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Abstract

The world is becoming more virtual, and the COVID-19 pandemic has shown how virtual teams are going to be a bigger part of the future, with several organizations considering incorporating a hybrid workspace layout. When moving from physical to a virtual workspace the social setting changes and leaders must address their followers differently. The goal of this study was to research the trust building relationship in the supervisor-subordinate dyad, and if this relationship affects a team. Further, we were interested to see if there is a difference in this trust building relationship between virtual and non-virtual teams. Trust is argued to be one of the key factors in both leadership and for virtual leadership, but one cannot lead without followers. This dynamic approach led us to research trust from both sides of the supervisor-subordinate relationship, through a mixed methodology. Our study also investigates the leaders' and team members' willingness to trust others, five dysfunctions of a team, and trust in teams and leaders' scales. Our findings suggest that trust has an important role in both leadership and teams, and trust is naturally found to affect a team. Many of the perceived trustworthy qualities for a leader and team member coincide, but there are contextual differences. Based on our findings, trust and different aspects of trusting behavior differs between non-virtual and virtual teams. The paper is concluded with recommendations for future research.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background, relevance, and theoretical importance

Today, we are living in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, and we have seen first-hand many organizational difficulties/challenges a crisis can bring. Previously in our MSc program, we conducted interviews with leaders that dealt with the pandemic where they commented on the struggles of *virtual leadership* and *trust building* between leader and follower. In addition, there have been a plethora of articles related to how the COVID-19 pandemic has forced a virtual organizational change in many sectors since the pandemic hit. This piqued our interest, and we wanted to get a better understanding of the trust-building relationship between leaders and followers, and research if this differs between virtual teams (VT) and non-virtual teams (N-VTs). This is the background for our topic. This thesis has *practical relevance*. The world is becoming more virtual, and the COVID-19 pandemic has shown how virtual teams are going to be a bigger part of the future; with several organizations considering incorporating a hybrid workspace layout (De Smet et al., 2021; Fayard et al., 2021; Halford, 2005; Montgomery, 2021; Ro, 2020). We, the researchers for this thesis, are most likely to be in a leadership or managerial position in/for a virtual team at one point or another throughout our careers. Thus, this topic is also personally interesting for us to gain more knowledge of what builds trust between leaders and followers in virtual teams. This interest extends beyond us, as it is appealing and knowledgeable for any organization that either has or will have virtual teams and adapt to a more hybrid workspace layout. The topic is relevant today and for the future of organizations.

Our topic also has *theoretical importance*. When moving from a physical to a virtual workspace the social setting changes and leaders must address their followers differently. The level of trust between leaders and followers can yield positive organizational results related to follower's work behaviors, attitudes towards the leader, job performance, organizational efficiency, job satisfaction, and more (Colquitt et al., 2007; Dirks & Ferrin, 2000; Haynie et al., 2016; Li & Tan, 2013; Nerstad et al., 2018; Nienaber et al., 2015a). This begs the question: just as the social setting changes, will the nature of trust-building change, and further make the organizational results differ when the organizational workspace moves from a physical to a virtual space? This thesis is highly *relevant* as these

effects are something an organization would like to continue (or begin to) achieve when the workspace is becoming more virtually remote. It is of managerial interest to highlight how to build trust in the different workspace layouts and map the possible differences on building trust between the participants in both non-virtual and virtual settings. Gaining more knowledge of these differences will give management and leaders a valuable tool to help nurture positive organizational results, and the possibility to tailor their approach depending on which workspace layout they are situated. The pandemic has forced organizations to think differently about how to conduct their daily tasks, as many have been moved to home offices. The aftermath of this pandemic could open doors for more remote work inside the organization, and thus a leader's ability to build and maintain trust through a virtual space becomes more important and relevant. We hope our thesis can be a contribution to this.

Thus, for our master thesis we wanted to research trust in teams, specifically how trust is built between a supervisor and the team members. Further, we wanted to research if the aspect of building this relation differs from non-virtual and virtual teams. The context of which we study this will be through the lens of a crisis, more specifically the COVID-19 pandemic. This led to the following research question:

How does the trust building relationship in the supervisor-subordinate dyad affect a team? And is there a difference between virtual and non-virtual teams?

1.2 Thesis structure

We start our paper with a concept and definition overview for the reader. This is to provide a clear and brief overview for the paper, as we interconnect theories and concepts. Following is a detailed literature review, which forms the basis for our research and hypotheses. Next is the methodology chapter. This includes our research design, methodology, the participant selection, chosen measurements and which established instruments we use, how we practiced GDPR in our research, data collection, and more. The next chapter we present our results, followed by a discussion. Finally, we finish our paper with a conclusion of our research, and we present suggestions for future research on this topic. A reference list and appendix are found attached to this paper.

1.3 Concepts and definitions overview

In this thesis we examine many different concepts, use several definitions, and some terms are used interchangeably throughout. For the reader's clarity we have collected a brief overview of key concepts, definitions, and terms in this section.

Leadership (virtual and non-virtual). We use Northouse's (2021, p. 6) definition of leadership; "*Leadership is a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal.*" Leadership extends beyond just the physical workspace; and thus, we look at both physical/non-virtual leadership and non-physical/virtual leadership in the workspace. These terms are used interchangeably in our thesis. This is not to be confused with *presence* in the workspace, as leadership can be present (or non-present) in both non-virtual and virtual workspaces.

Supervisor-Subordinate relationship. This is the dynamic relationship between a supervisor/leader/manager and their subordinates/followers/team. In our thesis we use these terms interchangeably.

Trust. Trust is a broad concept, and for our thesis we will focus on trust as a dynamic relationship between two or more parties where trust is "*the willingness of one person to be vulnerable to the actions of another party*" (Mayer et al., 1995). Further, we examine trust as both a psychological and relational state as well as trust as the rational view of a choice behavior in the leader-follower relationship in teams.

Trustworthiness. This is theoretically separated from trust itself. Trustworthiness is about the trustor's subjective *perception* of the trustee (Mayer & Davis, 1999), and this perception is formed as a trustor interprets and ascribes motives to the trustees' actions (Ferrin & Dirks, 2003). Contributing factors to trustworthiness is ability, benevolence, and integrity.

Teams (virtual and non-virtual). The Cambridge Dictionary defines team as "*people working together as a group in order to achieve something.*" Though this is a broad definition we are focusing on teams in organization and in the workspace. We will use acronyms for the different types of teams setting; virtual teams (VTs), non-virtual teams (N-VTs). Further we distinguish between global and local virtual teams (GVT and LVT).

2. Literature review

2.1 Trust, Trustworthiness, Trust Propensity and Distrust

2.1.1 Trust

Trust is something we are all aware of and have experienced to some degree; but research on trust itself is broad and unclear (Grimen, 2009). Martin Hollis, an English philosopher, writes in his book that "... although trust is an obvious fact, it is an exasperating one. Like the flight of the bumblebee or a cure for hiccoughs, it works in practice but not in theory" (Hollis, 1998, p. 1). Grimen (2009) explains further that Hollis's point above is that the concept and presence of trust is clear for us when we *don't* think about what it is, but once we start examining it and think about what trust really is, and entails, it easily becomes something unfathomable. Further, we find more support for the depiction of the bumblebee through various works on understanding the nature of trust (e.g., Arrow, 1974; Gambetta, 1988; Reemtsma, 2013); we know that bumblebees as a fact can fly, and we begin to understand why this is so. In parallel, we do understand as a fact that trust works, and begin to understand why this is so. Moreover, there is no working, but unexplainable, cure for hiccoughs (Grimen, 2009).

So, what is trust? Oxford's Advanced learner's dictionary (Hornby, 2015) defines trust as "... *the belief that somebody/something is good, sincere, honest, etc. and will not try to harm or trick you*". We often talk about trust *in* people and organizations, relationships being *built* on (mutual and non-mutual) trust, how it takes a long *time* to build trust, tools on how you can build trust, and the opposite of trust being distrust, mistrust, or doubt. Trust is the combination of words and action, and it is most meaningful in those situations where one participant is vulnerable or at risk to another party (Bligh, 2017). To further understand and explain trust as a phenomenon, we need to look at two distinctions (Grimen, 2009). Firstly, he emphasizes how we need to describe what trust givers (and receivers) do. Secondly, there is a need for a theory that *predicts* trust giving (and receiving) behavior, and for *when* they do what they do and *why*. This will provide the building blocks to understand trust.

Trust's most recognized general rule is that there are *some precautions* in giving trust; to trust someone is to act with precautions (Grimen, 2009). A crucial point is that even if a trustee gives trust, this action will not always meet the trustee's expectations. Further, many definitions do not always agree on what constitutes

trust, but what is repeated in the various definitions (e.g., Baier, 1986; Bligh, 2017; Coleman, 1994; Elster, 2015; Hertzberg, 1998; Warren & Warren, 1999) is that if A trusts B, it is *often the case that*:

1. A leave something, X, to, or in, B's custody for a certain time.
2. A leave - always and sometimes legally - discretionary power over X to B, or in another situation where B has such power.
3. X is important for A.
4. A expects that
 - a. B will not do anything that harms A's interests,
 - b. B is competent to look after X in line with A's interests, and
 - c. B has the appropriate means to look after X in line with A's interests.
5. A takes precautions to protect themselves against B (Grimen, 2009).

There are four things of special interest in this overview and their attempt at summarizing what constitutes trust. These are *safekeeping* (watching/attending something for others; items 1 and 2); the *value* of the custodian (its importance to the trustee; item 3); the trustee's *expectations* (the/a situation definition; item 4); and the trustee's *behavior* (here: taking precautions; item 5) (Grimen, 2009). Again, this is not meant to be exhaustive, but this can be used as a simplified overview of what trustees do.

Secondly, what *predicts* trust giving (and receiving) behavior, and for *when* they do what they do and *why*. Consider these questions: Why do you trust that your checked-in luggage will be sent to the right plane (while it sometimes ends up on the wrong plane and you're on a holiday without luggage); why do we trust (at least in Norway) that the water in our sink is clean and safe to drink from; and why do we not choose random people to be our babysitters? Today there is no clear and exhaustive theory for this; and we must look at multiple theories of trust to try and understand trust giving behavior (Grimen, 2009). One argument for this vastness is that many create a definition of trust based on their own empirical assumptions, and so unfavorably "shortens" the definition and area of trust.

To narrow it down, Mayer et al. (1995) defined trust as "*the willingness of one person to be vulnerable to the actions of another party*", which coincides with the Oxford dictionary's definition. Their definition assumes that despite the risk of the trustee being "harmed", the trustor can trust the trustee based on a positive

expectation that the other party will not exploit the situation on its behalf (Rousseau et al., 1998 in Nienaber et al., 2015). Vulnerability and positive expectations are two important concepts in understanding trust from these definitions. Further, Kramer (1999) distinguishes two different approaches to trust; trust as a psychological state (cognitive processes including affective and motivational aspects) and trust as a choice behavior (economic perspective, something rational, an efficient choice). Trust as a multidimensional psychological state incorporates cognitive processes and has affective and motivational components (Nienaber et al., 2015). Further, the economic perspective is that trust is a choice behavior that can be expressed as trust being a rational, efficient choice as well as a relational behavior.

2.1.2 Trustworthiness and trust propensity

Mayer et al.'s (1995) discussion and research on trust also distinguished between the two factors in Grimen's (2009) book '*Hva er tillit*' (Eng: 'What is trust?'). discussed above, categorizing them into *trustworthiness* and *trust propensity* (Colquitt et al., 2007). This categorization separates trust from trustworthiness and has been a structural clarification in the following trust literature (Colquitt et al., 2007). Flores and Solomon (1998) argued how, ideally, one trusts someone because the other party is trustworthy, which again inspires trust. Others have commented on the subjective nature of trustworthiness and highlighted how trustworthiness is a cognitive process which discriminates amongst people where we cognitively choose whom we will trust in under which circumstances we will do so (Lewis & Weigert, 1985). Discussions around trustworthiness has been around from early in the field of trust literature, and the findings from Flores and Solomon (1998), and Lewis and Weigert (1985) indicates how the concept of trustworthiness is essential to understand trusting behavior and to predict and look at what motivates trusting behavior (Colquitt et al., 2007).

Lewis and Weigert (1985) found that trust includes both emotional and cognitive dimensions and suggest through their findings how the sense of willingness to be vulnerable to the behaviors and decisions of others originates from a cognitive process which discriminates trustworthy from less trustworthy individuals. Mayer et al.'s (1995) takes it one step further, saying how the decision to trust someone is considered as a straightforward function based on the characteristics of the trustee and the trustors disposition to shape their perceptions

of the parties in a certain way. This is referred to as trust propensity, which is the dispositional willingness to rely on others (Colquitt et al., 2007). We will get back to trust propensity later in this subchapter, but first we will look at some motivations to engage in trust behavior.

There are several components that constitute trustworthiness, and of that which is referred to as “bases of trust” (Gabarro, 1978). Some of these are *ability, benevolence, character, and integrity* of a trustee. Ability, which is one of the most discussed dispositions of trustworthiness, is about the person's competence, and entails their knowledge and skills needed to be present to do specific work tasks, as well as the interpersonal skills and wisdom needed for one to succeed in an organization (Colquitt et al., 2007; Gabarro, 1978). Secondly, character is a multifaceted construct which includes honesty, fairness, openness, caring intentions, and behavioral predictability (Colquitt et al., 2007). Further, we can separate character into benevolence and integrity; where benevolence is the extent to which a trustee is assumed to do good for the trustor and is synonymous with loyalty, openness, caring and supportiveness; whereas integrity is the extent to which a trustee is believed to follow through morally and ethically, where this ‘trust base’ is also synonymous with fairness, justice, consistency, and promise fulfillment (Colquitt et al., 2007; Mayer et al., 1995). Moreover, Colquitt et al. (2007) highlights how it remains unclear on how ability, benevolence and integrity impacts *trust levels*, despite their intuitive nature connected with trusting behavior. Through their study they found how these three main dimensions of trustworthiness all had significant and a unique relationship with trust; where one explanation to this where how these trustworthiness dimensions reflects both cognition-based and affect-based sources of trust as discussed by previous researchers in this field (Colquitt et al., 2007; Flores & Solomon, 1998; Lewis & Weigert, 1985; Rousseau et al., 1998). These findings have been supported through updated research in this field and is continuously of interest in different studies on trust (Alarcon et al., 2017; Cui & Jiao, 2019; Dirks & Jong, 2022; Jones & Shah, 2016; Kahn et al., 2022; Lewis & Marsh, 2022; van der Werff et al., 2019).

Often, in an organizational context, we must make decisions on trust before we are given enough time to accumulate data on another party's trustworthiness. It has also been suggested that trust also constitutes past experiences and dispositional factors like personality (Kee & Knox, 1970). Interpersonal trust is a

personality-based trust form which has its roots back to mid-1950s (Rosenberg, 1956), and has throughout the field of trust literature been referred to as *generalized trust* (Stack, 1978), *dispositional trust* (Kramer, 1999), and *trust propensity* (Mayer et al., 1995). The latter is mostly used in today's literature on trust. There have also been several discussions around trust propensity's influence trust after trustworthy has been evaluated (Becker, 1996; Govier, 1994; Lewis & Weigert, 1985). Fast forward, it has been argued for, and widely agreed on, how trust propensity is a stable trait which is about reflecting the trustor's generalized belief that others can be trusted and that this is the primary second base of trust together with trustworthiness (Baer et al., 2018). Moreover, the effect of trust propensity is considered something that takes place in the *initial* stages of trust building relationships, and researchers argue that this effect on trust is expected to wane over time. As reality it never is black and white, we cannot say how it is just these factors which influence trust and trustworthiness. Some researchers expand the horizon on looking at how the social context in trust dynamics can affect trust (Baer et al., 2018), where their findings suggest that employee's trust is based on more than just 'hard data' of first-hand knowledge of a potential trustee. They found that employee's trust also varied on daily peer treatment, if the focal coworker was included in this dyadic behavior or not, and this influenced the state of their trust of propensity. In other words, the perception and willingness to trust others is fluid and affects the dyadic perceptions of trustworthiness.

2.1.3 Distrust

Distrust is the opposite of trust, and it is the expectation that other will not act in one's best interest (Govier, 1994). Trust and distrust are understood in behavioral terms, and McAllister (1998) argued how these terms are separate but linked dimensions. Later studies have supported this and argued how trust and distrust are two distinct, independent constructs (Dimoka, 2010; Lewicki et al., 1998; Li et al., 2010; McKnight & Choudhury, 2006; Rani et al., 2018) Further, distrust distinguishes how the expectation of capable and responsible behavior from one (or several) parties will not be forthcoming (Barber, 1983). Distrust is argued to be a negative form of trust, and is often a measure on how much the trustor believes that the trustee will actively work against them in a given situation (Marsh & Dibben, 2005). Moreover, Marsh and Dibben (2005) also highlighted

how distrust could be valuable during times of uncertainty and doubt, because it might lead people to behave more sensibly.

Rani et al. (2018), found how distrust has a pervasive effect on employee's identification, more than what trust has. Their findings coincide with an earlier study which found how trust and distrust activates different part of the brain, where trust activates positive feelings in our brains and distrust activate negative feelings (Dimoka, 2010). Like trust, distrust also has its range of organizational effects. Kutsyuruba and Walker (2016) argues how the speed of which trust can be broken (or even destroyed) depends on the overall damage from the act of untrustworthiness, and the perceived intentions of the untrustworthiness. Distrusting behavior can damage the organization, and it has been emphasized how a leader should have a conscious approach to rebuild trust in organizations. A leader should be prepared to restore broken trust internally in the organization and be able to reinstate hope in the employees (Kutsyuruba & Walker, 2016).

Further, Dirks and Skarlicki (2004) argues how trust breaking behavior from a supervisor is violating their followers' expectations to them, which ends in a significant drop in trust levels, and how these actions make the followers more sensitive to future trust giving actions. The kind of behavior which leads to experiencing a supervisor violating trust in an organization, and/or towards their team members, is perceived to be destructive, toxic, abusive, and derailed side of leadership. It is assumed that trust is easier to break than build (Lewicki & Wiethoff, 2000), as there is a bias toward seeing negative information as more diagnostic for making character judgements compared to positive information (Skowronski & Carlston, 1987). We tend to see negative acts as breaking a promise, not following through on commitments, dishonest behavior, or behaving without integrity as very informative actions which can tell us a lot of another character (Dirks & Skarlicki, 2004).

On a final note, distrust can be healthy and sometimes advisable (Hurley, 2011). Hurley (2011) shares similar views like those of Marsh and Dibben (2005), and he emphasizes that it is in *extreme* and *wrong* situations where distrust corrodes the cooperation and effectiveness in organization. Distrust can have both negative and positive effects on an organization, and the pace in which we can rebuild trust depends on the graveness of the untrustworthy behavior. Further, it is essential to understand that when a leader breaks the trust of their followers, it becomes more damaging than the other way around. In a broader picture, we are interested to see

if trust breaking behaviors are similar or differs depending on the context a team is in, and with that we suggest the following hypothesis:

H01: It is easier to break trust in a virtual team than non-virtual teams.

Through this review on trust and distrust, we get a basic understanding of what trust is, what it entails and what is expected from the parties involved in trust-building. In our thesis we examine trust as both a psychological and relational state as well as the rational view of a choice behavior.

