkiler, Güven, Örgütlerarası Güven.

1. INTRODUCTION

Interorganizational trust has received a lot of research attention in which scholars have used a variety of research methodologies to examine interorganizational trust in various types of organizational relationships, as well as to conceptualize and measure the construct in a variety of ways (Zou et al., 2023). In the context of interorganizational connections, such as joint ventures or international business, a lot of emphasis has been paid to examining the essential elements in fostering interorganizational trust (Ando & Rhee, 2009; Zou et al., 2023). The results of some of these studies demonstrate the subsequent impacts of cultural adjustment on the growth of interorganizational trust as well as the direct effects of expected justice in the collaborative negotiation process and the distribution of negotiating leverage among joint venture participants (Ando & Rhee, 2009). While in some studies, the factors such as informal-formal institutions, national culture, external uncertainty, country origin effects, firm's capability, competencies, performance and intangible resources are associated with antecedents of interorganizational trust (Zou et al., 2023). Reviewing the literature studies, Zou et al. (2023) demonstrate these factors that promote or hinder interorganizational trust as organizational, relational and environmental level factors.

When considering interorganizational interactions, according to the literature, organizations are anticipated to function in entirely new ecosystems within a complex web of interdependent actors in the future in which this interactivity is expected to establish collaborative structures at which everyone and everything is dependent upon one another, requiring compatibility and trust. As a result, it is assumed that the term information technology reliance refers to relationships in a technologically intensive context where business ecosystems are so interlinked that companies are unable to develop their digital business methods independently of alliances, partnerships, rivals, and the business ecosystem (Kiviranta, 2018). In this sense, trust between organizations becomes an essential concept in these interlinked and flexible organizational interactions that will be largely dependent on digital technology.

On the other hand, studies of the literature show that companies that have successfully developed their AI capabilities are more engaged in open innovation, especially in inbound activities that improve goods and offerings like working with clients and technology suppliers (Arias-Perez & Huynh, 2023). Although there are literature studies showing how using AI can improve and foster inter-firm collaboration (Arias-Perez & Huynh, 2023), there aren't many studies investigating how it affects the development of trust in these partnerships. According to research in the literature, building trust is crucial for interorganizational cooperation, which has a major impact on performance when there are high levels of trust and results in substantial costs when there is distrust (Sakai & Kimura, 2024). And in these collaborations, digitalization offers chances to strengthen alliances and boost transparency in these partnerships, opening up new avenues for collaboration that were previously unattainable (Kiviranta, 2018).

In order to preserve their organizational interactions from disruptions and to obtain benefits like visibility, flexibility, connectivity, transparency, speed, and problem-solving within collaborations among organizations through the enablers of digitalization, organizations have invested in digital technologies. AI, which is defined in the literature as a system's capacity to replicate human intelligence with the ideal characteristic to rationalize and take actions that have the highest tendency of achieving a specific goal, is used to obtain such advantages (Demir, 2024). Besides this, even though a lot of research has been done on the factors that determine interorganizational trust, a novel viewpoint raises concerns about how artificial intelligence may impact the development of trust in these kinds of interactions. In that regard, more thorough research is required to identify digital technologies' significant effects on interorganizational trust within these interactions, particularly in light of the fact that organizations are expected to operate in completely new ecosystems based on a digital dependency, which describes the interconnected and flexible organizational interactions that will be heavily dependent on digital technology (Kiviranta, 2018). Especially, the impact of digitalization and artificial intelligence on interorganizational trust will therefore become more significant in these newly emerging complex webs of interdependent actors in the future, where this interaction is anticipated to create synergistic systems where everything is mutually dependent, necessitating mutuality and trust within these mutually dependent and reciprocal networks (Kiviranta, 2018). Based on the discussions above, the study intends to broaden our understanding of how the use of artificial intelligence can impact interorganizational trust. In that sense, the primary goal of this article is to increase our comprehension of how artificial intelligence affects the development of trust between organizations and to offer future study possibilities that will maintain this field's theoretical coherence and quantitative strength for future research. As a result, the study uses a literature review approach to examine prior studies on the synthesis of artificial intelligence and interorganizational trust and identify research gaps in the field by concentrating on the impact of AI on organizational trust.

2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Artificial Intelligence

As semiconductor technology advanced to the point of microprocessors and chips, the mass production of personal computers brought about changes in the economy and way of life that led to the Age of Digital Growth. The popularity of electronic devices like tablets and smartphones increased as a result of the growth and widespread utilization of the worldwide web and internet technologies, which also profoundly changed almost every organization. Continuous advancements in industrial modernization and instrument automation, which may be regarded as the foundations of artificial intelligence, enable comprehensive advancements into the emerging age of robotics and intelligent machines (Haton, 2006; Rahimov, 2019).

