

TRUST AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN A BUSINESS CONSORTIUM: A CASE OF COOPETITIONEder Bruno Cavalcanti do Nascimento¹Lilian Soares Outtes Wanderley²Duarte Raab Pires³**ABSTRACT**

This study in a business consortium at SERVTEC - PE, in Recife/Brazil, aimed at analyzing various aspects of trust in a cooperative environment. This is a descriptive, exploratory and qualitative study, including semi-structured interviews with the five companies directors who have decided for the formation of the consortium. Combining the literature of coopetition and trust, the research had as main objective, to better understand relations of trust in a business consortium, considering that participants cooperate and compete in the same industry. The results showed that trust is essential in a business consortium relationship and it strongly contributes to achieving good results in a project. It was evident that the duration of this relationship determined the confidence levels of the consortium and therefore ensured longevity of the consortium for other projects. The study identified key attributes of trust considered by consortium members as competence, trustworthiness and mutual respect. These three are the core attributes of trust at SERVTEC. Finally, it became clear that accountability in a business consortium and clear division of responsibilities, together with financial results of the project can contribute to the achievement of higher levels of inter-organizational trust.

KEYWORDS: Consortium. Trust. Coopetition. Accountability.

¹ Mestre em Administração pela Universidade Federal de Pernambuco - UFPE (2012 - 2014 - Stricto Sensu), possui MBA em Marketing (2008 - Lato sensu)

² Professora e pesquisadora da Universidade Federal de Pernambuco/ UFPE.

³ Doutorando PROPAD/CCSA/UFPE.

1 INTRODUCTION

The new economy is characterized by the impact of institutional uncertainty in the political, economic and technological spheres; these changing assets may affect companies at different levels (ARGANDONA, 2003). The result of the effect of institutional innovations is setting up a new business environment with high environmental uncertainty and risk. According to Zanini and Almeida (2009) there are three main sources of uncertainty, as Market, Technology, Political and Legal. Uncertainties are very typical of emerging markets due to the absence of historical information. In the new telecommunications industry as the case of SERVTEC consortium, the number of institutional uncertainties may increase substantially due to the combination of these sources of uncertainty. The uncertainty generated in the business environment of these companies are listed below and they correlate to: 1) the approach of emerging markets on a global scale; 2) a variety of new technologies prior to the development of various products and services; 3) the goods and services with short life cycle; 4) the recent establishment of new companies, many financed by short-term funds; 5) the process in setting market rules and often flawed regulation; 6) the fault on the demands estimates (ZANININI; ALMEIDA, 2009).

For companies operating in the New Economy, high environmental uncertainty greatly limits the development of trust levels within organizations (ZANINI; ALMEIDA, 2009). Thus, an increase in the environmental uncertainty directly affects the confidence levels whereas future becomes even more unpredictable. It is common, in rapidly changing environments, that companies which adopt short-term strategies need constant downsizing and redeployment of scarce resources together with changes in production systems. The short-term strategies can also have consequences on the management of human resources of the company and it also generates high instability of employment environment.

COOPETITION

Dahl (2014) defines coepetition as a process based both in cooperative and mutual competitive interactions between two or more undertakings involved in the same line of business where the goals and experiences of individuals within companies are perceived as central to explain the process of inter organizational interaction.

There are exchanges of information among coepetition relations between companies which seek to cooperate in order to gain coepetitive advantage. The dynamics of coepetition is based on expectations that each partner will comply with the promised, characterizing a coepetitive action as being based on trust. In this context Ripperger (1998 apud ZANINI; ALMEIDA, 2009) considers that in all cooperative action there is an expectation of trust and an action based on trust. It defines the confidence expectation concepts and a trust-based action:

- Confidence Expectancy – it is the expectation of those who trust in another person, believing that she will be motivated to not act opportunistically; Trust-based action – it is a voluntary investment of a person who trusts through concrete action, a behavioral risk, without resorting to any explicit mechanism for security or control to guard against a possible opportunistic behavior.