2.2 Leadership

Today there are a plethora of books that examine leadership and various aspects of the term. Leadership is often collectively viewed as something simple in many popular books attempting to dismantle this topic (Northouse, 2018). The previous idea of a born leader has been debunked, and countless research has been done to collect and discuss how a leader is made (e.g., Bass & Bass, 2008; Bryman et al., 2011; Bryman, 1992; Day & Antonakis, 2011; Dinh et al., 2014; Hickman, 2015; Mumford, 2006) and what constitutes a good leader. Further, leadership has many different conceptualizations where some researchers define leadership as a *trait* (Bass & Bass, 2008; Jago, 1982; Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1991; Lord et al., 1986; Stogdill, 1948, 1974) or a *behavior* (e.g. Blake & Mouton, 1994; Cartwright & Zander, 1968; Stogdill, 1974), while other researchers view leadership as a form of *information-processing perspective* (Cerni et al., 2008; Lord et al., 1984; Lord & Maher, 1993) or *relational standpoint* (Helstad & Møller, 2013; Kark & Shamir, 2013; McCallum & O’Connell, 2009). As a result of these findings and countless of studies, academic institutions throughout the world have designed study programs on various levels (bachelors, masters, etc.) focusing on leadership studies; much like the Master of Science program majoring in Leadership and Change that we are enrolled in.

According to Stogdill (1974) there are almost as many different definitions of leadership as there are people trying to define it; and the definition of leadership has evolved a lot throughout the years (Burns, 1978; Copeland, 1942; Hemphill, 1949; Moore, 1927; Northouse, 2018; Rost, 1991; Seeman, 1960). Leadership scholars have after decades of disagreement agreed that they cannot create a common definition for leadership as long as leadership continues to have different meanings for different people, which builds under the notion of that leadership is

a complex concept (Northouse, 2018). In Northouse's (2021) book *Leadership*, they aim to view leadership as a complex process having multiple dimensions and base their breakdown of the different approaches to leadership on research literature to give a more holistic view of the term. For this master's thesis we will adapt the same viewpoint, and to have a clear idea of what is meant by leadership in this paper we will use a well-renowned and inclusive definition of leadership. Thus, the definition we will use for leadership in our paper is the same as the one used by Northouse (2021, p. 6):

“Leadership is a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal.”

2.2.1 Leadership, the Supervisor-subordinate relationship, and Trust

Trust becomes adherent in the relationship between a leader and follower(s). The supervisor-subordinate relationship is characterized by asymmetries between the parties (Nienaber et al., 2015); where the supervisor has a higher status, power, access to information and the possibility to exercise control and direction in the workspace. On the other side of this relationship the subordinates stand on a lesser ground; they face more uncertainty and more dependency in the workspace; leaving them naturally more vulnerable. Moreover, the subordinate has some degree of autonomy in whom, and to what degree, they trust in their co-workers, supervisors, and the company they work for. The follower has the choice to not reciprocate the supervisor's trust and/or reduce their level of effort and contribution to this relationship. This degree of autonomy within the subordinate's trust can impact the organization, workspace, and managers both positively and negatively (Nienaber et al., 2015). The participants in the supervisor-subordinate dyad have by definition different roles and varying degrees of status and power in their relationship (Bligh, 2017). The follower(s) are more vulnerable towards their leader. Although traditional discussions of leadership have seemingly ignored trust as a critical primary mechanism to exchange power and influence; trust is something relational and a dynamic occurrence between participants where the leader and follower(s) have important roles in creating, sustaining, destroying, and rebuilding trusting relationships (Bligh, 2017). Nienaber et al. (2015) points out in their meta-analysis of trust in supervisor-subordinate relationships that trust in these relationships works reciprocally; it comprises both the trust an (or plural) follower(s) has towards their supervisor, and vice versa; i.e., it is dynamic.

Trust also affects job performance where trust is believed to affect the way a trustor allocates resources when interaction with the trustee, as well as greater self-efficacy, psychological safety, knowledge sharing and job engagement (Colquitt et al., 2007; Dirks & Ferrin, 2000; Haynie et al., 2016; Li & Tan, 2013; Mayer & Gavin, 2005; Nerstad et al., 2018). They found that, depending on the degree of willingness a trustor must be vulnerable to leaders and their peers, the trustor is free to focus more of their attention on job tasks compared to reallocation their energy to monitoring. Further, an important attribute within effective virtual teams is the leader's ability to develop trust among its members (Germain & McGuire, 2014; Jarvenpaa & Leidner, 1999; Panteli & Duncan, 2004; Panteli & Tucker, 2009), and this attribute is also an important characteristic of effective virtual team leaders (Cartwright & Zander, 1968; Chamakiotis et al., 2021; Zander et al., 2013).

Trust is something that is either present or not, and can continuously vary throughout the whole leader-follower relationship; this relationship can lead to both positive and negative organizational effect (Bernerth & Walker, 2009; Bijlsma-Frankema & Koopman, 2003; Ertürk, 2010; Lance Frazier et al., 2010; Mayer & Gavin, 2005) which is why it is interesting and important to examine the role of trust in this relationship further. The purpose with our thesis is to further understand what specific aspects of the trust-building process induce trust between a supervisor and subordinates over both a virtual and non-virtual team composition in the workspace. Although our focus will be from the subordinate's view, it is also applicable to include perspectives from the supervisor's standpoint due to the dynamic and reciprocal nature of this relationship.

Two decades of research on virtual teams and leadership states that virtual leadership (e-leadership) is a prerequisite for success in virtual teams (Chamakiotis et al., 2021; Contreras et al., 2020; Gilson et al., 2015; Larson & DeChurch, 2020). The biggest difference between virtual leadership and virtual teams pre-COVID-19 is that they previously were a voluntary choice for both parties. The pandemic forced many organizations to move their workspaces to the virtual space and become more remote as a necessary for organizational continuity and survival (Chamakiotis et al., 2021; Richter, 2020). Thus, this radical transformation of organizational structures challenged previous e-leadership and virtual teams' literature on how to successfully work toward organizational and team success (Chamakiotis et al., 2021; Gersick, 1991). Moreover, Gilson et al.

(2015) states that (e-)leaders can be crucial in how virtual teams function as they influence how these teams handle obstacles and adapts to challenges, which underlines the importance of effective leadership during a crisis like the COVID-19 pandemic (Chamakiotis et al., 2021). The forced change to home offices and LVTs within organizations in Norway led us to explore the following hypothesis:

***H02:** COVID-19 has had a negative effect on intraorganizational trust.*

Further, Pearlson et al. (2015) suggested three challenges that e-leaders must overcome in virtual teams; communication, technology and team diversity. Hacker et al. (2019) argues that although trust itself should be identified as its own challenge in virtual teams, they consider trust as an important prerequisite for e-leaders to solve communication and technology related challenges. This argument is also supported by earlier research, where Jarvenpaa and Leidner (1999) identified that trust as the heart of well-functional virtual teams. Seeing how trust between the supervisor-to-follower(s) relationship is crucial in a virtual setting and affects multiple challenges for e-leaders, it underscores the importance of researching this concept and applying it the new emergence of more local virtual teams that came with the COVID-19 pandemic.

We can draw a parallel with our study and Dutton & Heaphy's (2003) reasoning for looking at high-quality connections in the positive organizational scholarship perspective. Their general reasoning highlights that researching the quality of the connection between people in the workspace is essential to understand individual and organizational behavior (Dutton & Heaphy, 2003). They go on by encompassing this relational quality further interconnects theories of growth, identity, learning and exchange to continue and improve our understanding of why and how these connections matter. Focusing on the quality of the connection will give us critical new dimensions to our understanding of people's behavior in the workspace; by further examining it at an individual level which gives us a dynamic and embodied context (Dutton & Heaphy, 2003). Just so, by looking at the quality of the trust-building process between the leader and the follower, we can gain further insight and might uncover or understand social organizational behavior and to what extent trust plays a role in this connection. Trust, as mentioned earlier, is a dynamic occurrence between two or more participants; and in so it is of interest to research how the quality of this connection differs (or not) in different compositions of teams (non-virtual and virtual). By unfolding this

dynamic relation and focusing on this micro dimension of the leader-follower interactions field, might give us new critical dimensions and tools to help better and understand people's behavior in teams.

Germain and McGuire (2014), and Jarvenpaa and Leidner (1999) states that trust had a crucial role in the pre-COVID-19 virtual teams. This argument states that high-trusting virtual teams are more cohesive in their work and has higher performance levels compared to virtual teams with low trust (DeRosa et al., 2004; Hacker et al., 2019). Further, Hacker et al. (2019) stresses the importance of e-leaders continuous monitoring-, and cultivation of a trusting culture in the supervisor-to-follower relationship and amongst the team members in a virtual setting. In Chamakiotis et al.'s (2021) theoretical model on COVID-19 virtual teams' context, they propose that leaders have a direct effect on virtual members work engagement and trust, and that work-life boundaries and virtual well-being has an indirect effect on engagement and trust. Moreover, the e-leader can both directly and indirectly affect the success of a virtual team's creative performance and innovation by consciously foster the supervisor-to-followers relationships and help virtual team members with healthy work-life boundaries and virtual well-being at work (Chamakiotis et al., 2021).

It is important to underscore that it would be wrong to use trust and collaboration interchangeably. It is possible to work together, in a group or as a part of a team, without the presence of trust; and collaborations ought not lead to trust among participants (Cook et al., 2005). Much so, it is possible to collaborate with a supervisor without necessarily trusting said person. Moreover, as we see through Nienaber et al. (2015) research, the level of trust between leaders and followers can yield positive organizational results. So even if trust is something that does not need to be present in a workspace, a positive level of trust can give several positive results compared to a neutral or negative level of trust in the same relation.

2.2.2 Leadership, gender, and trust

Norway scores high on international comparisons of gender equality between women and men, and in 2003 Norway was considered a world leader on gender equality (*Norway - World Leader in Gender Equality*, 2003). Today, Norway rank as the third most gender equal country in the Global gender Gap Index (Szmigiera, 2022). Where leadership and management roles have long history of

being male dominated, the gender distribution of leaders in Norway is gradually changing, and in 2019 37% of all leaders in Norway were women (Gram, 2021). Although Norway soars for gender equality and is able to score high on gender statistics and indexes, we were interested to see if gender affects the trust building relationship in the supervisor-follower and peer relationship in teams.

Cappelen et al. (2020) found in their study that trust is substantially higher in women than in men. What's interesting is that their study was conducted with a western sampling base from Germany, Norway, and the United States; where the reasoning behind their findings were somewhat due to gender role beliefs ascribing prosocial behavior more towards women than men (Cappelen et al., 2020). Moreover, trusting behavior towards men varied between the countries whereas trusting behavior towards women had less variations. Although this study shows differences between western countries, there is a tendency to view women as more trustworthy than men. It is interesting to see if this also applies in organizational settings, and if this affects the pacing of trust building in teams. Further, Chambers (2011) argues in their thesis that trust is fundamental to achieve and maintain successful leadership (Dirks & Ferrin, 2000). Although the depiction on a trust building relationship underlines the essential role of time (trust '*building*'), initial impressions of a leader's (including follower(s) and peer(s)) trustworthiness is considered present onset to the developing relationship between leaders, followers, and peer relations (Chambers, 2011).

Several aspects influence this initial, and most often, internal consideration. Colquitt et al. (2007) and Gill et al. (2005) highlights how an individual's general propensity to trust others plays an integral role, and there is a consensus between several other researchers (e.g., Foddy et al., 2009; Johansson-Stenman, 2008; Niu & Rosenthal, 2009) how group-based biases also affects our initial impressions of a leader's trustworthiness. But how is this related to gender? As biases to trustworthiness are considered as a factor that could influence leadership perceptions (Chambers, 2011), there has been focused on group-based trust and 'trust discrimination' in social groups. Further, other factors that can impact leadership perceptions are *social identity* (Foddy et al., 2009; Haslam & Platow, 2001; Hogg, 2001; Hogg et al., 2006) and *discrimination experiences* (e.g., Duck & Fielding, 1999; Kramer et al., 1995; Moy & Ng, 1996). Chambers (2011) further argues how initial perceptions of trustworthiness are based on an individual's biases towards a specific social group and the individual's degree of

own identification with their social group. This is the bases for the following hypothesis:

***H03:** The pace at which trust-building takes place varies, based on the leader's gender.*

Gender is categorized as a social group (Ridgeway, 2007), and thus it is interesting to highlight how today's leaders would weight gender as a factor for a leader's trustworthiness in a modern western society. The studies done by Foddy et al. (2009), Haslam & Platow (2001), Hogg (2001), Hogg et al. (2006), Duck & Fielding (1999), Kramer et al. (1995), and Moy & Ng (1996) could indicate that if an individual identifies as a female (or male) and possesses gender biases either towards their own gender or other genders, this bias will triumph when assessing their initial impressions of a leader's trustworthiness. The same effect is present should said bias be small to none, meaning that if less or little bias is present the individual is more likely to perceive a leader's trustworthiness more positively and trust said person faster. Moreover, women between the age of 16-66 are more willing to trust others than men (*Statistics Norway*, 2020), where they believe that most people can be trusted. This leads us to our next hypothesis:

***H04:** The gender identity of an individual affects perceived trustworthiness more favorably towards their own gender.*

On a final note, we acknowledge other genders and gender identities than previously discussed, but for our thesis we focus and discuss gender groups limited to 'female' and 'male'.

2.2.3 Non-virtual and virtual leadership

We need to distinguish the context in which leadership takes place. Since the COVID-19 pandemic hit, many organizations were forced into home offices and had to conduct a complete reversal of how to operate daily tasks and how to lead and motivate team(s). Overall, leadership context matters (Lord and Dihn); and one critical context for leadership is leadership in virtual teams (Schmidt, 2014). The concept of virtuality is that the workspace is taking partly, or fully, place in the virtual space; meetings over Teams/Zoom, working physically apart, working in different time zones and so on. Virtual teams are a major part of how work is done in the world (Schmidt, 2014), and how work has been conducted during the

pandemic. This has inherently created a similar need for virtual leadership, which is characterized by those leaders that are in charge of managing virtual teams and virtual workers, helping them to be as productive as possible (Schmidt, 2014).

Leadership generally impacts virtual team behaviors through performance management, communication frequency, transactional-, and transformation leadership, frequent leader-member communication, task cohesion, and more (Bell & Kozlowski, 2002; Gajendran & Joshi, 2012; Huang et al., 2010; Purvanova & Bono, 2009). Moreover, research has found that the effect of transformational leadership gives stronger team performance outcomes in virtual teams than non-virtual teams (Huang et al., 2010; Purvanova & Bono, 2009). Leadership through the virtual workspace has created the term “e-leadership”, and its defined leadership as being “*a fundamental change in the way leaders and followers relate to each other within organizations and between organizations*” (Avolio & Kahai, 2003). In our thesis we used the term *virtual leadership* for e-leadership, as these terms are interchangeable. Moreover, certain fundamentals of leadership will most probably always be the same regardless of the workspace context (Avolio & Kahai, 2003). We wanted to see if this extends to trust building across the two contexts, or if this differs between virtual and non-virtual teams. And this led to the following hypothesis:

H05: Perceived qualities for a leader differs between a virtual and a non-virtual team.

2.3 Teams

A team is defined as a group of people that work together towards a common goal (Franz, 2012, p. 5). The Cambridge Dictionary defines team as “*people working together as a group in order to achieve something.*” These are the definitions used in this paper. The difference between a group and a team is the function of the team. Teams have a specific assignment or a task that they are going to solve together. In the workspace there can be long-term teams and short-term teams. Some tasks demand a longer time to be completed and others less time. In organizations there can be varied reasons to work as a team, some teams are put together for a given project, a specific task, or other reasons.

Teams can be an effective way to solve different tasks. In teams the members combine their knowledge, experience, motivation, and energy to work towards a common goal (Partridge, 2007). Teamwork can be a good way to work together

but there is not always a match between the team members, making the task of picking out team members an important assignment. Teams are supposed to 1) support each other, and 2) work towards a common goal (Partridge, 2007).

Trust has been highlighted in the literature as one of the drivers behind effective teams and to build trust a key factor is good communication (Partridge, 2007). Good communication in teams is crucial, with good communication the team members can understand their position and their role in the team. Trust and mutual respect play a big part in a team between the leader and their followers and is the foundation of the dedications towards the job and the interpersonal relationships (Blake & Mouton, 1964; Dawson & Andriopoulos, 2017). It is not hard to understand that there needs to be trust towards each other in a team for a team to work successfully. Team members need to rely on the others to pull their part of the task and trust that they all are equally involved and engaged to have a satisfactory product at the end. For teams to be effective, trust needs to be in place to be able to work together and “produce” an outcome (Bhattacharya et al., 1998). Trust is an important element in teams where everyone is expecting each other to do their task and to fulfill their commitment to the team. Lencioni & Lencioni (2002) defines “Five Dysfunctions of a Team” where lack of trust is the first and most critical dysfunction. Further, they describe the five dysfunctions as a pyramid where they build on each other. When a team is not able to build trust with each other this causes the second dysfunction to grow which is the fear of conflict (Lencioni & Lencioni, 2002). When the team has a fear of conflict this will create the third dysfunction which is a lack of commitment where team members are scared of discussing openly and passionately (Lencioni & Lencioni, 2002). Further, the fourth and fifth dysfunction is avoidance of accountability and inattention to result. Lencioni & Lencioni (2002) emphasize the importance of trust in a team, without trust the team has one dysfunction, and with this, there is a much greater risk of creating more dysfunction.

2.3.1 Virtual teams

Virtual teams (VT) have existed for a while, with teams with members from across the globe working together for a common goal. In recent years technology has made global teamwork easier with video conferences and online “workspace”. The virtual transformation has made it possible for us to work together in a way like never before. There are both Local Virtual Teams (LVT) and Global Virtual

Teams (GVT), where pre-COVID-19 -19 the focus in the literature was mainly on GVT and after the pandemic the focus have shifted to LVTs (Chamakiotis et al., 2021). When the COVID-19 pandemic came, many workspaces suffered from the lock-down and were forced into LVT. Workers had to set up home offices and work from home overnight. Though most of the literature focuses on other situations such as teams that have a global distance or different time-zones, there is not much literature on the topic of LVT, which have increased during the pandemic. Keeping the motivation high among the team members in a VT can be a challenge and some team members might need different kinds of motivations (Jr et al., 2009).

Trust in VTs can become a challenge. People can feel isolated and unsure of the others in their team. A lack of trust in each other can become a threat to the team's success (Cascio, 2000). Though one could say that not all work is appropriate to conduct in a virtual team, the pandemic has forced many into this position. Cascio (2000) argues that not every job and not every person's combination would be a good match in a virtual workspace. Malhotra et al. (2007) is emphasizing the importance of establishing trust through communication to be able to have an effective team. They also found that teams who were struggling did not have a clear procedure to follow. Thus, they concluded that communicating a clear procedure and how the team is supposed to communicate together is important to establish from the beginning. Having clear guidelines to follow on communication will enhance the trust in the team (Malhotra et al., 2007).

In VTs, communication might be of greater importance than in a non-virtual team. In a non-virtual team, the members can read each other's body language which is a big part of the communication. There can also be a different level of digital communication. Some teams might only use written communications such as e-mail, and others might use a combination of written and verbal communication through phone calls, and some might also use videoconferences and combine all three. When teams use video tools to communicate it can become easier to read body language. In phone calls and video, one can interpret the auditory image one gets. Using virtual tools such as videoconferences is a fair substitute for face-to-face interaction. What is left out is the smell and touch senses, it is limited to a quasi 2D perception, and there is no physical interaction between the team members (Paradisi et al., 2021).