Artificial intelligence (AI) is the development and application of computer systems that can handle problems that are typically beyond the purview of traditional algorithmic approaches and that typically require human talent. One of AI's primary features is its pluridisciplinarity, although unlike computer science, AI systems primarily use symbolic information rather than only numerical data to solve problems. Despite the strong relationship between AI and computer science, notions from languages, cognitive sciences, and logic are also necessary for the creation of AI systems. Thus, artificial intelligence (AI) includes cognitive computing systems, which are intelligent machines that mimic human cognitive functions (Haton, 2006). The expression "AI technology" refers to a wide range of techniques and strategies created over time by AI researchers, including computer vision, robotics, machine learning, deep learning, knowledge-based reasoning, and natural language processing (NLP) (Weber et al., 2022). It is closely related to Artificial Neural Networks, which are pattern-detecting algorithms modeled after the structure of the human brain. Learning data representations is the main goal of deep learning, a branch of machine learning. Furthermore, "big data" describes enormous volumes of structured, semi-structured, and unstructured data that may be examined to find links, patterns, and trends, especially those pertaining to human interactions and behavior (Schonberger & Cukier, 2014).

In recent decades, researchers studying artificial intelligence (AI) have started to develop artificial entities that can represent information, learn from data, solve problems, make decisions, and operate in our social and physical contexts. Whether they are embodied intelligent devices like self-driving cars or disembodied decision support systems, these beings actively engage in human civilization and make decisions (Kuipers, 2022). A wide range of goods and services in industries where they may support human decision-making and perform an ever-increasing number of tasks related to data and information processing are utilizing artificial intelligence (AI) systems that can learn from data and make predictions. In contrast, these complex collections of machine learning (ML) models and algorithms that generate predictions from input data are incorporated as "cognitive engines" in products and services that can be referred to as "AI-powered solutions" since they autonomously learn and make decisions while interacting with the environment (Ferrario et al., 2020).

2.2. The Notion of Trust And Interorganizational Trust

The concept of trust can be characterized in a variety of ways depending on the setting, including social, business, and interpersonal connections. Accordingly, trust can be defined as a societal value based on the relationships in a social system or as the openness of one person to increase his or her vulnerability to the behavior of another in interpersonal relationships. In economic relations, it can be defined as the expectation that parties will make an effort in good faith to behave in accordance with any obligations and not take advantage of the other (Aulakh et al., 1996). According to a review of trust literature relevant to an organization's relationship with external organizations, the concept of interorganizational trust has been used from a number of diverse conceptual definitions (Zou et al., 2023).

According to Mayer et al. (1995), trust is a relational conception of the readiness of one party to be vulnerable to the acts of another based on the anticipation that the other would carry out an act that is significant to the party. The term "party" in this relational model of trust might refer to companies or collective actors in addition to individuals. As a result, the definition can be used for both people and organizations. From this point, interpersonal trust refers to an individual's expectation that another individual won't exploit their vulnerabilities, whereas interorganizational trust refers to an organization's expectation that another organization won't exploit the vulnerabilities of the trusting organization (Schilke & Cook, 2013). Since individuals within organizations manage interorganizational interactions, the property of unilateral expectations of conduct that existing between individuals started to be extended to exchanges between organizations. Thus, trust in interorganizational relationships entails a set of

expectations between the parties regarding each other's behavior and each partner's execution of its perceived duties and obligations in light of such requirements, as suggested by Madhok (1995) and Thorelli (1986). The literature suggests that there are two types of "expectations of behavior" between business counterparts: behavioral and structural. The structural component of trust is defined as the kind of trust that is fostered by reciprocal hostilities and cooperation of resources utilized by collaborators, whereas the behavioral component of trust is defined as a firm's assumptions that another entity will execute conduct that will result in advantageous results for the firm while not taking unanticipated initiatives that result in undesirable consequences (Aulakh et al., 1996).

According to an assessment of some of the most notable works on interorganizational trust in the context of international business, experts have employed a variety of conceptual approaches. For example, Verbeke and Greidanus (2009) defined trust as a trustor's optimistic projections about the trustee's future actions; Doney et al. (1998) defined trust as a trustor's acceptance of being subjected to the trustee's conduct; and Dhanaraj et al. (2004) defined trust as trustworthiness (e.g., ability, benevolence, and/or integrity). While ability is the set of skills, abilities, and characteristics that enable a party to have influence within a specific field, benevolence is the extent to which a trustee is believed to wish to do good to the trustor, away from an egocentric profit motivation. And the trustor's belief that the trustee upholds a set of values that the trustor considers acceptable is a key component of the link between integrity and trust (Mayer et al., 1995). In accordance with Mayer and his colleagues' characterization of inter-personal trust (Kiviranta, 2018), Zaheer et al. (1998) defined inter-organizational trust as a generally accepted trust orientation toward a partner organization, which includes expectations of the partner organization's dependability, predictability, and fairness, as well as an assumption that trust is relational and that betrayal is an essential feature of trust. Inter-organizational trust is described as an expectation of the other party's dependable, predictable, and fair behavior (Zaheer et al., 1998), taking into account the unilateral perspective on trust and clearly defining organizations as trustee-parties in a specific relationship (Kiviranta, 2018).

3. ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF AI ON TRUST AMONG ORGANIZATIONS

Since interorganizational trust among organizations begins as interpersonal trust before evolving into interorganizational trust (Kawasaki, 2019, as cited in Sakai & Kimura, 2024), interpersonal trust is formed during the early stages of inter-organizational interactions when individuals with assumed obligations associated with the expectations of their respective organizations interact with each other and share information (Sakai & Kimura, 2024). In the early stages of these interorganizational interactions, role conflicts and ambiguities brought on by technological uncertainty may have an impact on the development of trust within individual interaction processes, given that trust between organizations is positively correlated with individual social ties (Zaheer & Harris, 2005, as cited in Sakai & Kimura, 2024). Besides that, focusing on the relationship asymmetry which may result from discrepancies in the parties' obligations to one another as well as in information, authority, and interdependency; Kiviranta (2018) considered how digitalization affects partner-organization expectations in an imbalance order to evaluate the impact of digitalization on interorganizational trust. The findings demonstrated that expectations of trustworthiness are altered by digitalization, particularly those related to the quality and dissemination of information. The need for data quality, provenance, and traceability is growing as a result of digitization and trust asymmetry may worsen if the two parties are unable to meet each other's expectations and the escalating demands are not balanced between them. Additionally, the sense of dependability is increasingly influenced by perceived digital capabilities, and inter-organizational trust development includes reciprocal behavior in accordance with partners' expectations of trust. Regarding intentional trust building in the context of technological transformation, research indicates that using information coupled with technologically supported disclosure and interaction can foster inter-organizational trust building by offering reciprocity, which somewhat involves familiarity and shared context (Kiviranta, 2018). Thus, while in some studies it is stressed how digital technologies accelerate the interorganizational trust (Kiviranta, 2018); in some other studies, it is focused on how digital technologies impede the development of trust among organizations by emphasizing that role ambiguity and role conflicts might stem from the uncertainty brought on by AI's technological specialization within the interdependent relationships among individuals (Sakai & Kimura, 2024).

On the other hand, when inter-organizational trust is examined from the perspective of knowledge hiding and artificial intelligence; although research on the impact of partner trustworthiness on interorganizational knowledge hiding is still in its early stages, prior literature studies demonstrate our understanding of the role of partner trustworthiness as a driver of knowledge exchange and increases employees' positive attitudes toward external allies and intention to collaborate with them while decreasing the prevalence of

opportunistic behaviors like knowledge leakage. And, when trustworthiness is at the core of the intraorganizational dispute, research highlights the significance of compassion and integrity as attributes of trust that greatly diminish knowledge concealment. At the interorganizational level, however, knowledge concealment only decreases when staff members see working with outside partners as a chance to acquire and record important AI knowledge (Arias-Perez & Huynh, 2023). From an entirely distinct viewpoint, Weisz et al. (2025) emphasized the literature studies by demonstrating how AI can alter traditional methods of exchanging data and establishing confidence between partners through conditions in which an increase in artificial intelligence (AI) competencies causes a steady decrease in interpersonal trust as AI gradually replaces trust in interpersonal relationships. According to Weisz et al. (2025), AI-driven collaborations in a replacement stage are distinguished by high trust in AI technology due to high transparency and explainability, whereas AI-driven relationships in complementing stages are distinguished by low trust in AI system due to limited visibility and ease of explanation. It is highlighted by offering insights into various AI application stages of a firm in which explainability — the capacity of AI technology to offer succinct and understandable explanations for its predictions and recommendations — and transparency — the degree to which the operations and processes of AI technology are open and accessible to users — are highlighted as the essential components of trust-building factors (Weisz et al., 2025).

Furthermore, Das (2000) demonstrated that firms adopt AI technologies, smart contracts due to perceptions of other participants' dependability, a participant's individual intrinsic tendency to trust, participants' collective objectives and resource integration in the network, envisioned hazards in inter-firm interactions, the complexity and time criticality of inter-firm interactions by posing the question of how smart AI-based digital technologies can shape the trust equations among network participants engaged in algorithmic relationships. The literature claims that these digital technologies function as a decentralized database within a network of cooperating partners, which may promote trust between parties by implementing business collaborations in general and inter-firm business processes in particular through the truthful execution of code like AI technologies, smart contracts (Das, 2000).