TRUST

It is common knowledge that trust is essential to the commitment and the establishment of interactions between people and organizations (DRUMMOND, 2007). These relationships bring several definitions of trust, which vary according to the social, economic or organizational profile. These definitions are numerous and often contradictory (LANE; BACHMANN, 1996). In this context, in order to bring a summarized concept of trust, Illustration 1 presents recent authors chosen for this study.

Illustration 1:
Summary of Recent Perspectives on Trust

Authors	Perspectives on Trust
Zanini and Almeida (2009)	For companies operating in the New Economy, the high environmental uncertainty limits the development of trust levels within these organizations; at that, an increase in environmental uncertainty directly affects the confidence levels whereas the future becomes even more unpredictable.
Sobral (2010)	People with greater predisposition to trust tend to judge the morality of ethically ambiguous practices with more rigor and intolerance.
Pirani (2010); Alves et al (2011)	The evolution of trust is established by prior knowledge of the actors studied which results in a closer relationship between these organizations.
O'Neill (2013)	Confidence must be based on a relationship of honesty and competence, but for more transparency in these relations it is necessary to create control mechanisms, through accountability and division of responsibilities. The presence of trust can reduce the need for application of formal mechanisms against opportunistic behavior between partners.
Dahl (2014)	Coopetition is a process based both in cooperative and competitive interactions between two or more companies through a relation of trust.

Source: The authors, 2017.

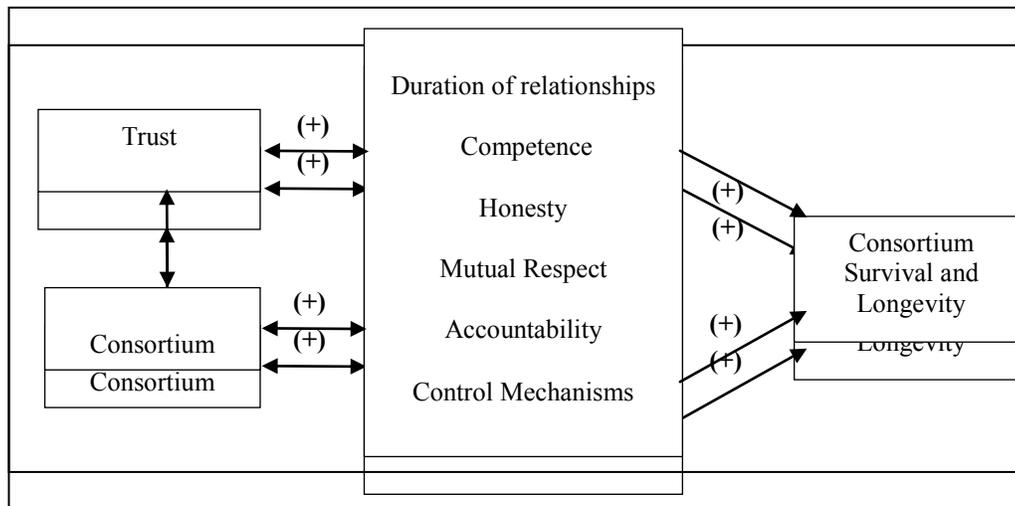
Authors listed in Illustration 1 were chosen for their recent contributions to trust in their different fields and perspectives which can be seen as complementing each other and together they help to understand trust through the following dimensions: relationships between people, security feeling, expectations, uncertainty of the business environment, morality concerns, honesty, competence of people, transparency in the relationship, reliable control mechanisms, accountability and division of responsibilities.

Agreeing with the definition of coopection as a process based both in cooperative and mutual competitive interactions between two or more enterprises involved in the same line of business (DAHL, 2014). The relevance to allocate confidence in particular aspects of the individual through reliability based on the judgment of the attributes of the trusted person, as well as the accountability concept in the definition of obligation/reliability through responsibilities, is the main argument of O’Neill (2013). While Zanini and Almeida (2009) contribute to the prospect that the development of trust is influenced by the business environment which appears uncertain, considering the companies operating in the new economy.