2.3.2 Trust in virtual teams

Several researchers argue for the importance of trust in virtual teams and how it's essential for a well-performing and functional team (Al-Ani et al., 2013; Hacker et al., 2019; Henttonen & Blomqvist, 2005; Jarvenpaa & Leidner, 1999; Jimenez et al., 2017; Joshi et al., 2009; Lukić & Vračar, 2018; Pearlson et al., 2015; Verburg et al., 2013). Moreover, trust has also been found to improve collaboration and knowledge sharing in teams (Al-Ani et al., 2013; Henttonen & Blomqvist, 2005; Jimenez et al., 2017), team coordination and performance (Joshi et al., 2009; Lukić & Vračar, 2018) and Verburg et al. (2013) argue that trust is an overall critical success factor for virtual teams. Thus, Hacker et al. (2019) highlights that the research done in this field (e.g. Al-Ani et al., 2013; Hambley et al., 2007; Henttonen & Blomqvist, 2005; Hertel et al., 2005; Liao, 2017; Lukić & Vračar, 2018; Staples, 1997; Thomas & Bostrom, 2008; Zander et al., 2013) underscores the importance of how e-leaders should continuously focus on creating, reinforce, and maintain trust in the supervisor-to-follower(s) relationship and among virtual team peers.

Daim et al. (2012), found the importance of leader's own trustworthiness (as trustees) and their trust (as trustors) of team members. Further, Hughes and Saunders (2021) discussed how *benevolence* and *integrity* are the most dominant influences on team members' perception of leader trustworthiness (Mayer et al., 1995), as the team members take ability for granted as one of the bases for trustworthiness within their leader. Their findings also argue for how VT leaders need to make a conscious effort to build trust with their team members. They highlight how a leader's care and concern for their team members are more key factors in VTs than in N-VTs, which has been recognized by VT leaders. Other factors which play an important role for trustworthiness within the leader in VT's these factors were mentioned: *supporting, protecting, fairness, career development and coaching, communication beyond the daily agenda, openness, and presence* (Hughes & Saunders, 2021). Hughes and Saunders (2021) also found three forms of leader behavior which demonstrated their trust within their VT members: openness, granting autonomy, and demonstrating value and respect towards their members. The most important behavior was openness (Hughes & Saunders, 2021), as this was found to be central to trust between the leader and their followers, and this is also a form a disclosure-related trust (Gillespie, 2003). This led to us to the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 06: *Perceived trustworthiness towards a team member differs between a virtual and a non-virtual team.*

Hypothesis 07: *Perceived trustworthiness towards a leader differs between a virtual and a non-virtual team.*

As discussed earlier in the subchapter of trust, trying to dismantle this term is not always as simple. There are different approaches to defining trust, and thus researchers and practitioners (e-leaders and team members) are limited due to an overall unclarity about trust in a virtual context and a plethora of conceptualizations and studies (Hacker et al., 2019). Regardless of this flaw, it is important for researchers to try and agree on a generalized definition with room for contextual adaptations to help practitioners to work with turning theory into practice. This is not the aim for our paper, but it is important to be aware of the diversity of definitions within this field of research and its limitations.

2.4 Summary

Mayer et al. (1995) describes trusts as “*the willingness of one person to be vulnerable to the actions of another party*”. Trust, trustworthiness, and trust propensity are separate terms in this field’s literature, where trustworthiness is essential for understanding trusting behavior (Flores & Solomon, 1998; Lewis & Weigert, 1985; Colquitt et al., 2007). Trustworthiness is built on “bases on trust”, where the three main bases are ability, benevolence, and integrity (Mayer et al., 1995). In today’s literature on trust, trust propensity is mostly used when describing interpersonal trust, which again is personality based and is a stable trait which is about reflecting the trustor’s generalized belief that others can be trusted and that trust propensity is the primary second base of trust together with trustworthiness. Trust propensity is something that takes place in the beginning stages of trust building relationships and is a subjective internal evaluation of a person’s trustworthiness. Distrust is the opposite of trust, and the trustor expects that the trustee will not act in one’s best interest. Trust and distrust are separated behavioral terms, which are linked through a shared dimension. Distrust can be both damaging and healthy depending on the situation.

In this thesis we use Northouse’s definition of leadership “*Leadership is a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal.*” It is interesting to look at the trust relationship between leadership,

the supervisor-subordinate relation and trust as this is one of the most meaningful situations where trusts take place; the asymmetry in the supervisor-subordinate relationship leaves the followers automatically more vulnerable than the leader. In our thesis we also have a dynamic approach to trust and the supervisor-subordinate relationship, as trust is something relational and has dynamic occurrence between participants where the leader and follower(s) have important roles in creating, sustaining, destroying, and rebuilding trusting relationships (Bligh, 2007). Trust in an organization can yield many positive, and negative, effects such as job performance, self-efficacy, psychological safety, knowledge sharing, team efficiency, job engagement and more.

Leadership takes place in both virtual and non-virtual workplaces. The concept of virtuality is that the workspace is taking partly, or fully, place in the virtual space; meetings over Teams/Zoom, working physically apart, working in different time zones and so on. Leadership generally impacts virtual team behaviors through performance management, communication frequency, transactional-, and transformation leadership, frequent leader-member communication, task cohesion, and more.

Norway scores high on international comparisons of gender equality between women and men. Leadership and management roles have long history of being male dominated, the gender distribution of leaders in Norway is gradually changing, and in 2019 37% of all leaders in Norway were women in 2021. Trust is substantially higher in women than in men and trusting behavior towards men varies between some western countries compared to trusting behavior towards women. Trust is fundamental to achieve and maintain successful leadership (Dirks & Ferrin, 2000), and how an individual's general propensity to trust others plays an integral role, and group-based biases also affects our initial impressions of a leader's trustworthiness. As biases to trustworthiness are considered a factor that could influence leadership perceptions, there has been focused on group-based trust and 'trust discrimination' in social groups. Other factors that can impact leadership perceptions are *social identity* and *discrimination experiences*. Chambers (2011) argues how initial perceptions of trustworthiness are based on an individual's biases towards a specific social group and the individual's degree of own identification with their social group.

The difference between an organizational group and a team is the function of the team. Teams have a specific assignment or a task that they are going to solve

together. A team is defined as a group of people that work together towards a common goal. Trust has been highlighted in the literature as one of the drivers behind effective teams and to build trust a key factor is good communication (Partridge, 2007). VT's have existed for a while, with teams with members from across the globe working together for a common goal. In recent years technology has made global teamwork easier with video conferences and online "workspace". The digital transformation has made it possible for us to work together in a way like never before. There are both LVT and GVT, where pre-COVID-19 the focus in the literature was mainly on GVT and after the pandemic the focus have shifted to LVTs.

Lastly, several researchers argue for the importance of trust in virtual teams and how it's essential for a well-performing and functional team. Moreover, trust has also been found to improve collaboration and knowledge sharing in teams, team coordination and performance and trust has been argued to be an overall critical success factor for virtual teams. Thus, some research thinks that e-leaders should continuously focus on creating, reinforce, and maintain trust in the supervisor-to-follower(s) relationship and among virtual team peers.

3. Methodology

The aim for this thesis is to uncover whether the trust building relationship differs from non-virtual and virtual teams. We want to highlight this relationship from both parties in the supervisor-follower relationship and consequently chose a *triangulated approach* with *cross-sectional research design*; with both qualitative and quantitative data. The following is a thorough description of the methodology used for our thesis.

3.1 Research Designs

In this paper, we decided to use a cross-sectional design with both quantitative and qualitative data. The reason for this was to get two different aspects for our discussion in the paper. The qualitative data collection was done through semi-structured in-depth interviews with one VT leader and three N-VT leaders. We used a semi-structured interview type as that the data we collected through this method is more reliable and potentially can be generalized, but to its limitations (Bell et al., 2019, p. 209). Data collected through this method were processed and analyzed in a *thematic analysis* (Braun & Clarke, 2006), which is the most common analytical method in qualitative research (Bell et al., 2019). By conducting a thematic analysis, we were able to analyze plural reoccurring themes by looking at the collected data. Further, these themes were coded in core categories and subcategories which allows us to understand the thematic approach to the research project (Bell et al., 2019). When we searched for themes, we looked for repetitions, indigenous typologies or categories, metaphors and analogies, transitions, similarities, and differences, and more (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). We emphasized repetitions within and across data sources that are relevant to the research question and focus, metaphors and analogies that are used, similarities and differences, and more. These data were imported to *NVivo 12*, which helped us to gain a better overview of the themes that rose during the data collection.

The other method we used is a mixture between quantitative and qualitative. We created a survey in Qualtrics which was a self-administered questionnaire (Bell et al., 2019). We looked for team members in both VT and N-VT's and some leaders of teams as well. With this, we aimed to get a greater understanding of how the

followers and the leaders have experienced the transitions to “overnight” VTs, and those who have previously worked in VTs, and if this has affected the trust-building in the leader-follower relationship. Though the completed results of the survey (n=45) are not enough to generalize the results they can still give us an indication of how they have experienced the trust-relationship with their leaders and towards their followers. We asked questions where the participants had to scale their answers on how they have perceived the differences in the trust relationship between them and their leader or between them and their subordinates or between them and the others on the team. By using a mixed method in the survey, we wanted to get a more fulfilling answer through both the scale and the open-ended replies. With the scaled questions we could compare the answers and see if the context of VT’s influenced the trust relationship. Using a survey is also less time-consuming and can give us valuable insight without spending hours on hours interviewing.

3.2 Sampling methods

In this paper we have tried to sample participants that we accounted to be relevant. Since we use *mixed method*, we conducted different sampling methods for the different methodologies; where we have used *purposive sampling* with a *criterion sampling approach* for the qualitative method and *non-probability self-selection sampling* for the quantitative method (Bell et al., 2019).

For the qualitative semi-structured in-depth interviews, we wanted the viewpoints from participants with direct reference to our research question. The characteristic of purposeful sampling fits our aim, as we chose participant(s) according to the needs of the study (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982; Glaser, 1978; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Morse, 1990). Thus, we recruited participants in a strategic way where all had to fulfill particular criterions; which were that the informants would have been in a (or plural) team(s) and had lead/supervised a (or plural) team(s) during the past five years. The gender ratio of the informants were two male and two female supervisors, where all were recruited through our personal network.

For the quantitative method we used self-selection sampling techniques since we wanted to recruit volunteers (*What Is Non-Probability Sampling?*, n.d.) who met our criteria. Moreover, since our sampling method is not done according to the norms of probability sampling, i.e., we have not conducted random selection,

some units in the population were more likely to be recruited than others resulting in the use of non-probability sample for our thesis (Bell et al., 2019).

In total we have divided our sampling into three groups regardless of non-virtual or virtual context:

1. Supervisors or leaders of teams,
2. Team members that have been in a team with a supervisor/leader, and
3. Someone who has been/is both a supervisor and a team member.

For the semi-structured in-depth interviews, we chose participants from the first and the last group and for the survey we chose the second group and third group. The same sampling criterion applied for the quantitative method, only that it also included team members. To get a more holistic picture we interviewed both leaders of VT's and N-VT's, where one leader had to start in a new job with a supervising role for a forced LVT during the pandemic.

3.3 Preparation and execution of in-depth interviews and surveys distribution

3.3.1 In-depth interviews

Date, time, and place for the interviews was scheduled one week prior to the interview. During this week we revisited and cross-referenced the interview guide that got accepted for the NSD application. The themes covered by the guide are (1) *Trust, trustworthiness, and trust building in general*, (2) *Leadership and trust*, (3) *Leadership and trust building in context*. We asked all subjects to define trust and to rank which elements they deem most important for trust building in their work. All informants were also asked to complete the Behavioral Trust Inventory (BTI) (Gillespie, 2003) (see *Appendix 1 Semi-structured interview guide*) before the interview started.

One hour was set aside for each interview. As the informants were recruited through our personal networks, three interviews were conducted at one of researchers' homes, and one was conducted through a virtual tool, *Zoom*. All interview questions were used, and the interviewees were asked to elaborate on open answers to questions. The interview was performed orally and was digitally recorded for transcription where information and consent for handling personal data were given before the interview. The questions functioned as a template for the interview to ensure that we cover the themes we aim to cover for this thesis, as

well as giving us room to explore other themes with our subjects that aren't included in the guide.

The Behavioral Trust Inventory is an instrument that captures a person's willingness to be vulnerable in a relationship with a specified other (here: supervisor-subordinate relationship). This inventory is also to measure trust sensitivity in leader-member (and peer) relationships in a team setting. Hence, this inventory is needed to capture the essential features of these typically complex and highly interdependent work relationships that we are researching for our master thesis (Gillespie, 2003). Mapping these futures from our informants will also allow us to gain greater insight into their subjective thoughts and actions on trust building in their work and to their team members; which can result in a richer understanding of our topic.

3.3.2 Survey distribution

When deciding which tool to use for the survey our institution/BI has a partnership with Qualtrics, and we had some prior experience with using this for survey sampling. The survey was public for three weeks and in that time, from 13.05.2022 to 02.06.2022, in this time we received 124 responses. After we cleaned the data there were 101 that had answered some of the questions where the 23 others were someone that had just started the survey or just answered the first few questions. Of the 101 respondents 39% completed the *whole* survey.

In the survey there were 58,9% men and 39,6% women that answered the survey, the remaining 2% defined themselves as "*other*". The age of the respondents ranged from 20 to 67 years with a mean at 32 years. The average person had been in 4 different teams during the past five years where the highest number were 10 different teams in the time span. 54,8% of the respondents had been in virtual teams because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Among the respondents that had been in a VT there were 44 that had been a team member, 8 that had been a leader and 25 that had been in both positions. For the N-VT there were 34 that had been a team member, 4 that had been a leader and 22 that had been both.

The survey was shared on different social platforms to try to reach out to as many as possible. We were interested in getting respondents from different work fields and locations. The post was shared with acquaintances from both private

circles and academic circles. When we shared the survey in messages and on these platforms, we informed them about GDPR and shared either the document or pictures of the document about our application letter to the NSD (“Norsk senter for forskningsdata”). In the information, we described how the data were anonymized. And in the survey, we described the purpose of the data collection and that if they did not consent to us collecting the data the survey would end.

The survey was created in a way that would differentiate between those who had experience with being a leader and those who had experience with being a team member and those who had both. For those who had been in a virtual team, they would get a set of questions asking about their experience as a leader, a team member, or both in a VT, and then they would be asked about their experience with the same roles but in a non-virtual team. So, the same questions were asked to both participants who had experienced virtual and non-virtual teams. This made it possible for us to compare the results in these two parameters and see if there is an indication of a difference.

3.4 Measurements

Although organizational literature is increasingly converging on common definitions and theoretical conceptualizations of trust, it is unclear if the same can be said for how one measures and operationalizes this term (McEvily & Tortoriello, 2011). All participants in our research were asked to define what trust is to them and give key descriptions on what needs to be present to trust a supervisor, follower, or co-follower (qualitative and quantitative). The purpose of this is to uncover what meaning the respondents/informants put in the concept of trust and to investigate if the term is practiced the way it is described theoretically. Uncovering the respondents' approach of trust and comparing it with the theory helps us to uncover whether we measure what we want to measure, and conceivably uncover gaps in the theory.

McEvily and Tortoriello (2011) provided a framework for measuring trust and states that the choice among their instruments must be weighted by theoretical considerations as each of their measures of trust profiled varies in its suitability for capturing different components of trust. Their paper reviews the organizational literature to assess the degree of sophistication and convergence across studies in how trust has been measured where their analysis spans 171 published papers and

found that over 48 years the state of trust measurement is rudimentary and fragmented (McEvily & Tortoriello, 2011); which also coincides with the spike of trust definition amongst theorists. They identified several measures of trust that have previously been carefully developed and thoroughly validated; and they profile these measures with strong measurement properties. Further, their framework on trust measurement is ought to be used as guidance for researcher for selecting or developing a measure of trust, and for our thesis we will choose among the instruments that weights on *trust intentions* (Currall & Judge, 1995; Gillespie, 2003; Meyers et al., 2012) and *trusting behavior* (Currall & Judge, 1995; Gillespie, 2003) from this framework.

Moreover, because our survey is designed to capture two participant groups, we constructed a survey with three possible *flows*. Depending on which participant group the respondents identified with (team member, team supervisor, or both) the time to complete the survey varied from 15-25 minutes. This is because we have included three measurements in our survey; BTI from Gillespie (2003), Adams et al (2008) trust scales, and Lencioni & Lencioni's (2002) instrument. So, if a respondent chooses the last sampling category of "both team member and supervisor", they will be taken through these directed both at the leader perspective and towards their peers. By facilitating this we strengthen the basis for comparison between virtual and non-virtual teams. With this flow design of the survey, we ran *Paired Samples test* in *SPSS version 28*. Since we had a lot of questions to test, we decided to run Paired Samples test as this gives us the best comparison between the two situations. Since we were not sure which way the test would lean towards, we decided to use the two-sided *p* results. The survey was quite big with around 200 questions if one had been in all the categories. This unfortunately led to many hopping off during the survey and led to missing data. There is also the aspect that the same person might have answered the same two sets of questions (virtual vs. non-virtual) and it could be possible that the person answered similar and was not able to clearly divide the two experiences.

3.5 Summary of hypotheses

Although our focus will be from the subordinate's view, it is also applicable to include perspectives from the supervisor's standpoint due to the dynamic and reciprocal nature of this relationship. Here is a summary of the hypotheses we are exploring for our paper:

H01: It is easier to break trust in a virtual team than non-virtual teams.

H02: COVID-19 has had a negative effect on intraorganizational trust.

H03: The pace at which trust-building takes place varies, based on the leader's gender.

H04: The gender identity of an individual affects perceived trustworthiness more favorably towards their own gender.

H05: Perceived qualities for a leader differs between a virtual and a non-virtual team.

H06: Perceived trustworthiness towards a team member differs between a virtual and a non-virtual team.

H07: Perceived trustworthiness towards a leader differs between a virtual and a non-virtual team.

3.6 Data collection

3.6.1 Ethical considerations

In this thesis we have worked with sensitive information and stored identifiable data through collecting/recordings/storing personal data for the qualitative method. We worked with and stored digital audio recordings, contact information, and identifiable demographics for the in-depth interview informants on encrypted files on student computers. Thus, to ensure all ethical considerations and guidelines for our thesis would be met, we got our project approved by the Norwegian Center for Research Data (NSD) before we started contacting informants and distributing the survey.

The surveys created for the quantitative method were pre-anonymized. Responses were separated from any kind of personal identifiable information such as department, e-mail, IP-addresses, or other unique identifiers, making the respondents unidentifiable. During the data processing and analyzing of our findings we anonymized the data.

For the semi-structured in-depth interviews, we sent all informants an information letter one week prior to the interviews, and verbally re-informed the

informant on data collection and anonymization on the interview date. Written consents were given before the interview started. Further, after transcribing the interviews we sent the informants a copy for review and editing, and received a written confirmation of consent. Same opportunity was given when we included quotes from the informants in our thesis, where all informants were sent a copy to confirm, change, or withdraw their statements. This was done to reassure that we used our data in a correct manner, and that we didn't misuse or misunderstand the informant's statements.

It was just as easy to withdraw as to give consent in both methodologies. For the qualitative method all informants could withdraw their consent both in writing and verbally before, during or after the interview. All data material would then be destroyed and not be used in the project. No sensitive data were collected for the survey, but the respondents could choose to not consent at the front page (withdraw) and end the survey whenever by exiting their browser (withdraw) leaving an unfinished dataset. All unfinished datasets were excluded and deleted before analyzing the results.