4. CONCLUSION AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Despite the growing body of work at the nexus of artificial intelligence and interorganizational trust, it is seen that the literature studies have not adequately examined the impact of artificial intelligence on the development of interorganizational trust. In this sense, by concentrating on the gap, the researches that will be done to identify the antecedent effects of artificial intelligence on the formation of interorganizational trust will shed insight on a range of contextual factors, dynamics, and mechanisms for further studies.

Additionally, budgetary objectivity, comparable goals, common beliefs based on previous interactions, common codes of conduct, individual trust regarding reputation and expertise, prior contact, shared values, and communication frequency are all important factors for building trust among organizations, according to literature studies (Kawasaki, 2019, as cited in Sakai & Kimura, 2024). An in-depth understanding of how artificial intelligence contributes to the development of trust between organizations may assist in gaining a better understanding of how AI would also serve as a foundation for strengthening shared experiences, norms, communication frequency, reputation, and information, based on our prior knowledge of these trust-enabling factors.

Furthermore, knowledge hiding is found to be reduced at the interorganizational level only when employees believe that collaboration with external collaborators offers a chance to acquire and record important AI knowledge (Arias-Perez & Huynh, 2023). Given that prior research has consistently shown that partner trustworthiness boosts employees' favorable attitudes toward outside allies while lowering the prevalence of opportunistic behaviors like knowledge leakage (Arias-Perez & Huynh, 2023), more research is required to determine how the use of artificial intelligence may shield organizational members from knowledge-hindering tendencies.

According to literature research, trust develops between organizations over time through recurrent ties. This suggests that routines and norms created by previous exchanges, as well as expectations for the future, can be connected as the sources of trust (Kiviranta, 2018). And, the trust connection between partner collaborations is significantly impacted by artificial intelligence as information sharing systems and complementary predictive analytic systems that enable real-time information exchanges between partners (Weisz et al., 2025). In this sense, research on artificial intelligence's function in fostering the development and maintenance of recurring relationships within these interactions would shed light on interorganizational trust-building aspects.

Also, examining the literature on the relationship between artificial intelligence and inter-organizational trust, some studies point out how digitalization might impede the development of trust (Sakai & Kimura, 2024), while others show how it can promote it (Kiviranta, 2018). In that regard, developing inclusive research contexts through more comprehensive empirical research, the field may expand with the increasing knowledge of antecedent factors of interorganizational trust within the context of artificial intelligence and provide better insights into how artificial intelligence affects the formation of trust among organizations.

Additionally, there are also some other studies examining trust and AI linkage from other angles in terms of trust in AI. The results of these research show that trust in AI is positively correlated with management commitment, authoritarian leadership, and trust in the AI proponent. Additionally, these results demonstrate that high AI self-efficacy increases the influence of management commitment and trust in the AI promoter, providing guidance for professionals and researchers in building users' trust in AI in workplace settings (Li et al., 2021). The results of some other research with a similar focus on the influence of trust in AI indicate that elements affecting emotional trust differ from those affecting cognitive trust, and certain aspects may even have distinct effects on both. Transparency and reliability have not been fully investigated in terms of emotional trust, although having some effect on cognitive confidence in AI. Furthermore, studies showed that in some cases, decreased reliability had the opposite effect of what was expected, demonstrating a positive impact on emotional trust in robotic AI (Glikson et al., 2020). Given these results, extending the relationship between trust and AI to the perspective of interorganizational trust and AI linkage will reveal a range of contextual factors, dynamics, and mechanisms for differentiating antecedent elements of AI on trust among organizations. According to the reviewed literature, there are studies examining how AI affects trust, but much more research is required to examine how AI affects trust in businesses, particularly in light of the fact that businesses are expected to establish and operate in entirely new ecosystems where technological interdependence is becoming more significant (Kiviranta, 2018).

When considering and looking at organizations in terms of interorganizational relationships, it is expected that they will form and operate in completely new ecosystems where digital dependency becomes more significant. This describes digitally intensive contexts where business ecosystems are so entwined that firms are unable to develop their business strategies independently of the business ecosystem. Additionally, the impact of digitalization and artificial intelligence on interorganizational trust will become more significant within this newly emerging complex web of interdependent actors in the future, where this interaction is anticipated to create synergistic networks that everything is mutually dependent, necessitating mutuality and trust (Kiviranta, 2018). In that regard, the conceptual framework and literature review presented in this study will be useful for future interdisciplinary, descriptive, and statistical studies even if it does not include any empirical research. In this way, it seeks to provide a conceptual basis for developing inclusive research contexts and to raise awareness of the need to investigate how the adoption of digitalization and artificial intelligence affects the formation of trust between organizations through various factors in future research.

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