These authors were chosen by contemporary contributions in studies of coopection and confidence. Dahl (2014) published more recent studies on coopection within organizational spheres. O’Neill (2013) is recognized for contributions to trust in interpersonal and inter-organizational relationships; and, finally, Zanini and Almeida (2009) include contributions on trust by the complexity of the economic environment which impacts the inter confidence levels.

The theoretical basis of the study is shown in the image below for understanding how development of trust in SERVTEC-PE consortium.

Illustration 2:
Theoretical Map for the Study



Source: The Authors, based on O’Neill, (2013), Zanini and Almeida, (2009), La Taille, (2006), Locke, (2001) and Rousseau, (1998)

Illustration 2 presents the features of a consortium relationship. This relationship is based on a business structure in which participants are competitors and cooperators each other through coopection. It is understood that these characteristics are essential for the operation of the consortium’s goals, and once considered as positive, it can generate results to ensure the longevity of the consortium to other business projects. Thus, based on the selected literature, trust is crucial in business activities to the consortium's survival and longevity.

For this study, we chose a descriptive and exploratory qualitative case study research (YIN, 2013). Descriptive because it addresses the experience reports of the business partners involved in SERVTEC consortium management about their understanding of trust. The research is also exploratory, having as its main objective to deepen knowledge on the topic researched by clarifying concepts and providing subsidies for the subsequent studies.

Thus, we aim at understanding trust relationship within the SERVTEC consortium and its contributions to the consortium longevity.

SERVTEC-PE Consortium

The unit of analysis of this study is the SERVTEC consortium where the owners of the companies comprising this consortium allowed recorded interviews. SERVTEC is notably composed by entrepreneurs who decided to start the consortium in order to provide tele-assistance and computer support services to users of state agencies through a central tele-assistance service.

What makes this consortium more relevant is that it follows a global trend of large number of participants in instead of usual bilateral agreements (SOFTEX, 2009; PORTER, 1990). Trust in a consortium is the basic requirement for collaboration and its discussion needs to be better understood as trust in alliances and networks has been a fundamental gap (TOMKINS, 2001). Regarding studies in Brazil, recent research findings raise new questions regarding trust in collaborative and competitive companies (MACEDO et al, 2017). Mello (2017) attributes credibility as the basics condition for inter-organization trust, but still not enough to guarantee it. Five in-depth interviews were conducted from August to September and respondents were contacted in advance by phone and email to scheduling day and time of the interviews. All interviews were conducted in Recife at the headquarters of the consortium partners with due consent of the participants, recorded for further analysis and transcription, generating the results of this work. Illustration 3 presents the code given to each respondent by company followed by location where interview took place and how long – ranging from 20 minutes the shortest to one hour and eleven minutes Source: The authors, 2017. the longest. Transcribed interviews were categorized applying Bardin’s content analysis (BARDIN, 2009).

Illustration 3 – Data collection records: interviewee code, date, location and duration.

Interviewee	Date	Location	Interview Duration
PR	21st Aug	Company’s meeting room	22 minutes
PN	1st Sep	Director’s Office	20 minutes
DT	28th Aug	Company’s meeting room	26 minutes
ZH	15th Sep	Director’s Office	1 hour and 11 minutes
CH	15th Sep	Company’s meeting room	39 minutes

Source: The authors, 2017.

Each interviewee agreed voluntarily to take part in the study. Qualitative categories were transcribed, analyzed and later translated into English

3 DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The research data analysis is based on the analysis of categories which were previously built from the theoretical framework. The categories were selected and divided into three: I. definition and attributes of trust, II. economic environment and trust relations, and finally III. control mechanisms/accountability.