3.7 Reliability and validity

Reliability is *“the degree to which measure of a concept is stable and consistent”* and there are several aspects to investigate when evaluating a paper's reliability, such as internal-, inter-rater reliability and stability (Bell et al., 2019, p. 595). We will discuss these aspects in this subchapter. Further, validity is the concern with the integrity of the conclusion which are drawn from the research, and like reliability there are several aspects to discuss with validity as well. When discussing a paper's validity you value measurement validity, internal validity, external validity, and ecological validity (Bell et al., 2019). We will also discuss these aspects of validity for our research in this subchapter; and since one often uses theoretical constructs in social sciences, many of the variables that are of interest and their theoretical outcomes of the research are important. Because of this it is crucial for the research's quality while using pre-established instruments that are both valid and reliable to measure (Kimberlin & Winterstein, 2008). Thus, we will briefly comment on the validity of the instruments used in our research from Gillespie (2003), Lencioni and Lencioni (2002), and Adams et al. (2008).

3.7.1 Reliability and replicability

Reliability is to which degree the measures of our chosen concepts are stable and consistent over time, where we will look at internal-, external-, and inter-rater reliability (Bell et al., 2019). *Replicability* on the other hand is the degree to which the results of our study can be reproduced repeatedly by other researchers when following the same methodological procedure as ours (Bell et al., 2019); and it's also of interest to look at internal reliability when discussing replicability. Thus, in this subchapter we will discuss our papers' reliability and replicability.

Further, when conducting the same survey questionnaire in an attempt to replicate the study the chance of getting the exact same outcome is very low (Gripsrud et al., 2016). Especially for our case where we study concepts and themes that are highly subjective and the data will vary from all the respondents' personal experiences with trusting (or non-trusting) behavior towards their team supervisor, team members, and peers. This implies that the reliability isn't necessarily high with our use of survey-based data collection in the quantitative methodology. So, although our detailed description of the research process and use of research design and methodologies, the research process is replicable in and of itself; but due to the subjective nature of our study the research findings might differ upon several replications of our study depending on individual factors, which sector is being studied, the size of a team, and more.

Internal reliability is the degree a scale's indicators are consistent (Bell et al., 2019). In our research we have used different pre-established instruments (Adams et al., 2008; Gillespie, 2003; Lencioni & Lencioni, 2002) that have been used in multiple research projects or been tested by other researchers, which argues that these scales are consistent. Since this research project is conducted by more than one researcher, we need to comment on the *inter-rater reliability* for our paper. Inter-rater reliability is likely to be an issue in content analysis and coding open questions in research using either, or both, questionnaires, and structured interviews (Gripsrud et al., 2016). This is affected by the degree of agreement about the coding of an item, where we could be prone to individual differences or individual biases when coding the items for our paper compared to "a more trained eye" or someone with more experience in this field. Thus, the inter-rater reliability can be medium-low.

Lastly, in cross-sectional design the issues of reliability are related to the quality of the measures that are used to research the concepts that we are interested in,

instead of matters related to the research design (Bell et al., 2019). The following is an evaluation of the measure's validity used for our thesis.

3.7.2 Measurement validity

Measurement validity considers if the researchers' interpretations of the test results are warranted, which again depends on the use which the tests are intended to serve (Kimberlin & Winterstein, 2008). Moreover, it evaluates the degree to which a measured concept(s) reflects the concept(s) being researched (Bell et al., 2019).

The *internal validity* is considered weak for our thesis, as it is difficult to establish causal direction from the data, we have collected with our research design, as cross-sectional design often produces associations rather than findings with causal inferences (Bell et al., 2019). An exception to this is when the exposure is safely assumed to be stable over time, but with the subjective nature of the research topic this is not the case for our thesis (Kesmodel, 2018). The *external validity* is also questionable as our sampling is not randomly selected (Bell et al., 2019). Bell et. al. (2019) highlights that both non-random and non-probability samples, which have been used for our research, are possible for human judgment affecting the selection process. This is due to some part of the population being more likely to be selected than others compared to a less biased sample when using random and/or probability samples. Moreover, the data collected through the quantitative method are meant to support our main findings collected through the qualitative method, so the quantitative findings are meant to be illustrative in our thesis. Some sampling issues related to our online research could be that not everyone from our sample is present in the channels we have distributed our survey. Sampling errors are further discussed in sub-chapter 3.9.2.

Lastly, Cicourel (1982) highlights that since cross-sectional research designs often use research instruments like self-completion questionnaires, like we have done for our thesis, the *ecological validity* might be imperiled as these questionnaire instruments disrupt the respondents "natural habitats" (Bell et al., 2019). Moreover, the combination of these tools in a cross-sectional design is also argued to strengthen the paper's ecological validity, as we use more than just one formal instrument of data collection (Bell et al., 2019). Considering these arguments, although our self-completion questionnaires inherently disrupt the

“natural habitats”, the use of both qualitative and quantitative data collection strengthens this paper's ecological validity.

3.8 Generalization

Since we used purposive sampling for the qualitative methodology, we cannot generalize the findings from our in-depth interviews with the different supervisors (Bell et al., 2019). Moreover, Bell et al. (2019) highlights how generalizability is a concern with the *external validity* of the research findings. Above we argued for the external validity of our paper being questionable due to the non-probability sampling method although the quantitative data collection is meant to have a supporting role in our research; but due to the nature of a non-probability self-selection sampling indicates that our research findings cannot be generalizable.

3.9 Evaluation of methodology and sources of error

Several sources of error may have occurred while collecting data for this thesis. Although the researchers have limited experience for conducting in-depth interviews, there are areas for improvement within our execution of this method implementation. Same applies for the quantitative methodology. Discussing and highlighting these aspects of our thesis allows us to reflect on the quality of our data material as well as identify areas for improvement. Being aware of our shortcomings opens for better discussion and future research.

3.9.1 In-depth interviews

Bell et al. (2019) lists six common sources of error in survey research, which are; *poorly worded questions, the way the question is asked, misunderstandings on the part of the interviewee, memory problems from the interviewee, how the information is recorded, and the way the information is processed*; both when answers are coded and when data are entered into a computer. During the interviews we had to elaborate on some questions for the informants to grasp what we were asking about, and there were some misunderstandings underway on how some questions were answered. On the latter we tried to assess the misunderstandings with the informants, and to further minimize this error we sent all informants both the transcription and a draft of our paper to get their feedback and consent that we have used their statements in accordance with the themes.

To reduce errors in the way the data was recorded and processed, we, with consent, digitally audio recorded the interviews for transcription and stored the

data in accordance with BI's guidelines. To make the excerpts more readable we removed pause words and repeating words from the informants. All informants were informed about this and gave consent to our editing of the data.

Conducting three of the in-depth interviews at one of the researchers' homes allowed the informants to be in a space where they are familiar and for them to be more comfortable. Although not clear from external distractions, three out of four interviews needed to have intermissions. These intermissions broke the natural interview flow, but also allowed the informants small breaks as all expressed that many of our questions were difficult to answer. The last interview was conducted online, but the informant was pressed for time so we did not get to go as in-depth in some discussions as we would like.

Sampling from our personal network was both a strength and a weakness. Having an already established relation to our informants made the interview process more organic and natural, and might foster deeper conversations and in-depth discussion of the topic and themes we are researching. Although conversing in English took some time to get used to, as everyone's primary language is Norwegian, we believe that the data collected is still sufficient. We might have gained some more depth in the conversations if the interviews had been conducted in Norwegian, as the informants would not have to continuously translate everything they had to say, their thoughts, opinions, and attitudes on the different interview themes. Moreover, having a relation to all the informant's might raise the question of participation bias, where they might be more inclined to answer in a manner, they think we would want them to instead of sharing their perspectives (Bell et al., 2019).

During the transcription phase of the interviews, we experienced that during some of the follow-up questions where the informants were asked to elaborate more than once, we sometimes asked leading questions. In later interviews we tried to refrain from this, and when we needed to summarize an informant's answer (due to longevity and degree of detail) we asked them to confirm or correct us in our attempted summary.

After the interview transcriptions were approved by all informants, we transferred the data to the software program NVivo version 12, which is a software designed to help researchers get a richer insight from qualitative and mixed methods data and help to produce clearly articulated findings backed on rigorous evidence (Best Qualitative Data Analysis Software for Researchers |

NVivo, n.d.). By using this software as a supporting tool for coding our qualitative data when conducting a thematic analysis, we actively tried to minimize the degree of *inter-rater reliability* in our paper.

For the in-depth interviews we don't have a solid representative selection of participants, as we have interviewed three supervisors who have worked N-VT's and one supervisor who has led an VT's which was moved to a hybrid solution after the pandemic. A bigger sample, 8-10, with several supervisors with varied backgrounds (virtual, hybrid, non-virtual) would be preferred. This could highlight our research problem better, and our research could include other elements of our thesis. One suggestion to this could be different interpretations on our research basis between supervisors who have worked only virtually, those with hybrid experience, and those with only non-virtual experience.

3.9.2 Survey research

Several errors could be made present in survey-based research, and in retrospect we see how some things could have been done differently. In survey research one usually discusses four main types of errors; *sampling error*, *sampling-related error*, *data collection error* and *data processing error* (Bell et al., 2019). *Sampling error* is about the difference between the papers' sample and the population from which our sample is selected from, and this error often rises because it is difficult to end up with a perfectly representative sample (Bell et al., 2019); which also applies to our paper. Secondly, *sampling-related error* for our thesis entails a subsumed error under non-sampling error; where we could have an inaccurate sampling frame and where we also had a non-response rate of 63,7% for our survey. Thirdly, our research also has *data collection error* where our limited experience with making surveys could result in poor question wording for the self-completion questionnaire and the semi-structured interviews. Although we have tried to minimize the data collection error by including several acclaimed research instruments conducted by experienced researchers, this does not fully eliminate flaws in the previous administration of the research instruments. Lastly, some *data processing error* could be present in our study. This is in the discussion of *measurement validity* above, where we might have some errors in our coding of the answers from both the qualitative and quantitative data collection. In retrospect we realized that the survey was too big and comprehensive for this thesis. Due to the size of the survey (by using three instruments), respondents

might feel fatigued by the length of the survey and ended it before completing their responses. Valuable data could be lost as of this, and this might explain the complete response rate for our survey. We acknowledge this flaw in our thesis.

3.9.3 Further evaluation

Studying well established teams that have been forced to LVT may not accurately capture the developmental process of trust as it exists from the team's foundation. Thus, we might not have succeeded by operationalizing the appropriate testing relationships with theory (Hacker et al., 2019). Although we have a dynamic and rich approach to the trust relationship between the supervisor-to-follower(s) and peer member relationship; previous research in the field of virtual trust often has a static approach which can make it difficult to draw concrete conclusions when connecting our research findings to previous theory. However, this previous static approach to trust is deemed somewhat more theoretically appropriate (Hacker et al., 2019).

4. Results

Our results and findings are given in this chapter. We show the data from each method respectively and discuss our findings in chapter 5.

4.1 Qualitative results

4.1.1 Trust, trustworthiness, and trust building in general

Trust. The first main theme in the interview guide was *Trust, trustworthiness, and trust building in general*. The purpose of this theme was to uncover what the respondents include in these terms and to uncover possible gaps between the literature on trust and how this concept is used in society today. Table 4.1 presents a comparison of the literature definition to trust we use in our thesis, compared with the informants' approaches.

Table 4.1 Defining trust to uncover theoretical gaps.

Finding	Theoretical definition	Informants
Trust	<i>“A dynamic relationship between two or more parties where trust is “the willingness of one person to be vulnerable to the actions of another party” (Mayer et al., 1995).</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A declaration of love, something essential and fundamental which is built over time.• Reliant behavior where communication is important.• Mutual relationship with a form of expectation for a set behavior.• Mutual dependence with transparency.

Prerequisites for trust. Trust is conceptually separated from trustworthiness, and there are several *bases* to trust. To further understand trust and trusting behavior we asked all informants to describe what they think needs to be present to trust someone, indicating that some form of intrapersonal evaluation takes place before the partaking in trust behavior. All factors that were discussed are listed in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2 Pre-requisite for trust.

Finding	Informants approach	Keywords
Trust	Personal	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Familiarity, time, something mutual, good communication, honest intent
	Organizational	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Openness, transparency

Trust breaking behavior. To understand trusting behavior, we also looked at distrusting behavior, i.e., what breaks trust. The informants were asked to describe the first examples of trust breaking behavior that came to mind, both in personal and organizational settings. By uncovering what trust behavior *isn't*, we get a more concrete understanding of what trusting behavior entails. Overall, all described scenarios in which the trustee does not behave in accordance with the set expectations, and where disclosed information that leaves one party vulnerable is exposed to the other party. Reoccurring themes were *dishonesty, bad intentions within the trustor, breaking expectations, and to act inconsistently.*

4.1.2 Leadership and trust

Trust's role in leadership. The informants rated how important they think trust is for leadership on a scale from 1-5, where 1 was *not important* and 5 was *very important*. All said 4 or 5, which implies that trust plays an essential role in leadership and could give several positive organizational effects as reflected in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3 Trust's role in leadership.

Finding	Informant	Quotes
Leadership	#1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If the supervisor or project manager trusts its team and the team trusts the manager, I think they are more efficient than other teams and supervisors that do not trust each other.
	#2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The store doesn't work without trust.
	#3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Trust is fundamental. You can't expect your coworkers, or your supervisor, to do the tasks and perform or thrive unless there is trust both ways.
	#4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Through leadership trust is absolutely necessary to be able to have people follow you and not be chased down by you. it's the difference between boss and leader.

Behavioral Trust Inventory results. The BTI is an instrument that assesses the individual's willingness to be vulnerable in a relationship with a specified other and measures trust sensitivity in the supervisor-subordinate (and peer) relationships in a team setting (Gillespie, 2003). Since the sampling frame (n=4) in the qualitative method was too small to conduct analyses of statistical significance, we used an informal approach with simple statistics to see if there were differences in the scores between the informants. The results are presented in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4 Informants' Behavioral Trust Inventory scores.

Informant #	Gender	Reliance based trust (RBT)					Disclosure based trust (DBT)					
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	
1	Male	5	4	5	6	6	6	3	5	5	3	2
2	Female	7	7	6	7	6	6	7	7	7	7	7
3	Female	3	1	6	6	5	2	6	7	6	7	7
4	Male	5	5	4	4	6	6	3	4	3	6	3

Total, individual score	Max score	in %	RBT, individual score	Max reliance score	in %	DBT, individual score	Max disclosure score	in %
44	70	63 %	26	50	52 %	18	50	36 %
68	70	97 %	33	50	66 %	35	50	70 %
50	70	71 %	17	50	34 %	33	50	66 %
45	70	64 %	26	50	52 %	19	50	38 %

Tot. Score in trust willingness for females	84 %	Tot. Score in trust willingness for males	64 %	Tot. Score in RBT for females	50 %	Tot. Score in RBT for males	52 %	Tot. Score in DBT for females	68 %	Tot. Score in DBT for males	37 %
Gender difference	21 %				-2 %				31 %		

Gender and trust. We had an equal sample of the genders for the qualitative method (2 female and 2 male), with representation from male dominated-, female dominated-, and a somewhat equal gender ratio in the informants' respective fields. There was a strong consensus between the informants' that gender affects how fast someone trusts a supervisor, as discussed in Table 4.5. Regardless of the gender ratio in their fields, all expressed how this factor could be weighted compared to the time it takes to trust a supervisor.

Table 4.5 Gender and trust.		
Finding	Informant	Quotes
Trust	#1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I think only initially. But once you start building that trust relationship, I don't think gender has anything to do with it. Trust is a genderless thing in itself.
	#2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I think it does. Because if you are female, maybe you connect better with another female [supervisor] than the male [team member] in the beginning because you might feel more comfortable with the same sex.
	#3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I would say probably a lot.
	#4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I hope not. But unfortunately, yes, I think that there is a difference, it shouldn't be there, but I think it's present.

Consciousness towards trusting behavior at work and using trust as a tool. All informants reported having some consciousness towards using trust in their leadership style. This, and with the previous research done on trust, demonstrates that trust could be used as a tool to gain organizational effect. The degree of consciousness within the informants was reflected in how they used trust, and we also found little variation of how trust was used as a tool based on the respective fields the informants worked in. All leaders used trust as a tool to *empower* their team members and followers. Informants 1-3 have non-virtual jobs where informant 1 is a leader within the construction field and informants 2 and 3 work as supervisors in retail. Informant 4 works virtually managing knowledge workers.

4.1.3 Leadership and trust building in context

Trust's role in teams. Since we research the supervisor-subordinate dyad we need to look at what role trust plays in a team. All informants emphasized that it plays a big role in teams, where some argued that without trusts the team becomes dysfunctional and others states how without trust there wouldn't be a team at all. Further discussion is found in Table 4.6. This implies that the degree of trust in a team also can have negative effects, and we suggest that trust should be emphasized in all parties in the supervisor-subordinate and peer relationship.

Table 4.6 Trust's role in teams.

Finding	Informant	Quotes
Trust	#1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If the supervisor or project manager trusts its team and the team trusts the manager, I think they are more efficient than other teams and supervisors that do not trust each other.
	#2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I would say that it is important no matter what position you have.
	#3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A very big role. If you don't have trust in a team, then the team is automatically dysfunctional.
	#4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Everything. Without trust there is no team, that's just individuals. You need to be able to trust your coworkers to be able to both create and enable a team to work efficient, be productive, social, have fun and all of these pieces is linked through the plane of trust.

Trust differences towards supervisors and team members. A team supervisor and the team members have different roles. Thus, the supervisor is technically apart of the team as they often, not always, have a supervising role compared to actually "doing the work". The informants argue that there is an underlying distance between these parties in a team, and how trust is built between and across these parties also depends on the supervisor's involvement in the team. Team members amongst themselves are perceived to be more relatable than the supervisor, but overall, it depends on the supervisor's *presence*. Further, the supervisor is in the

position to delegate tasks and assignments, whereas team members are expected to cope with the everyday work in an organization. These findings demonstrate the formal hierarchical relationship between the supervisor and the team member, and it also implies that informal relationship between the parties and a supervisor's involvement in the team's work could affect the pace and degree to which the members trust them. From this we suggest that trust is built differently depending on which role you have in a team, how present and involved you are in the work, and that the degree of this will provide different organizational effects.

Trust in virtual and non-virtual contexts. There was a strong consensus on how it is easier to build trust in a non-virtual context than virtual. The key argument was how *physical presence* and *multiple formal and informal interactions* with your coworkers can strengthen the pace of trust building in an organization. Working virtually creates an additional distance from your coworkers and could imply less informal interactions throughout a workday. This implies that the arena you built trust in is important, as it's been argued for how it is easier to build trust in a non-virtual context where you could be given more chances to interact with your coworkers.

COVID-19's influence on trust. Our findings suggest that people are both more trusting towards each other after the pandemic, but also how the forced social distance could have led people to build internal walls and become less trusting. The pandemic has also shown to strengthen organizational trusts, where employees have (where possible) been forced to work from home and where these team members have been supervised differently from before. These findings are reflected in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7 COVID-19's influence on trust.

Finding	Informant	Quotes
Trust	#1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• It is a dual edged sword. In one hand, it has probably been harder to build trust in business relations and other things where you can't meet in person. On the other side, I think that COVID-19 has strengthened trust in a lot of ways. Where you would have companies having their employees working from home digitally.
	#2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The surrounding social environment has been weakened in the last 2 years. Maybe have not seen other people around yourself for a while and that you feel like you have built a wall.
	#3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I think people are more easy trusting because they are so hungry for seeing people.
	#4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I think we are trusting each other more than ever. It's different, I guess some people become less trusting as well.

Trust breaking behavior in teams. We have mapped trust breaking behavior in two organizational scenarios and in two contexts: *Between team members*, *between team members and their supervisor*, and *in non-virtual and virtual teams*. Our findings suggest that trust breaking behavior in a team does not vary depending on the member's title. The same behaviors were discussed for both supervisors and team members. Trust breaking behavior in a team can be dishonesty, workspace gossiping, not completing the tasks you've been delegated or volunteered to do, and lack of professional integrity.

There was incongruence on whether context affected the degree of trust breaking behavior. Further, the split was equal as two informants suggested that trust breaks easier in a virtual team context while the others thought it would be easier to break trust in a non-virtual team. These arguments are reflected in table 4.8.

Table 4.8 Trust breaking behavior in context.

Finding	Informant	Quotes
Trust	#1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">I think that trust in a <i>virtual environment</i> is probably more volatile. Once you give that trust in a virtual environment, I think it breaks easier.
	#2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>Non-virtual</i>. It can often lead to trash-talking, people who doesn't want to work [and do not show up for work and give late notice].
	#3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>Non-virtual</i>. It is more possible for conflicts at work. I think non-virtual you can get away with a lot because it "isn't documented".
	#4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Think the <i>virtual world</i> would be probably the easiest place to break trust.

4.2 Quantitative results

4.2.1 Virtual and non-virtual trust

One of the main goals for this thesis were to see if there is a difference in the trust building relationship between virtual and non-virtual teams. We included six open ended questions in the online survey where all respondents could comment on what they deem most important to trust building in the different contexts. We conducted a thematic analysis of the data by categorizing the answers into themes and imported the observations to NVivo. Further, we conducted three-word clouds, with synonyms, for each category; *leader towards team members* (see table 4.9), *team members toward peers* (see table 4.10), and *essential leader quality regardless of dyadic position* (see table 4.11), to compare the answers. The top five valued factors for each context are listed below together with their weighted percentage.

Table 4.9 Most valued factor as a leader towards their team members.

Finding	Virtual (n=33, weighted %)	Non-virtual (n=24, weighted %)	Overall (n=57, weighted %)
<i>As a leader towards their team members.</i>	1. Communication (12,86)	1. Communication (20,41)	1. Communication (15,97)
	2. Openness (10,00)	2. Honesty (8,16)	2. Honesty (8,40)
	3. Honesty (8,57)	3. Respect (8,16)	3. Openness (6,72)
	4. Trust (7,14)	4. Understanding (4,08)	4. Respect (4,20)
	5. Listening (4,29)	5. Ability (2,04)	5. Trust (4,20)

Table 4.10 Most valued factor as a team member towards peers

Finding	Virtual (n=35, weighted %)	Non-virtual (n=27, weighted %)	Overall (n=62, weighted %)
<i>As a team member towards their peers.</i>	1. Honesty (10,53)	1. Communication (14,29)	1. Honesty (11,50%)
	2. Supporting (8,77)	2. Honesty (12,50)	2. Communication (10,62)
	3. Communication (7,02)	3. Openness (8,93)	3. Supporting (7,08)
	4. Commitment (5,26)	4. Caring (5,36)	4. Openness (6,19)
	5. Collaboration (5,26)	5. Supporting (5,36)	5. Caring (4,42)

Table 4.11 Essential leader quality.

Finding	Virtual (n=36, weighted %)	Non-virtual (n=26, weighted %)	Overall (n=62, weighted %)
Leadership	1. Honesty (10,53)	1. Communication (12,24)	1. Communication (8,49)
	2. Openness (8,77)	2. Openness (8,16)	2. Honesty (8,49)
	3. Integrity (7,02)	3. Fairness (6,12)	3. Openness (8,49)
	4. Listening (7,02)	4. Honesty (6,12)	4. Integrity (5,66)
	5. Caring (5,26)	5. Trust (6,12)	5. Listening (5,66)

All tests were run in *SPSS version 28*. Most of the answers were from subjects that had been in virtual teams. Which meant that the answers about the non-virtual had very few respondents compared to the virtual group. We ran a reliability test of all the questions in the survey. Most question groups had a score of $.83 < \alpha < .97$ whereas question group 10 had an $\alpha = .64$.

Since the whole survey was designed so that the exact same questions were asked for both virtual and non-virtual, we used a Paired Samples test. This was because it makes it possible for us to compare the two cases and see if there is a significant difference between the means in both cases. We ran this test on the whole data set, putting question 10-1 up against 10N-1 and so on (see Appendix 3). There were four question pairs that had a significant ($p < 0.05$, two-sided) result in the survey:

Table 4.12 Results from Paired Samples test for whole survey ($p < 0.05$)

10-2 & 10N-2	10-7 & 10N-7	10-12 & 10N-12	11-4 & 11N-4
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For Lencioni & Lencioni's (2005) "*Five dysfunctions of a team*" we grouped the fifteen questions into their respective category:

Table 4.13 Overview of the *Five dysfunctions of a team* grouping

Absence of Trust	<i>Question 10(N): 4, 6 & 12</i>
Fear of Conflict	<i>Question 10(N): 1, 7 & 10</i>
Lack of Commitment	<i>Question 10(N): 3, 8 & 13</i>
Avoidance of Accountability	<i>Question 10(N): 2, 11 & 14</i>
Inattention to Results	<i>Question 10(N): 5, 9 & 15</i>

In SPSS we calculated the mean of each question in the category and added them together to get the most accurate mean score for each category. Then we ran a *Paired Samples t-test* for each category from virtual compared to non-virtual to see if there was a significant difference between these. What we found was that in the category of *Fear of conflict* there was significance ($p < 0.05$, two-sided) where the mean ($= -0.74$) between the two variables (virtual/non-virtual) was negative. The other finding was that there was significance ($p < 0.05$, two-sided) in the category *Avoidance of accountability* also with a negative mean ($= -1.086$). See

Appendix 4 for results of test. We ran the BTI scores for both the virtual and the non-virtual group where we divided into reliance-based trust and disclosure-based trust. There were no significant findings in the Paired samples test between the two groups (VT vs- N-VT) for these two types of trust (see Appendix 6).

4.2.2 Trust relationship between supervisor and team members

The survey was built so that question group 12(N) and 15(N) are identical just from two different angles, meaning that 12(N) asked about how team members experienced trust within their team and 15(N) asked how a leader experienced trust with their team. We ran a *Paired Samples test* for these as well, comparing how team members experience the trust relationship to their leader and how leaders experience the trust relationship towards their team members. The test was conducted in both the virtual and the non-virtual question group. This did not give any significant results for the virtual group questions, but for the non-virtual there was a significance ($p < 0.05$, two-sided) of question 12N-5 and 15N-5 which was “*My team(mates) watches my back*”.

Adams & Sartori (2008) divided their assessment into four categories, benevolence, integrity, predictability, and competence. They divide it further into trust towards team and trust towards a leader, these questions were in our survey for both VTs and N-VTs. Before we ran a test in SPSS, we put the questions into these four categories and calculated the mean. Then we ran a paired samples test to compare the trust in teams in both virtual and non-virtual and the same test for trust to leaders. There were no significant findings in either of the two tests. Further we wanted to see if there was a difference between the four categories in the two different perspectives, leader, and team members. Hence, we compared the four categories, benevolence, integrity, predictability, and competence in teams and towards leaders. The test was run for both virtual and non-virtual and we also cross tested to see if there were a significant difference across the settings and the roles. There were significant findings ($p < 0.05$, two-sided) in one of the tests where we compared trust in teams with trust towards leaders in virtual teams. This was in the category benevolence (mean=-.25) and predictability (mean=.28). See Appendix 5.

5. Discussion

In this chapter we discuss our findings from the data materials where we interconnect our findings with the themes from the literature chapters. Now we will try to answer the problem for the thesis; "*How does the trust building relationship in the supervisor-subordinate dyad affect a team? And is there a difference between virtual and non-virtual teams?*"; and discuss the various hypotheses related to our problem. We end this chapter with a summary of our findings, before we resolve the thesis with our conclusion and suggestions for future research.

5.1 Trust, trustworthiness, and trust building in general

5.1.1 Trust definition

We found that all informants described trust as a *dynamic* relationship which is formed over time (ref. Table 4.1). Two of the informants' defined trust from a personal standpoint, whereas the others defined it from an organizational and work-related perspective (ref. Table 4.2). This distinction could be due to poor question phrasing or the informants misunderstanding of the question. Although we informed of which theme we were going to discuss before asking the following questions, it seems like the informants took different contextual approaches in which they described prerequisites of trust. Moreover, when all were asked to give examples of trust behavior, everyone describe a scenario where one participant is more vulnerable to the action of another party, and where something immaterial of high value is shared for safekeeping. These findings implies that the informants have a similar approach for defining and understanding trust as is depicted from the terms' literature and Meyer et al.'s (1995) definition, as we did not uncover possible gaps between the literature on trust and how this concept is used in society today. This provides a better stronghold for the following discussions and findings.

5.1.2 Prerequisites for trust

As stated in the previous chapter the informants interpreted the question from two different views, so it is important to keep their descriptions separately. Moreover, those who took on a personal view of trust, which was the intent for this theme in

the interview, commented on similar factors. Those who had an organizational approach also weighted the same factor by using synonymous terms.

Although we were given factors from different views, what was common were how trust is something relational; where you need two or more participants to achieve trust building behaviors. This is clearly apparent from the informants with a personal standpoint, but those with an organizational standpoint listed elements that indirectly suggest interaction with other persons. This is not surprising if we revisit Mayer et al.'s (1995) definition of trust: "*the willingness of one person to be vulnerable to the actions of another party*". This definition includes several parties when defining trusting behavior. Moreover, our informants also highlight how *time* is important for giving trust, as well as *intent*, *communication*, *openness*, and *transparency*. The last four factors can be linked with how one party is willing to be vulnerable towards the other party in trusting behavior, where you believe the counterparty has an honest intent when meeting you in a vulnerable position; how communication is essential to rely on information and action undertaken in trusting behavior; acting with openness and transparency towards each other and hoping the non-vulnerable party does not act distrusting.

The biggest distinction in the two approaches where how those with an organizational approach chose factors to describe trustworthiness, where they emphasized on *openness* and *transparency*. Trustworthiness and trust are considered separate in the literature (Gabarro, 1978; Grimen, 2009; Mayer et al., 1995), so we expected more keywords surrounding trustworthiness than was given when discussing prerequisites for trust. Informant 4 discussed the importance of *transparency*, which is synonymous with openness and honesty. Informant 2 discussed how openness is important when initiating trusting behavior, and this ability is linked with base of trust called *character* (Gabarro, 1978).

Honest intentions were mentioned by Informant 3, which also falls under *character*. Character can further be separated into two approaches; integrity and benevolence (Gabarro, 1978). Benevolence is synonymous with openness, so three of the informants emphasized how character is an important prerequisite to trust, as they either directly or indirectly discussed this basis of trust. They shared an approach to which a trustee is assumed to do good for the trustor (Colquitt et al., 2007; Mayer et al., 1995). Informant 1 stressed the importance of time when building trust and how you need share experiences with the trustee before you can

decide whether they are trustworthy or not. He also had a personal approach when addressing this issue, and indirectly emphasized how the degree of integrity within the trustee will form the decision on initiating trusting behavior. Integrity is another base of trust (Gabarro, 1978), and falls under *character*. Although the previous informants also discussed the importance of character above, informant 1 stands out. Character can be divided into benevolence and integrity, where in contrast to the other informants, informant 1 emphasizes the extent to which a trustee is believed to follow through morally and ethically. The latter is synonymous with fairness, consistency, and promise. In summary, the reoccurring trait which needs to be present to trust someone is *character*, and where other factors like *familiarity*, *time*, and *openness* also is heavily weighted.

Ideally all respondents should have the same approach and understanding when answering the same questions, and we identify this as a flaw in our thesis. Regardless, in the methodology chapter we discussed how the findings in our paper cannot be generalized and thus we accept this flaw. Some further research could try to compare and distinguish these approaches (personal vs. organizational), as it was interesting to see the distinction between character traits.

5.1.3 Trust breaking behavior

Distrust is the opposite of trust and activates negative feelings in our brain (Dimoka, 2010; Govier, 1994). Distrust is often the result of trust breaking behavior, where someone who has been perceived trustworthy by the trustor, where they have chosen to be vulnerable to the action of the trustee, and the trustee in return has broken the trustors trust through an act of untrustworthiness (Kutsyuruba & Walker, 2016). The informants described scenarios in which the trustee does not behave in accordance with the set expectations, and how disclosed information that leaves the trustor vulnerable is exposed to an external party. Informant 3 shared one of her experiences which led to distrust, and commented on how this can happen both in her personal life and at work:

“Basically, if you tell a coworker or friend “ok I trust you, so I am telling you this”, and then that piece of information circles and comes back to you [through an external party], you go “oh yeah, I told that person [the trustee] in confidentiality ... So that is nice that you heard it also [sarcasm].” Informant #3

Comparing all informants' examples we found reoccurring themes of *dishonesty, bad intentions within the trustee, breaking expectations, and to act inconsistently*. Breaking expectations and acting inconsistently often went together when the informants shared their examples of trust breaking behavior; where the trustee can say they are going to do something (i.e., transfer their percentage of the bills to the joint bank account) and ends up doing the opposite (i.e., rarely, or never transfer the money). These examples coincide with Dirks and Skarlicki's (2004) descriptions of negative acts as informative actions which can tell us a lot of another person's character, and reappoint this negative information as a diagnostic for making character judgement (Skowronski & Carlston, 1987). If a trustee breaks trust by being dishonest, break the expectations of the trustor by acting inconsistently and more, these actions will lead the trustor to appoint these actions to the trustee's character, and through experience perceive the trustee as untrustworthy. This will result in future feelings of distrust towards the trustee. Trust breaking behavior in teams is discussed further in subchapter 5.3.4.

5.1.4 Trusting behavior in personal relationship, towards coworkers and supervisors

We were interested to see if the pace of which we trust someone varies depending on the context of the relationship. The informants were asked to give a number between 1-10 on how fast they trust someone in different scenarios, where 1 is *very quickly* and 10 is *very slowly*. The three scenarios were in the informant's *personal life, towards a new team member/coworker, and towards a new supervisor*.

In personal relation all but one expressed how they use a long time to trust someone. Most informants said 6 or higher, whereas the last one said 2. He commented:

“*Personal relations are chosen, so I tend to trust people I choose to spend time with.*” Informant #4

The other informants showed more caution when trusting someone new. Where all emphasized, they needed more time to trust someone. Informant 3 said:

“*Based on earlier experiences, it is harder for me to trust somebody. I need time and I need to feel secure to trust someone.*” Informant #3

Our findings indicate that in an organizational context the pace of which we trust others is much quicker than in personal relations. Many highlighted that the reason for this is because they expect their coworkers to perform well, and for those who also had experience with recruiting in their position added:

“When you give her or him the job you need to trust this person be honest with you, to communicate better from the beginning or you don't know if this is gonna work from the personal point of view and the work point of view.”
Informant #2

Time also was integral to this. Most often you spend a lot of time at the workspace or have several interactions with coworkers and supervisor(s) throughout the day. Often several days a week depending on if you work fulltime, part-time, or has other weighted percentages of work in your contract. Whereas in your personal life you might not see a new acquaintance several times a day or several days of a week. So, the pacing of how often you interact with someone differ depending on the context. Informant 4 also commented on how work-related relationships are often “forced” as you don’t choose your coworkers, someone else is responsible for recruiting. So, we argue that you are freer to choose your personal relations and who to include as a part of your life compared to a working environment.

“[...] Because in a professional setting you get to judge the person fairly quickly. Like, are they listening to me, are they getting what I am saying? You get to know a person very quickly by working with them.” Informant #3

Informant 1 also shared the same view as informant 3, but one thing stood out for the prior. As informant 1 works in construction, where they have a lot of responsibility and work to prevent, lessen or uncover dangerous health risks, he also emphasized the potential dangers of acting distrustful in his field. This indicates that there might be differences to how trust, trustworthiness and trusting behavior is valued depending on which field you work in; despite the similar scores provided by our data. This is not surprising, as one (hopefully) would trust an employee at a hospital more than a shoe salesman working in retail.

“I always expect coworkers to perform well. I think you have to be optimistic, you have to trust that they know what they are doing and when you hand out

task[s] you have to trust that they will perform them well, or correctly. Especially how we work. If we in our field makes an error it could be really dangerous. There could be personal damages, and environmental damage when we do our jobs incorrectly. I would always trust some [coworkers] to know what they are doing.” Informant #1

The informants who took the longest to trust someone in their personal lives also took a little longer to trust their supervisors compared to the others. This could also be due to the informants’ personalities, as some can be more cautious than others. Those who took longer to trust their supervisors also shared previous negative experiences with untrustworthy leaders which is the reason they now take longer when evaluating a leader’s trustworthiness. What’s interesting is that for the informants it takes shorter to trust a coworker (mean = 3) than a supervisor (mean = 3.5), but only marginally with a .5 difference. Collecting qualitative data on this would be interesting to help us distinguish between trusting behavior in organizations and in private relations.

5.2 Leadership and trust

5.2.1 Trusts’ role in leadership

Previous trust literature has found several areas where trusts affect an organization and discusses the various degrees of trust's importance. The informants suggested that trust plays an essential role in leadership and shared a strong consensus on this topic. As discussed in an earlier chapter, certain fundamentals of leadership will most probably always be the same regardless of the workspace context (Avolio & Kahai, 2003). Trust is also considered an important attribute withing effective team leader’s ability to develop trust among its members (Germain & McGuire, 2014; Jarvenpaa & Leidner, 1999; Panteli & Duncan, 2004; Panteli & Tucker, 2009) and is considered an important characteristic of effective virtual team leaders (Cartwright & Zander, 1968; Chamakiotis et al., 2021; Zander et al., 2013). Thus, we wanted to see if this extends to trust building across the two contexts, or if this differs between virtual and non-virtual teams and ended with the following hypothesis.

H05: Perceived qualities for a leader differs between a virtual and a non-virtual team.

Our findings support previous studies on the effect of trust in the workspace (Dirks & Ferrin, 2000; Haynie et al., 2016), where if trust is present in the supervisor-subordinate relationship you can have positive organizational effects like *job performance* and *job satisfaction*. Informant 1, 2, and 3 argued how trust in the supervisor-subordinate relationship can affect job performance, while informants 3 and 4 also had a relational approach and commented on how trust affects job satisfaction (ref. Table 4.3). In an earlier chapter we argued that there are several *bases of trust*, which also applies for leadership and the perception of a leader's trustworthiness. The survey respondents were asked to state the most essential leadership quality for trust building behavior in the workspace, and when analyzing the findings in *Table 4.11 Essential leader quality* the five most weighted qualities where their degree of *communication*, *honesty*, *openness*, *integrity* and *listening*. The table is re-represented below.

Table 4.11 Essential leader quality.

Finding	Virtual (n=36, weighted %)	Non-virtual (n=26, weighted %)	Overall (n=62, weighted %)
Leadership	1. Honesty (10,53)	1. Communication (12,24)	1. Communication (8,49)
	2. Openness (8,77)	2. Openness (8,16)	2. Honesty (8,49)
	3. Integrity (7,02)	3. Fairness (6,12)	3. Openness (8,49)
	4. Listening (7,02)	4. Honesty (6,12)	4. Integrity (5,66)
	5. Caring (5,26)	5. Trust (6,12)	5. Listening (5,66)

Good communication is argued to be a key factor in building trust (Partridge, 2007), so it was to no surprise that this factor was one of the most weighted factors, alongside *honesty* and *openness* where all stood for 8,49% (ref. column 3 in Table 4.11). *Honesty* is a big part of a person's character and is closely followed by *openness*. *Openness* is also connected with benevolence which is a subgroup of character attributions. Alongside benevolence we have *integrity* which explains a part of a person's character and it's also its own base of trust. The last factor, *listening*, can be linked with communication and openness factors as it was often mentioned in examples of where the leader needed to listen to their

members feedback and suggestions and meet them with openness in response to build trust.

Honesty, openness, integrity, and indirectly listening, are all bases of trust where we can judge a person’s perceived trustworthiness. Thus, it is not surprising how these factors scored highest, as they all contribute to our evaluation of a leader’s trustworthiness and are prerequisites for trusting behavior. Based on these findings we would argue that trust plays an essential role for leadership, as it can yield both positive and negative organizational effects. But does this differ between non-virtual and virtual teams?

The biggest difference in essential leadership qualities between non-virtual and virtual leaders where how *communication* and *honesty* was weighted. In non-virtual leadership communication (12,24) was the most important trait, where it was honesty (10,53) in virtual leadership. In contrast honesty is ranked as the 4th most important quality in non-virtual leadership, and communication did not make the list for the virtual leadership qualities. Honesty, openness, listening, and caring are all connected with benevolence in trustworthiness, and the other main base of trust, integrity, is listed in its entirety as the 3rd most important trait for virtual leadership. Moreover, virtual leadership got more traits related to benevolence within trustworthiness and “warm” abilities, compared to non-virtual leadership where traits from integrity within trustworthiness was most recurrent, see Table 5.1 below.

Table 5.1 Comparison of leadership qualities in virtual and non-virtual teams.

Finding	Context	Benevolence	Integrity	Other
Trust	Virtual leader	Honesty Openness Listening Caring	Integrity	None
	Non-virtual leader	Honesty Openness	Fairness	Communication Trust

Regardless of workspace context, (ref. column 3 in Table 4.11) *communication* is the most important leadership quality for fostering trust, and this finding coincides with Partridge’s (2007) argument of how communication is key for trust. Trait number 2, 3 and 5 describes the bases of trust *benevolence*, and trait number 4 is

integrity which is another basis of trust. It is interesting how two out of three bases of trust is weighted by the respondents, and where ability is not mentioned for either workspace context. This finding indicates that ability could either not be significant when ranking a perceived leaders' qualities for fostering trust in a team, or that ability is something that is taken for granted within a leader. These findings coincide with those of Mayer et al. (1995), Daim et al. (2012), and Hughes and Saunder (2021), where the benevolence and integrity are the most dominant influences on team member's perception of a leader's trustworthiness, and that ability is taken for granted within their leader.

The discussion of our findings above indicates that there is a difference in perceived qualities for a leader between non-virtual and virtual teams (H05). Many qualities coincide (ref. Table 5.1), and the biggest different lies in how behavioral traits (*communication* and *trust*) is more weighted in non-virtual leadership. Benevolence is considered the most important bases of trust and seems to be more important in virtual leadership, where integrity is also considered more present in virtual leadership. In non-virtual leadership benevolence is more pressing than integrity, but behavioral actions like communication and trust scores high. Overall, our findings suggest that in a leader's perceived trustworthiness, *benevolence* and *integrity* are important, where the former is more weighted than the latter, and *communication* is considered as the most important factor. On a final note, future research on this, with a bigger sample and in different fields, could yield different result than what we have discussed above.

5.2.2 Gender and trust

Although Norway is one of the highest scoring countries on gender equality (Szmigiera, 2022), there is still room for improvements. There is still fields with clear gender inequalities in Norway, both in gender representation and in lack of equal pay between the genders. Although gender and trust in the supervisor-subordinate relationship in teams could, in entirety, be its own master thesis, we were curious to how the different genders would weight 'gender' as a factor in trust building. This, together with the literature presented in subchapter 2.2.2, resulted in H03 and H04:

H03: *The pace at which trust-building takes place varies, based on the leader's gender.*

H04: The gender identity of an individual affects perceived trustworthiness more favorably towards their own gender.

To answer these hypotheses, we consciously tried to have an equal sample of the genders for the qualitative method (2 female and 2 male), with representation from male dominated-, female dominated-, and a somewhat equal gender ratio in the informants' respective fields. After completing the data collection, we were intrigued to compare our findings to this with our informant's BTI, to see if there are any indications of the same relationship towards team members/subordinate's gender. This is briefly commented at the end of this chapter.

There was a strong consensus between the informants that gender affects how fast someone trusts a supervisor. Regardless of the gender ratio in their fields, all expressed how this factor could be weighted compared to the time it takes to trust a supervisor. In an earlier chapter we argued that trustworthiness is considered present in the onset in the developing relationship between leaders, followers and peers (Chambers, 2011), and where internal considerations affects this stage. Group-based biases and 'trust discrimination' in social groups affects these early impressions of a supervisor's trustworthiness. All but one informant described this social bias towards gender, where informant 1 made an important point of how trust is genderless.

"I think [gender affects how fast you trust a supervisor, but] only initially. [...] I don't think that it takes longer to build trust itself. I think we are all drawn to similarities. And, you know gender differences is this little thing that separates you and me, [and] makes you more strange or more of a stranger, and less familiar to me. So, I think just this initially thing. Like once we start to build the [trust] relationship, I do not think there is a difference." Informant #1

When mapping the informants, we asked them what their gender identity was, to compare if their social identity unconsciously affects their representation of the different genders in their examples and opinions on this topic. Where informant #1 identifies as a male and works in a male dominated field having had zero female leaders, he only highlighted how group-based gender differences might affect how fast we trust supervisors. No weight was given to describe one gender more favorably than another. Further, there was an interesting difference between the female supervisors, which both identified as female and worked in female dominated fields.

“I think it does. Because if you are female, maybe you connect better with another female [supervisor] than the male [team member] in the beginning because you might feel more comfortable with the same sex.” Informant #2

“I would say probably a lot. Because the problem with having an all-female workspace is that women in general have a tendency to break trust. I don’t know if it is more often than men, but females are very fond of gossiping. [...] so, I think having a more male dominant workspace probably makes it easier to build trust faster. I might be wrong.” Informant #3

Where informant #2 didn’t give weight to describe one gender more favorably than the other, informant #3 gave male supervisors in general a more favorably outcome. This challenges Cappelen et al. (2020) findings on how we trust women more than men, where prosocial behavior is ascribed more towards women than men. Moreover, when we asked her to consider the same question only in an equal work environment she said:

“I think it would be easier to trust the female supervisor. I mean, me as a female to trust a female supervisor in a 50-50 environment. Because, this is also just a theory, but in workspaces like that, females often have to kind of prove that they belong in supervising positions. So, they are more inclined to actually do their part and do their job good. I think it is less gossiping and less trust breaking in an 50-50 environment.” Informant #3

This indicates that the gender ratio in the field you work in also can affect how fast you trust a supervisor, and where the gender ratio is more equal one might favor female supervisors when discussing how fast you trust someone. This statement is also somewhat contradictory to what she said earlier, where the latter supports Cappelen et al.’s (2020) theory. This can be explained through discrimination experiences (Duck & Fielding, 1999; Kramer et al., 1995; Moy & Ng, 1996), where the informant shared how gossip and toxic female leaders have acted towards her and others in her work.

The last informant is a leader of knowledge-workers in a somewhat gender equal industry, where his social gender identity is male. He also stands out compared to the other informants as he is the only leader who has worked only in a virtual team and was not able to meet his followers physically prior to starting in his job. He was most hesitant in his answer but concluded the same as the other above.

“I hope not. But unfortunately, yes I think that there is a difference, it shouldn't be there but I think it's present. [...] I think unfortunately that the general challenges we see in the professional work in terms of leadership and the bias towards men is probably the reason why. Because for me it doesn't depend which gender, but it depends on your integrity, and it depends on your ability to handle your work professionally.” Informant #4

Although he draws upon examples of where female leadership has been both a good and bad experience, he only presents the opposite gender unfavorably. He highlights how trust is more reliant on integrity and has a technological and task ascribing approach in evaluating previous supervisors. This could be due to the informant's process of their gender biases, where if he has little to less bias towards his own gender, he might be subjected to perceive the trustworthiness more positively and trust a supervisor faster if they are in his own social group. This is only speculative as the informants has not been given more room for elaboration on this topic.

Informant 1 was most gender neutral in this discussion of the male informants, but informant 1 has only positive experiences from female employees in his profession and in interdisciplinary teams where he has worked with female carpenters and painters. However, informant 1 has not had female leaders compared to informant 4. Informant 1's exclusive experience that female team members are as good as male team members, and sometimes even better or more motivated than his male peers, may have contributed to how he considers gender to affect trust only marginally. The differences in these informants can be due to how informant 1's degree of experience discrimination is lower than informant 4's. If informant 1 had had a different kind of experience then maybe his answer could have been different, which in turn emphasizes the subjectivity of trust and how experience discrimination can affect one's attitude towards the same and opposite gender. Moreover, the male informants emphasized the trustworthiness factor *ability* compared to the female informants who weighted trustworthiness factors closer linked to *benevolence*. Further research on this topic compared with virtual and non-virtual teams, with a quantitative approach, would be interesting.

When comparing the BTI scores of the informants we found that the female supervisors were most willing to trust their subordinates, scoring 97% and 71% respectively. Whereas the male supervisors were least willing to trust their subordinates, scoring 63% and 64% respectively (ref. Table 4.4). These findings suggest that there is more variation in the degree of willingness to trust

subordinates in the female dominated fields where the two female supervisors work, but what more interesting were how close the male supervisors scored as one works in a male dominated field and the other in a somewhat equal gender ratio.

It was 1 point (the 1% difference) that separated the male leaders, and this difference lay in their reports on *disclosure-based trust*. Both had the same personal score on reliance-based trust factors, but there was a 1-point (equal to 2%) difference in their score on disclosure-based trust. Where informant #1 scored 2% lower, the differences were found in Q7-Q10 (ref. Table 4.4), where we found the biggest difference in Q9. In Q9 they had to disclose how willing they were to discuss how they honestly feel about their work, even negative feelings and frustrations (Gillespie, 2003). Informant #1 scored at the right end of not willing at all, whereas informant #4 is almost completely willing to do this.

Further, it was informant #2, one of the female supervisors, who were most trust willingly towards her subordinates, with a score of 97%. The least willing was informant #1, one of the male supervisors, scoring 63% in the BTI, but again with only 1% lower than the other male supervisor. These findings coincide with SSB statics on inter-human trust (*Statistics Norway, 2020*). Our interviewees were all in the age group 25-44, where the women scored higher in inter-trusting behavior than men with 0.4 point. Thus, it was not surprising how the female supervisors both scored higher in partaking trusting behavior towards their team members than the male supervisors, as statics show how Norwegian women are more trusting in others than men.

In summary, based on these finding we argue that gender *does* affect how individuals perceive the trustworthiness of a supervisor which again affects the pace of trusting behavior both positively and negatively (H03). This perception is grounded in everyone's own social identity, group-based biases, and discrimination experiences; where we unconsciously perceive the initial stages of trustworthiness towards someone based on our biases towards a specific social group, and our degree of own identification with our social group, in this case the individuals gender identity (H04).

5.2.3 Consciousness towards trusting behavior at work and using trust as a tool

Previous research argue how trust has positive and negative organizational effects (Bernerth & Walker, 2009; Bijlsma & Koopman, 2003; Ertürk, 2010; Lance

Frazier et al., 2010; Mayer & Gavin, 2005), and trust has also been shown as important in virtual team where it's considered essential for a well-performing and functional team (Bernerth & Walker, 2009; Hacker et al., 2019; Jarvenpaa & Leidner, 1999; Jimenez et al., 2017; Lukić & Vračar, 2018). These findings show that the weight of the essentialness of trust has been considered for a long time, but it begs the question of how to use trust as a tool to gain positive organizational effects or lessen negative organizational effects where trust is low or not present?

As all informants had a somewhat consciousness towards using trust in their leadership style, we also wanted to know how. This naturally varied with the degree of consciousness within the informants. We also found little variation of how trust was used as a tool based on the respective fields the informants worked in, as all leaders used trust as a tool to empower their team members and followers.

The commonality between the first three informants where that they all somewhat consciously used trust as a tool to delegate tasks and empower their followers. Informant 1 realized that he did not use trust as consciously as he initially thought, but it is something that has always been present and comes natural to him in his leadership style. Where he exhibits trust by delegating tasks and challenging his apprentices (which are both young and older of age) with tasks of various technicality degrees and strive to give them opportunities to gain autonomy early in their careers, he uses trust as a tool to empower them. Further, he also gives an example of how conducting trusting behavior in itself can be considered as a tool:

“Just an example, if someone has to leave the construction site because of something embarrassing and they would need to tell me they are leaving I might ask why they are leaving and for how long. And they often might confine in me where it could be something embarrassing like a disease, or whatever, that [they] don't necessarily want to talk about with the rest of the team or want them to know. Then they could ask me not to tell the team why. I think at least that you are staying true to your word ... that is a conscious thing that I am doing [by not telling the other team members why said person needed to leave].” Informant #1

Informant 2 and 3 showed more specific action related to using trust as a tool in their work. They delegate different tasks with different degrees of responsibility to their followers, and informant 3 often gives her followers room to solve some tasks as they please by not giving demands or directions. She does this to give her

followers responsibility and an arena to display how they think some tasks should be done, and afterwards she goes through the process with her follower to give feedback. She does this to consciously empower her employees and give them a chance to grow and work more independently. Lastly, informant 4 also highlights how he would use trust to empower his virtual employees:

“Empowerment I guess. Make sure that people feel empowered to make decisions and also know where the difference between...or knowing when to ask and when to grunt. When to be able to know your limits for what you're both capable of and where you feel empowered to move forward.” Informant #4

In summary, using trust as a tool to gain positive organizational effects can be done both unconsciously and consciously. Where all leaders that were interviewed for our paper had a somewhat conscious attitude towards trusting behavior in their work, all uses trust as a tool to empower their followers. They show trusting behavior when delegating difficult, or give free space to solve, tasks and by doing so they give employees room for more autonomy in their work and room for personal growth.

5.3 Leadership and trust building in context

5.3.1 Trusts' role in teams

Previous trust literature has found several areas where trusts affect teams in organizations and discusses the various degrees of trust's role in teams. The informants suggested that trust plays an essential role in team settings and shared a strong consensus on this topic. Through a thematic analysis of the open-ended questions in the quantitative data we found that the five most valued factors for trust between team members were *honesty, communication, supporting, openness, and caring* (ref. column 3 in Table 4.10). The five most valued factors as a leader towards team members were *communication, honesty, openness, respect, and trust* (ref. column 3 in Table 4.9.) and regardless of team position the most valued factors on fostering trust within a leader were *communication, honesty, openness, integrity and listening* (ref. column 3 in Table 4.11).

Many of the same factors are given for each category, but there are also differences to the order and how the factors are weighted depending on who's point of view we are evaluating from. There are several interesting findings to this, and

we will discuss which and why later in this chapter. The data is reproduced in Table 5.2 below.

Table 5.2 Comparing most valued factors of trust between team member alike, towards their leader, and leadership factors regardless of context.

Finding	Team members towards peers (n=62, weighted %)	Team members toward leader (n=57, weighted %)	Leadership traits, independent. (n=62, weighted %)
Trust.	1. Honesty (11,50)	1. Communication (15,97)	1. Communication (8,49)
	2. Communication (10,62)	2. Honesty (8,40)	2. Honesty (8,49)
	3. Supporting (7,08)	3. Openness (6,72)	3. Openness (8,49)
	4. Openness (6,19)	4. Respect (4,20)	4. Integrity (5,66)
	5. Caring (4,42)	5. Trust (4,20)	5. Listening (5,66)

All informants emphasized how trust plays an important role in teams, and how distrust can make a team dysfunctional. As Lencioni & Lencioni (2002) have described the most important piece of a functional team is trust. When there is a lack of trust it effects the dynamic of the team and the other factors that contribute to a dysfunctional team. The degree of trust in a team is also perceived to have negative effects and it should be discussed and seen from all parties in the supervisor-subordinate and peer relationship when discussing trust building behavior, as trust is something dynamic (Bligh, 2017; Nienaber et al., 2015b) and can change over time (Baer et al., 2018). If a team has a high degree of trust towards each other or their supervisor, this can lead to more positive organizational effects like team efficiency, job performance, job satisfaction, higher knowledge sharing and more (e.g., Colquitt et al., 2007; Dirks & Ferrin, 2000; Haynie et al., 2016; Li & Tan, 2013; Mayer & Gavin, 2005; Nerstad et al., 2018). Low degrees of trust, or distrust, will have the opposite organizational effects as those presented above, and can lead to negative effects like low team efficiency, low job satisfaction, lack of psychological safety at work, and more.

Informant 1, 3 and 4 discussed if trust in teams can have organizational effects, where if trust is present in a team, you can yield higher team efficiency, better job performance, and there were even indications of higher job satisfaction (ref. Table 4.6). Lencioni & Lencioni (2002) created the assessment so that if any category

had a score above 8 there was no indication that there was a dysfunction to address. When the score, added the three questions together (See Table 4.13) was between six or seven there could be that the dysfunction would be a problem. But if the score was between three and five there was a clear indication that there was a dysfunction that needed to be addressed (Lencioni & Lencioni, 2002). In our test in SPSS, we calculated the mean of all the categories, and all had a score between six and seven. Which could mean that there is a potential problem with some of the dysfunctions in the teams where the participants of the survey work. But since the survey was sent out to random people that most likely work in different teams and in different organizations it is not possible to draw any conclusions based on these findings.

5.3.2 Trust differences towards supervisors and team members

In the results we explained how we ran a test comparing the difference of how the participants experienced the trust relationship to their supervisor and how they experienced it to their teammates. Here we will discuss the hypothesis:

H06: Perceived trustworthiness towards a team member differs between a virtual and a non-virtual team.

H07: Perceived trustworthiness towards a leader differs between a virtual and a non-virtual team.

The test for both the VT and N-VT showed only one question that stood out being significant. This was in the N-VT where it seems that the teammates experienced that their leader had their back in a much higher degree than the leader experienced that their team had their back. Mayer et al. (1995) has emphasized how important it is, for a leader in a virtual team to actively build trust. It could be that N-VT's members experience the trust better because they are able to meet and communicate face-to-face. We also ran a Paired Samples test on the questions that matched each other from question group 12 and 15 and compared them to questions group 13. Since there were no findings in this analysis the survey showed us no clear difference in the trust relationship between the supervisor and the team members.

One of the other tests that we ran was comparing the four categories of the Adams & Sartori's (2008) assessment. When we compared the means in the four categories from trust to team members and trust to a leader, we found a significant difference between the means in two of the categories. This was in benevolence

(n=45) and predictability (n=45), in virtual teams. The mean was negative between team member and leader benevolence which indicates that team members have a stronger feeling of this towards their leader than towards their team members. Benevolence has been described in the literature as an expectation that the other will be good to you (Colquitt et al., 2007; Mayer et al., 1995) and has been highlighted that it is one of the most dominant influences on a leader's trustworthiness (Hughes & Saunders, 2021). It could be natural to think that a team member is expecting their leader to be loyal, honest, and open towards them. In the relationship between the leader and the subordinate there is a power asymmetry (Nienaber et al., 2015) and the subordinate has an expectation that their leader is there to help guiding and supporting. In the pandemic there was a lot of focus on how to be a good leader in virtual team and it could have been that some have done this right. There is also the possibility that how team members interact in the virtual workspace has affected these numbers. Being in a virtual team could mean that there is less checking up on each other in a team and some might. Whereas the trust towards your team member could be seen in a different light. Often there is competition between members and there is not the same expectation that there will be the same loyalty as their leader. Though we should take the sample size into consideration, which is too small to draw any conclusion from this, but it could contribute to an understanding of the subject.

The other category had a positive mean which tells us that predictability is higher towards team members than towards their leaders in virtual teams. Hughes and Saunders (2021) have emphasized the importance of a leader being open and demonstrating value and respect to their team members. In virtual teams it is probably harder to do these things in an organic sense. Being open and clear in the communication can be difficult with 10 faces on the screen all staring straight forward into their own screen. Misunderstanding must be an issue in the virtual space where there is poor internet connection and difficult to just drop a comment. There has also been a very uncertain time for many during the pandemic with restrictions changing and the everyday life has been turned upside-down. This could also have played a part in how team members have experienced the predictability of their leaders, there have been a lot of unpredictable things in the last years.

5.3.3 Trust in virtual and non-virtual contexts

Through the survey we have tried to explore the different settings of virtual and non-virtual a see if there are any differences in the perceived trust in these two situations. This led to the following hypothesis:

H06: Perceived trustworthiness towards a team member differs between a virtual and a non-virtual team.

H07: Perceived trustworthiness towards a leader differs between a virtual and a non-virtual team.

What we found comparing the Lencioni & Lencioni (2005) tool was that there was a significant difference in two of the categories between the virtual and non-virtual. This was in the category fear of conflict which was question 10(1, 7, 10). The mean had a negative score which meant that the average score was higher in the non-virtual than in the virtual. The tool is built so that the lower the score is the more likely it is that the dysfunctions is going to be a problem. Hence there seems to be more *Fear of Conflict* in virtual teams than in non-virtual.

Communication is an important key in trust and trust is one of the drivers behind an effective team (Partridge, 2007; Bhattacharya et al., 1998; Hughes & Saunders 2021). There is also a focus that the communications need to be open and that there needs to be a presence (Hughes & Saunders, 2021). This could be a contributor to the fear of conflicts. Lencioni & Lencioni (2005) also describes that fear of conflict often comes from absence of trust. In a VT there can be a challenge to talk and communicate with coworkers in a natural sense and the everyday small talk around the coffee stations is no longer possible. and it is certainly demanding to be present in a VT team. Though the samples size (n=29) is too small to draw any concrete conclusion from this.

The other category was Avoidance of Accountability where the mean also had a negative score. This was question 10(2, 11, 14). This indicates that avoidance of accountability is higher in virtual teams and lower in non-virtual team. The literature emphasized the importance of open communication and respect (Hughes & Saunders, 2021). Since virtual communication loses the aspect of body language and the ability to “read the room” there might be problematic to have as open communication in virtual teams as in non-virtual teams. It could be easy to blame the others for not communicating well enough and this leads to team

members avoiding taking accountability. One could also think that some find it harder to be motivated when in virtual teams (Jr et al., 2009). With less motivated team members it can be more difficult to enhance each other's performance. Which is interesting for the next finding.

Question 10(N)_2 had a significance ($p < 0.05$, two-sided) which indicated that there was a difference between virtual and non-virtual, the mean was negative. This means, since the scale was *rarely-sometimes-usually*, that people call out the teammates of unproductive behavior more often in non-virtual team than in virtual teams. When we link this to the finding above it seems that in virtual spaces it is harder to keep up motivation and to check up on the other in the team. There are not the same natural meetings in the hallway or popping by the office just to see how things are going. In virtual workspaces there is not possible to know how effective the others are working and if they are doing something productive or not. Some of the teams might not have had time to create a natural space in the virtual workspace to confer with each other (Malhotra et al., 2007). Without this there could also be unclear as to whom report to whom. When these guidelines are blurred out by virtual spaces and it becomes a bigger barrier to reach out to team members this will effect on the trust in a team (Malhotra et al., 2007) and then further affect avoidance of accountability.

Question 10(N)_7 also was significant with a negative mean and the same scale as the questions above. This means that team meetings seem to be more "compelling" in non-virtual team meetings than in virtual team meetings. In virtual meetings people are missing out on the small in-person interactions, such as looks, small comments, body language, and eye contact (Paradisi et al., 2021). It can be easy for the team members to space out and focus on other things in their surrounding rather than their screen.

5.3.4 Trust breaking behavior in teams

Distrust can have both negative and positive effects on an organization, and the pace in which we can rebuild trust depends on the graveness of the untrustworthy behavior. Further, it is essential to understand that when a leader breaks the trust of their followers, it becomes more damaging than the other way around. Moreover, we wanted to explore if trust breaking behavior differs depending on the context a team is in, and this resulted in the following hypothesis:

H01: It is easier to break trust in a virtual team than in non-virtual teams.

We found that trust breaking behaviors does not vary depending on the member's role in a team, as the same behaviors applies for both a team supervisor and a team member. The informants were asked to give examples of the first trust breaking behaviors that came to mind in an organizational setting from both a team leader and team members perspective. They argued for how trust breaking behavior in a team could be dishonesty, workspace gossiping, not completing one's tasks that has been delegated or volunteered to do, and lack of professional integrity. Their examples coincide with Dirks and Skarlicki's (2004) examples of negative acts which we deem as informative actions in our evaluation of another character.

Further, the informants had different views on how context affect the degree of trust breaking behavior. Half of the informants argued for how it is easier to break trust in a virtual context while the others thought it would be easier to break trust in a non-virtual context (ref. Table 4.8) The main argument for trust breaking in VT's where that this environment is expected to be more volatile and thus is easier to break. Likewise for the N-VT the informants argue how trash-talking/gossiping can be more present in this environment and how it is easier to get away with trust breaking behavior in a non-virtual setting as less things aren't tracked or documented. Informant 3 emphasized how in virtual teams, your progress is more documented due to the increase of digital meetings, reporting to your supervisor, and more compared to a non-virtual workspace. This will differ depending on which field one works in, but the increased degree of reporting and progress tracking in virtual teams is suggested to make the members more accountable for their work compared in a non-virtual setting. Informant 3 further highlights how it is easier to get away with unfinished or incomplete tasks in a non-virtual team due to less progress documentation.

Our findings suggest that trust breaking behavior doesn't vary depending on which role someone has in a team (supervisor or team member), and the incongruence between the informants also suggest that context does not affect the pace of trust breaking (H01). Future research, with a big enough sample to draw statistical conclusions, to see if team context affects whether trust is more easily broken or not, would be interesting for organizations to learn more about, as this

knowledge could provide leaders with concrete strategies on approach trust depending on the team context.

5.3.5 COVID-19's influence on trust

The context in which we study trust is through the COVID-19 pandemic. The forced change to home offices and LVTs within organizations in Norway led us to explore the following hypothesis, which we will now address:

H02: COVID-19 has had a negative effect on intraorganizational trust.

One of the sampling criteria for our thesis where that each sampling group would have been (or still is) a part of a team sometime during the last five years (Mid-2017 to 2021). The COVID-19 pandemic has been the most challenging global phenomenon in Norway during peacetime, with intrusive restrictions in our personal lives and several waves of national lockdowns. Thus, we were interested to see if COVID-19 has affected how we trust, or our trust behavior.

In an earlier chapter we discussed trust's crucial role in N-VT's and VT's (ref. chapter 2.4 and 2.8). Trust had a crucial role in pre-COVID-19 VT's, where high-trusting VT's were more cohesive in their work, where trust has shown to improve collaboration, knowledge sharing, coordination and performance in teams, and the team leader is found to have direct effect on trust in VT's (Chamakiotis et al., 2021; Contreras et al., 2020; DeRosa et al., 2004; Germain & McGuire, 2014; Gilson et al., 2015; Hacker et al., 2019; Jarvenpaa & Leidner, 1999; Larson & DeChurch, 2020). Our findings suggests that the COVID-19 pandemic has strengthened organizational trust, where employees have (where possible) been forced to work from home and where these team members have been supervised differently from before. Although this has been a forced change, organizations, leaders, and top management have been forced to trust their employees to do their job from home, in a setting where the employees are supervised differently.

The informants had two different approaches to this topic, where informant 1 discussed the pandemic's influence on trust in an organizational matter (which was the intent) and the three other informants talked about this effect from a personal standpoint. Informant 1 commented on both negative and positive influences the pandemic has had to trust:

“It is a dual edged sword. In one hand, it has probably been harder to build trust in business relations and other things where you can't meet in person.”

On the other side, I think that COVID-19 has strengthened trust in a lot of ways. Where you would have companies having their employees working from home digitally.” Informant #1

He also comments on how the physical workspace restrictions in his field (construction) had a negative effect on interdisciplinary collaboration and trust, as the restrictions created a physical distance between the professions working on same projects. Where earlier practice was to share barracks where all professions could have lunch (and which served as a social arena on the construction site), many workers saw themselves having to eat lunch in the company car, either alone or with their apprentice. They also couldn't talk to the other professions on the construction site, and informant 1 emphasized on how the requirement to wear a face mask on the construction site, along with all other safety equipment such as helmets, goggles, and occasional hearing protection, created an additional sense of isolation from the others. Having almost their entire faces covered made the others on the site feel estranged.

“COVID-19, in my field, has given us a harder opportunity to build trust because we are less together, we are more by ourselves. We have to keep our distance, we cannot talk to each other because of that. With all our other equipment we also hide our mouths. It has been a setback to build trust in general.” Informant #1

This suggests that the COVID-19 has had a positive effect on intraorganizational trust and a negative effect on organizational trust towards other professions in the construction field, where the pandemic created a setback to building trust in general in this field. Informant 3 and 4 discussed how the pandemic has made us more trusting in general, and informant 2 and 4 also highlighted how some people also has become less trusting. Based on these findings we argue that COVID-19's influence on trust in our personal lives might be more varying than in an organizational setting, where the pandemic has led to stronger intraorganizational trust and lessen cross-organizational trust (H02).

5.4 Summary

The informants had a similar approach for defining and understanding trust as is depicted from the terms' literature and Meyer et al.'s (1995) definition, as we did not uncover possible gaps between the literature on trust and how this concept is used in society today. This provided a better stronghold for our discussion and

findings. The reoccurring trait which needs to be present to trust someone is *character*, and where other factors like *familiarity*, *time*, and *openness* are also heavily weighted. Our findings on trusts role in leadership indicates that there is a difference in perceived qualities for a leader between non-virtual and virtual teams (H05). Many qualities coincide, and the biggest different lies in how behavioral traits (communication and trust) is more weighted in non-virtual leadership. *Benevolence* is considered the most important bases of trust and seems to be more important in virtual leadership, where *integrity* is also considered more present in virtual leadership. In non-virtual leadership benevolence is more pressing than integrity, but behavioral actions like *communication* and *trust* scores high. Overall, our findings suggest that in a leader's perceived trustworthiness, benevolence and integrity are important, where the former is more weighted than the latter, and communication is considered as the most important factor.

We argue that gender affect how individuals perceive the trustworthiness of a supervisor, which affects the pace of trusting behavior both positively and negatively (H03). This perception is grounded in an individual's own social identity, group-based biases, and discrimination experiences; where we unconsciously perceive the initial stages of trustworthiness towards someone based on our biases towards a specific social group, and our degree of own identification with our social group, in this case the individuals gender identity (H04). What we found in the survey was that benevolence was more markedly with virtual leader than with non-virtual leaders and team members. It was also a strong indication that team members experienced more predictability towards their peers than towards their leader (H07). The other findings from the survey points towards a less efficient team in virtual spaces, where team members are afraid of conflicts and avoid taking responsibility. We also found that in non-virtual teams, members are more upfront towards each other and not scared of speaking up. There is also the aspect that team meetings seem to more compelling in non-virtual spaces. All in all, there seems to be more trustworthiness in non-virtual teams (H06).

Our findings suggest that trust breaking behavior doesn't vary depending on which role someone has in a team (supervisor or team member), and the incongruence between the informants also suggest that context does not affect the pace of trust breaking (H01). Lastly, we argue that COVID-19's influence on trust

in our personal lives might be more varying than in an organizational setting, where the pandemic has led to stronger intraorganizational trust and lessen cross-organizational trust (H02).

6. Conclusions and suggestions for further research

6.1 Conclusion

In this thesis we have researched trust building in non-virtual and virtual teams, and have tried to answer the following research question through our hypotheses:

How does the trust building relationship in the supervisor-subordinate dyad affect a team? And is there a difference between virtual and non-virtual teams?

Our findings suggest that trust has an important role in both leadership and teams. With the dynamic and reciprocal nature of the leader-subordinate relationship, trust is naturally found to affect a team. As time is strongly emphasized when discussing trust, the degree of trust between the participants in a team can vary throughout the team's lifetime, depending on perceived trustworthiness and trusting (and trust breaking) behavior. Further, in a team you can have multiple trusting dyads simultaneously, and thus we research this topic from both the supervisor's and the team member's view. Research has found trust is a key element for successful and efficient teams, and the leader's consciousness toward using trust as a tool (or sustain from it) can affect both the team and organizations.

We suggest that there are some differences in the trust building relationship depending on if the team is virtual or non-virtual. Although many of the qualities in perceived qualities for a leader coincide, we found contextual differences. The biggest difference lies in how behavioral traits (*communication* and *trust*) is more weighted in non-virtual leadership, and how perceived trustworthiness through *benevolence* and *integrity* is considered more important in virtual leadership. Further, gender identity affects how individuals perceive the trustworthiness of a supervisor and team member, which affects the pace of trusting behavior both positively and negatively in virtual and non-virtual teams. In virtual teams there seems that benevolence is more emphasized towards the leader and that predictability is higher towards team members. There seems to be an indication that trustworthiness is higher in non-virtual teams. Further, trust breaking behavior doesn't vary depending on which role someone has in a team (supervisor or team member), and the context of virtual and non-virtual teams does not affect the pace of trust breaking. Lastly, we argue that COVID-19's influence on trust in our personal lives might be more varying than in an organizational setting, where

the pandemic has led to stronger intraorganizational trust and lessen cross-organizational trust.

6.2 Suggestions for further research

Several researchers emphasize how previous research looks at trust as static. They point to the need for a more dynamic approach, like ours, within the field of trust literature. We also encourage future research to have a dynamic approach to trust when studying trust in virtual teams.

We commented on how we recognize several gender identities than *male* and *female* but where we have limited our discussion of gender to these. Where gender identity is being expanded and more accepted in modern society, it may be safe to assume that much earlier research based on gender is also limited to only the two mentioned above. Thus, it would be of interest to expand research in this field to include more gender identities, to get a more holistic and nuanced picture of gender, trust, and organizational factors in an ever increasingly diverse labor market.

Lastly, we encourage future research on trust differences in virtual, hybrid, and non-virtual teams with a bigger sampling group. Our research had a broad and general perspective but narrowing it down to case studies between different fields or internal studies within a big corporation could yield different results than those of this paper. Other organizations, whether they work virtually, have a hybrid solution, or work on-site, would benefit from the results of such a study. Through our research we have seen the value of trust in an organization, and what positive and negative effects the degree of trust in the organization can have, and believe future research on this topic can contribute to understanding organizational behavior more.

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Appendix

Appendix 1 Semi-structured interview guide

In-depth interview guide for *Master Thesis; Trust building in non-virtual and virtual teams* – Spring 2022

This interview template is semi structured and contains many of the same questions to the different sampling groups. Some variation will occur depending on the informant's background as a team supervisor/leader (digital, non-virtual, or both). The interview is performed orally and will be digitally recorded for transcription (information and consent for handling personal data is given before the interview starts). The questions in this guide are more a guideline for us than for the informants, and we aim for a natural conversation with our informants. The questions function as a template for the interview to secure that we cover the themes we aim to cover for this thesis.

The interview subjects will be asked to complete the Behavioral Trust Inventory (Gillespie, 2003) that is attached before the interview starts. The BTI is an instrument that captures a person's willingness to be vulnerable in a relationship with a specified other (here: supervisor-subordinate relationship). This inventory is also to measure trust sensitively in leader–member (and peer) relationships in a team setting. Hence, this inventory is needed to capture the essential features of these typically complex and highly interdependent work relationships that we are researching for our master thesis (Gillespie, 2003).

Moreover, there is no right or wrong answers to these questions.

Date: ____ | **Interview subject #**____ | **Interview form:** Digital Physical

Mapping the interview subject

- How old are you?
- What is your gender identity?
 Male Female Other _____
- What industry/field do you work in?
- How long have you worked in this industry/field?
- How is the gender ratio in your field?

Male dominated Female dominated Equal/Balanced Other

-
- When was the first time you had a supervising role?
 - Do you work mostly non-virtual or digital?
 Non-virtual Digital Other _____

Theme: Trust, trustworthiness, and trust building in general

- What is trust to you and can you describe what meaning you give to this term?
- What do you think needs to be present to trust someone?
- How much time do you need to trust **someone new (in your personal life)**? On a scale from 1-10 where 1 is very quickly and 10 is very slowly.
- How much time do you need to trust a **coworker**? On a scale from 1-10 where 1 is very quickly and 10 is very slowly.
- How much time do you need to trust a **supervisor**? On a scale from 1-10 where 1 is very quickly and 10 is very slowly.
- What do you think breaks trust, and can you name the first two examples you can think of?

Theme: Leadership and trust

- Can you describe your leadership style?
- If you were to sum up your leadership style in 5 traits, which traits are most dominating? (Listening, delegating tasks, problem solving, etc.).
- On a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is not important and 5 is very important, how important do you think trust is for leadership?
- Do you have a conscious attitude toward trust building in your leadership style?
- How would you use trust as a tool to supervise/lead/manage a team (and/or project)?
- Think of a time you were a team member and had a supervisor, how long did it take to trust the supervisor?
 - Follow up 1: If you didn't trust the supervisor; why not?
 - Follow up 2: Why did you trust that supervisor?
- How do you think gender affects how fast someone trusts a supervisor?
 - Why/Why not?
- Have you had both female and male supervisor?
 - If YES - Follow up 1: Think back on all your previous leaders/supervisor, did you trust one of the genders faster than the other?
 - If YES – Follow up 2: Follow up: Why/why not?

Theme: Leadership and trust building set in context

- What role do you think trust plays in a team?

- How do you think the trust building relationship is different between team members alike, and team members to their supervisor?
 - Follow up: Why/why not?
- To what extent do you think the context of a digital and non-virtual setting affect trust building?
- What do you think are important actions to take to build trust in a digital setting?
- What do you think are important actions to take to build trust in a non-virtual setting?
- How do you think the COVID-19 Pandemic has affected how we build trust?
 - Why/why not?
- How do you think the COVID-19 Pandemic has affected how you build trust in your work field?
- What do you think breaks trust between team members alike?
- What do you think breaks trust between team members and their supervisor?
- How do you think this differs between a non-virtual and virtual team?
 - Why/why not?
- Which setting do you think it is easiest to break trust, non-virtual or virtual?

Final question: Is there anything else you want to share on this topic that we have not talked about today?

APPENDIX: THE BEHAVIORAL TRUST INVENTORY

Note: Items 1–5 tap reliance-based trust and items 6–10 tap disclosure-based trust.

Please indicate how willing you are to engage in each of the following behaviors with *your Leader/Team Member/Follower*, by circling a number from 1 to 7.

	<i>Not at all willing</i>			<i>Completely willing</i>			
1. Rely on your leader's task related skills and abilities.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. Depend on your leader to handle an important issue on your behalf.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. Rely on your leader to represent your work accurately to others.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. Depend on your leader to back you up in difficult situations.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. Rely on your leader's work-related judgments.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. Share your personal feelings with your leader.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. Discuss work-related problems or difficulties with your leader that could potentially be used to disadvantage you.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. Confide in your leader about personal issues that are affecting your work.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	<i>Not at all willing</i>			<i>Completely willing</i>			
9. Discuss how you honestly feel about your work, even negative feelings and frustration.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. Share your personal beliefs with your leader.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Appendix 2 Paired Sample t-test – Five dysfunctions of a team

Paired Samples Test

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Significance	
				Lower	Upper			One-Sided p	Two-Sided p
Pair 1 AbsenceTrustSUM - IAbsenceTrustSUM	-.67241	2.13088	.39569	-1.48296	.13813	-1.699	28	.050	.100
Pair 2 FearConflictSUM - IFearConflictSUM	-.72414	1.72992	.32124	-1.38216	-.06611	-2.254	28	.016	.032
Pair 3 LackCommitSUM - ILackCommitSUM	-.06897	2.38943	.44371	-.97785	.83992	-.155	28	.439	.878
Pair 4 AvoidanceSUM - IAvoidanceSUM	-1.08621	2.08767	.38767	-1.88031	-.29210	-2.802	28	.005	.009
Pair 5 InattentionResultsSUM - IInattentionResultsSUM	-.05172	2.14786	.39885	-.86873	.76528	-.130	28	.449	.898

Appendix 4 Mean for the five dysfunctions

Paired Samples Statistics

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	AbsenceTrustSUM	6.3103	29	1.85363	.34421
	IAbsenceTrustSUM	6.9828	29	1.60625	.29827
Pair 2	FearConflictSUM	7.2414	29	1.55046	.28791
	IFearConflictSUM	7.9655	29	1.52322	.28285
Pair 3	LackCommitSUM	7.1724	29	1.64900	.30621
	ILackCommitSUM	7.2414	29	1.72493	.32031
Pair 4	AvoidanceSUM	6.2586	29	1.61809	.30047
	IAvoidanceSUM	7.3448	29	1.67494	.31103
Pair 5	InattentionResultsSUM	7.3793	29	1.47391	.27370
	IInattentionResultsSUM	7.4310	29	1.96271	.36447

Appendix 5 Paired Samples test Adams & Sartori (2008)

		Paired Samples Test							Significance	
		Paired Differences			95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	One-Sided p	Two-Sided p
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper				
Pair 1	TeamBene - LeaderBene	-,24889	,80131	,11945	-,48963	-,00815	-2,084	44	,022	,043
Pair 2	TeamInte - LeaderInte	,01333	,65561	,09773	-,18363	,21030	,136	44	,446	,892
Pair 3	TeamPred - LeaderPred	,28000	,70505	,10510	,06818	,49182	2,664	44	,005	,011
Pair 4	TeamComp - LeaderComp	-,05568	,82583	,12450	-,30676	,19539	-,447	43	,328	,657

Appendix 6 Paired Samples test BTI

		Paired Samples Test							Significance	
		Paired Differences			95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	One-Sided p	Two-Sided p
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper				
Pair 1	Reliancebased - IReliancebased	,04762	1,25364	,27357	-,52303	,61827	,174	20	,432	,864
Pair 2	Disclosurebased - IDisclosurebased	,10000	,90029	,20131	-,32135	,52135	,497	19	,313	,625

Appendix 7 Survey questionnaire and flow

Standard: 2 (1 Question)
Branch: New Branch If If You have been invited to participate in a survey about trust in digital teams. This is a survey... I do not consent Is Selected
EndSurvey:
Standard: 5. (1 Question)
Branch: New Branch If If Have you worked in a team during the past 5 years? No Is Selected
EndSurvey:
Block: 4,3 (2 Questions) Standard: 6. (1 Question) Block: 8. (1 Question) Standard: COVID-19 (1 Question)
Branch: New Branch If If Have you been in a virtual team during the last 5 years? (Home office/Hjemmekontor, etc.) Yes Is Selected
Block: Virtual (1 Question) Standard: 7. (1 Question)
Branch: New Branch If If 7. What has been your role in the VIRTUAL team(s) that you have worked in? Team member Is Selected
Standard: 10. (3 Questions) Standard: 11. (3 Questions) Standard: 12. (4 Questions) Standard: 13. (4 Questions) Standard: 14. (2 Questions)
Branch: New Branch If If 7. What has been your role in the VIRTUAL team(s) that you have worked in? Both Is Selected
Standard: 10. (3 Questions) Standard: 11. (3 Questions) Standard: 12. (4 Questions) Standard: 13. (4 Questions) Standard: 14. (2 Questions) Standard: 15. (4 Questions)
Branch: New Branch If If 7. What has been your role in the VIRTUAL team(s) that you have worked in? Team leader/Project manager/Team manager/Supervisor/ etc. Is Selected
Standard: 10. (3 Questions) Standard: 12. (4 Questions) Standard: 15. (4 Questions)
Block: Virtual leader (1 Question) Standard: Virtual teammmber (1 Question)

Block: Virtual team member (1 Question)

Standard: Non-virtual teams (1 Question)

Block: 7.no (1 Question)

Branch: New Branch

If

If What has been your role in the NON-VIRTUAL team(s) that you have worked in? I have only been in virtual teams Is Selected

EndSurvey:

Branch: New Branch

If

If What has been your role in the NON-VIRTUAL team(s) that you have worked in? Team member Is Selected

Block: 10.no (3 Questions)

Block: 11.no (3 Questions)

Block: 12.no (4 Questions)

Block: 13.no (4 Questions)

Block: 14.no (2 Questions)

Branch: New Branch

If

If What has been your role in the NON-VIRTUAL team(s) that you have worked in? Both Is Selected

Block: 10.no (3 Questions)

Block: 11.no (3 Questions)

Block: 12.no (4 Questions)

Block: 13.no (4 Questions)

Block: 14.no (2 Questions)

Block: 15.no (4 Questions)

Branch: New Branch

If

If What has been your role in the NON-VIRTUAL team(s) that you have worked in? Team leader/Project manager/Team manager/Supervisor/ etc. Is Selected

Block: 10.no (3 Questions)

Block: 12.no (4 Questions)

Block: 15.no (4 Questions)

Block: Block 17 (1 Question)

Standard: Non-virtual leader (1 Question)

Standard: Non-virtual team leader (1 Question)

Q2 You have been invited to participate in a survey about trust in digital teams. This is a survey for our master thesis at BI Business School in Bergen.

The purpose of this survey is to examine the trust relationship in teams and see if there is a difference between virtual teams and non-virtual teams. All personal information that we collect will be stored in a secure place and encrypted so no participants can be identified. Do you consent to us collecting these data and using them in our Master Thesis?

We will process your personal data based on your consent. By participating in the online survey you will be asked to consent before any answers can be recorded.

Warning: If you do not consent you will not be able to complete this form.

- I consent to participate in this survey (3)
- I do not consent (4)

5 Have you worked in a team during the past 5 years?

- Yes (2)
- No (3)

Q3 What gender do you define as?

- Male (1)
- Female (2)
- Other (3)
- Prefer not to say (4)

Q4 What is your age?

18 24 30 37 43 49 55 61 68 74 80

What is your age ()	
---------------------	--

6. How many different teams have you worked in during the last 5 years?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Number of team in the last 5 years ()	
---------------------------------------	--

8. Have you been in a virtual team during the last 5 years? (Home office/Hjemmekontor, etc.)

Yes (1)

No (2)

Q57 Was one of the reasons you worked in a virtual team the COVID-19 pandemic?

Yes (1)

No (2)

Does not apply to me (4)

Q15 Please consider the VIRTUAL team(s) you have been in for the next questions.

7.7. What has been your role in the VIRTUAL team(s) that you have worked in?

Team member (1)

Team leader/Project manager/Team manager/Supervisor/ etc. (2)

Both (3)

10. Trust between team members in a VIRTUAL team. Please take a look at the statements below and rate them as what fits best in your team(s). 1 = Rarely, 2 = Sometimes and, 3 = Usually

1. Team members are passionate and unguarded in their discussion of issues.
2. Team members call out on another's deficiencies or unproductive behaviours.
3. Team members know what their peers are working on and how they contribute to the collective good of the team.
4. Team members quickly and genuinely apologize to one another when they say or do something inappropriate or possibly damaging to the team.
5. Team members willingly make sacrifices (such as budget, turf, head count) in their departments or areas of expertise for the good of the team.
6. Team members openly admit their weaknesses and mistakes
7. Team meetings are compelling, not boring.
8. Team members leave meetings confident that their peers are completely committed to the decisions that were agreed on, even if they were in initial disagreement.
9. Morale is significantly affected by the failure to achieve team goals.
10. During team meetings, the most important – and difficult – issues are put on the table to be resolved.
11. Team members are deeply concerned about the prospect of letting down their peers.
12. Team members know about one another's personal lives and are comfortable discussing them.
13. Team members end discussions with clear and specific resolutions and action plans.
14. Team members challenge one another about their plans and approaches.
15. Team members are slow to seek credit for their own contributions, but quick to point out those of others.

11. Here we want you to evaluate trust between team members in a VIRTUAL team. Please respond to the given statements and rate them from 1 to 5, where 1= totally disagree and 5 = totally agree.

1. Most people in this team do not hesitate to help a person in need.
2. Most people speak out for what they believe in.
3. Most people stand behind their convictions.
4. The typical person is sincerely concerned about the problems of others.
5. People usually tell the truth even when they know they will be better off lying.
6. People can rely on each other.
7. We have complete confidence in each other's ability to perform tasks.
8. People will keep their word.
9. We work in a climate of cooperation.
10. We discuss and deal with issues or problems openly.
11. While taking a decision we take each other's opinion into consideration.
12. Most people in this team are open to advice and help from others.
13. People check whether others keep their promises.
14. Most people tend to keep each other's work under surveillance.

12. Trust to your team members in a VIRTUAL team. Please respond to the given statements and rate them from 1 to 5, where 1 = totally disagree and 5 = totally agree

1. My teammates honour their word.
2. I believe that my teammates have my best interest in mind.
3. My team is motivated to protect me.
4. I feel that my teammates work to protect me.
5. My teammates watch my back.
6. My teammates look out for me.
7. I can depend on my teammates to be fair.
8. My teammates are honourable people.
9. My teammates honour their word.
10. My teammates keep their promises.
11. My teammates tell the truth.
12. I know what to expect from my team.
13. I usually know how my teammates are going to react.
14. In times of uncertainty, my team sticks to the plan.
15. My teammates are reliable.
16. My teammates behave consistently.
17. My teammates are capable at their jobs.
18. My teammates know what they are doing.
19. I have faith in the abilities of my teammates.
20. My teammates are qualified to do their job.
21. My team members communicate well.

13. Trust to your team leader in a VIRTUAL team. Please respond to the given statements under and rate them from 1 to 5, where 1= totally disagree and 5 = totally agree.

1. I know my leader will keep his word.
2. I have confidence in the motivations of my leader.
3. My leader watches my back.
4. My team leader has my best interest in mind.
5. My leader is genuinely concerned about my wellbeing.
6. My team leader is likely to protect me.
7. I believe my leader is fair.
8. I believe my leader is honest.
9. I can depend on the fairness of my leader.
10. My leader puts their words into action.
11. I know my leader will keep their word.
12. I usually know how my leader is going to react.
13. I can anticipate what my leader will do.
14. I know exactly what my leader will do in difficult situations.
15. I can rely on my leader to behave predictably.
16. My leader behaves in a very consistent manner.
17. My team leader performs their job well.
18. I have confidence in the abilities of my team leader.
19. My team leader is capable at their job.
20. My team leader is highly skilled.
21. My team leader knows what they are doing.

14. Please indicate how willing you are to engage in each of the following behaviors with your team leader in a VIRTUAL team where 1= extremely uncomfortable and 5=extremely comfortable

1. Rely on your leader's task related skills and abilities.
2. Depend on your leader to handle an important issue on your behalf.
3. Rely on your leader to represent your work accurately to others.
4. Depend on your leader to back you up in difficult situations.
5. Rely on your leader's work-related judgments.
6. Share your personal feelings with your leader.
7. Discuss work-related problems or difficulties with your leader that could potentially be used to disadvantage you.
8. Confide in your leader about personal issues that are affecting your work.
9. Discuss how you honestly feel about your work, even negative feelings and frustration.
10. Share your personal beliefs with your leader.

15. Trust to your team members from leader perspective in a VIRTUAL team. Please respond to the given statements and rate them from 1 to 5, where 1= totally disagree and 5 = totally agree.

1. My team honour their word.
2. I believe that my team have my best interest in mind.
3. My team is motivated to protect me.
4. I feel that my team work to protect me.
5. My team watch my back.
6. My team look out for me.
7. I can depend on my teammates to be fair.
8. My team are honourable people.
9. My team honour their word.
10. My team keep their promises.
11. My team tell the truth.
12. I know what to expect from my team.
13. I usually know how my team are going to react.
14. In times of uncertainty, my team sticks to the plan.
15. My team are reliable.
16. My team behave consistently.

17. My team are capable at their jobs.
18. My team know what they are doing.
19. I have faith in the abilities of my team.
20. My team are qualified to do their job.
21. My team members communicate well.

Q16 As a leader/if you were a leader in a VIRTUAL team; what do think is the most important factor in the trust-building relationship with your followers? (You can answer in Norwegian if you prefer)

Q17 In a VIRTUAL team, what do you think is an essential quality for a leader regarding trust-building relationships? (You can answer in Norwegian if you prefer)

Q18 In a VIRTUAL team, what do you think is the most important factor for trust between team members? (You can answer in Norwegian if you prefer)

Q15 In this section, we ask you to consider the NON-VIRTUAL team that you have been in. If you have been in multiple teams we ask you to choose the one that describes the best overall answer.

Q58 What has been your role in the NON-VIRTUAL team(s) that you have worked in?

- Team member (1)
- Team leader/Project manager/Team manager/Supervisor/ etc. (2)
- Both (3)
- I have only been in virtual teams (4)

Q10_N Trust between team members in a NON-VIRTUAL team. Please take a look at the statements below and rate them as what fits best in your team. 1 = Rarely, 2 = Sometimes and, 3 = Usually

1. Team members are passionate and unguarded in their discussion of issues.
2. Team members call out on another's deficiencies or unproductive behaviours.
3. Team members know what their peers are working on and how they contribute to the collective good of the team.
4. Team members quickly and genuinely apologize to one another when they say or do something inappropriate or possibly damaging to the team.
5. Team members willingly make sacrifices (such as budget, turf, head count) in their departments or areas of expertise for the good of the team.
6. Team members openly admit their weaknesses and mistakes
7. Team meetings are compelling, not boring.
8. Team members leave meetings confident that their peers are completely committed to the decisions that were agreed on, even if they were in initial disagreement.
9. Morale is significantly affected by the failure to achieve team goals.
10. During team meetings, the most important – and difficult – issues are put on the table to be resolved.
11. Team members are deeply concerned about the prospect of letting down their peers.
12. Team members know about one another's personal lives and are comfortable discussing them.

13. Team members end discussions with clear and specific resolutions and action plans.
14. Team members challenge one another about their plans and approaches.
15. Team members are slow to seek credit for their own contributions, but quick to point out those of others.

Q11_N Here we want you to evaluate trust between team members in a NON-VIRTUAL team. Please respond to the given statements and rate them from 1 to 5, where 1= totally disagree and 5 = totally agree.

1. Most people in this team do not hesitate to help a person in need.
2. Most people speak out for what they believe in.
3. Most people stand behind their convictions.
4. The typical person is sincerely concerned about the problems of others.
5. People usually tell the truth even when they know they will be better off lying.
6. People can rely on each other.
7. We have complete confidence in each other's ability to perform tasks.
8. People will keep their word.
9. We work in a climate of cooperation.
10. We discuss and deal with issues or problems openly.
11. While taking a decision we take each other's opinion into consideration.
12. Most people in this team are open to advice and help from others.
13. People check whether others keep their promises.
14. Most people tend to keep each other's work under surveillance.

Q12_N Trust to your team members in a NON-VIRTUAL team. Please respond to the given statements and rate them from 1 to 5, where 1 = totally disagree and 5 = totally agree

1. My teammates honour their word.
2. I believe that my teammates have my best interest in mind.
3. My team is motivated to protect me.
4. I feel that my teammates work to protect me.
5. My teammates watch my back.
6. My teammates look out for me.
7. I can depend on my teammates to be fair.
8. My teammates are honourable people.
9. My teammates honour their word.
10. My teammates keep their promises.
11. My teammates tell the truth.
12. I know what to expect from my team.
13. I usually know how my teammates are going to react.
14. In times of uncertainty, my team sticks to the plan.
15. My teammates are reliable.
16. My teammates behave consistently.
17. My teammates are capable at their jobs.
18. My teammates know what they are doing.
19. I have faith in the abilities of my teammates.
20. My teammates are qualified to do their job.
21. My team members communicate well.

Q13_N Trust to your team leader in a NON-VIRTUAL team. Please respond to the given statements and rate them from 1 to 5, where 1= totally disagree and 5 = totally agree.

1. I know my team leader will keep his word.
2. I have confidence in the motivations of my team leader.
3. My team leader watches my back.
4. My team leader has my best interest in mind.
5. My team leader is genuinely concerned about my wellbeing.
6. My team leader is likely to protect me.
7. I believe my team leader is fair.
8. I believe my team leader is honest.
9. I can depend on the fairness of my team leader.
10. My team leader puts their words into action.

11. I know my team leader will keep their word.
12. I usually know how my team leader is going to react.
13. I can anticipate what my team leader will do.
14. I know exactly what my team leader will do in difficult situations.
15. I can rely on my team leader to behave predictably.
16. My team leader behaves in a very consistent manner.
17. My team leader performs their job well.
18. I have confidence in the abilities of my team leader.
19. My team leader is capable at their job.
20. My team leader is highly skilled.
21. My team leader knows what they are doing.

Q14_N Please indicate how willing you are to engage in each of the following behaviors with your team leader in a NON-VIRTUAL team where 1= extremely uncomfortable and 5=extremely comfortable

1. Rely on your leader's task related skills and abilities.
2. Depend on your leader to handle an important issue on your behalf.
3. Rely on your leader to represent your work accurately to others.
4. Depend on your leader to back you up in difficult situations.
5. Rely on your leader's work-related judgments.
6. Share your personal feelings with your leader.
7. Discuss work-related problems or difficulties with your leader that could potentially be used to disadvantage you.
8. Confide in your leader about personal issues that are affecting your work.
9. Discuss how you honestly feel about your work, even negative feelings and frustration.
10. Share your personal beliefs with your leader.

Q15_N Trust to your team members from leader perspective in a NON-VIRTUAL team. Please respond to the given statements and rate them from 1 to 5, where 1= totally disagree and 5 = totally agree.

1. My team honour their word.
2. I believe that my team have my best interest in mind.
3. My team is motivated to protect me.
4. I feel that my team work to protect me.
5. My team watch my back.
6. My team look out for me.
7. I can depend on my teammates to be fair.
8. My team are honourable people.
9. My team honour their word.
10. My team keep their promises.
11. My team tell the truth.
12. I know what to expect from my team.
13. I usually know how my team are going to react.
14. In times of uncertainty, my team sticks to the plan.
15. My team are reliable.
16. My team behave consistently.
17. My team are capable at their jobs.
18. My team know what they are doing.
19. I have faith in the abilities of my team.
20. My team are qualified to do their job.
21. My team members communicate well.

Q19 In a NON-VIRTUAL team, what do you think is the most important factor in the trust relationship between team members? (You can answer in Norwegian if you prefer)

Q20 As a leader in a NON-VIRTUAL team what do think is the most important factor in the trust-building relationship with your followers? (You can answer in Norwegian if you prefer)

Q21 In a NON-VIRTUAL team, what do you think is an essential quality for a leader to have regarding trust-building relationships? (You can answer in Norwegian if you prefer)