3.1 Trust at SERVTEC – definition and attributes

A definition of trust by the consortium business partners has become easier to deal with confidence examples in labor relations. That said, the concepts and examples presented permeated in some cases, trust attributes themselves. Briefly, the very illustrative reports of respondents are the following:

DT: “Trust in the point of view of labor relations is to believe that the professional who is there by your side will try to do the best for now, intending to seek the best possible result. It is not the matter of always believing blindly when operator says that operations are doing very well, should I just believe in it? Not at all! It is not the way how it works. The other part has to start proving throughout results.”

ZH: “Trust is associated with principles, it is something that means a rule that you learned far behind, it means moral principles”

PR: “I do not have a simplistic definition. But I say that trust is linked to attitudes. It is a person’s behavior in everyday life. So my definition is this one: Trust means attitudes!”

PN: “For me, trust is established when you create an expectation that a particular person will do the best, we expect the action of another in order to seek the betterments in every way, whether in personal or professional life”

CH: “Trust for me is built when you have an expectation of someone who is good either within the company or outside. It is to believe in someone who will do the best for you”

From answering the question “what do you understand about trust?”, the responses confirmed the concepts proposed by the Ripperger (1998, apud ZANINI; ALMEIDA, 2009), and Marioti and Souza (2005). Confidence in SERVTEC is defined by the expectation that someone else will be motivated not to act opportunistically, oriented mainly for repeated situations and lasting relationships.

It is noteworthy that in SERVTEC this expectation is based on the bringing of positive attitudes in seeking improvements to the consortium and the maintenance of agreements made during the formation of the consortium. In this sense, the assumption that trust exists depend on good agreements and partnerships sustained over time and maintenance. The above statement follows the illustrative account of the CH company:

CH: “Confidence in the corporate environment is the representativeness of the agreements and the tacit agreements compliments which were previously made, and also, the maintenance of these agreements over time, because managers often maintain confidence during the time and then break that trust, but also on the other side, the collaborators, those being managed by these managers, who are part of these companies often fulfill the agreement when it is comfortable for themselves and later, for some reason, break that bond, then confidence gets lost.”

Confidence in SERVTEC reveals the idea of expectation based on the actions of other consortium members. This expectation is positive and is based on a good relationship considering that the consortium members are responsible for the agreements made before consortium activities started.

Based on the attributes of trust there are four main reasons why people at SERVTEC trust one another. These observations confirm the prospects for O’Neill (2013), La Taille (2006), Bachmann (1996) and Zucker (1986). These authors consider the main confidence reasons: 1. Duration of a relationship, 2. Competence, 3. honesty and 4. mutual respect.

3.1.1 Duration of Relationship

In SERVTEC, the leading reliable attribute is related to the time/length of a relationship, all partners have proposed time as an important attribute of trust. Short parts of the reports as illustrations:

PR: “The longer the group stay together it will create an improvement in the trust. The time together means that you are gaining confidence, that is, the fact of moving to another project means that you have confidence in the consortium”

DT: “The trend is that over time the issue of trust increases, whereas on the other hand, time can provide some external stimulus that forces the breakdown of trust such as another company if there is a stimulus to businesses no longer set up a new consortium or some other third party into the consortium. Some external factors can undermine confidence in the long run”

ZH: “Time is a premise for the construction of this trust, the more time passes the more you have observation windows”

CH: “Which brings confidence is the time, you know? then, in my professional experience, this does not mean that a manager who is part of some of the areas of managers who are below me, cannot arrive quickly and be extremely well validated and we have an empathy and get a job together, but I think what will differentiate the deposit of trust is time. You only consorts when you have some information of the companies which you will join to make a consortium, about their time in the market, their experience, their size; but then you only really build confidence when you get a time of coexistence and commitment with these companies, understand? “.

PN: “I think confidence is something you acquire with time. The experience that we have here in the company, my professional background in addition to the time I’ve spent as a professional, I say that it is something you get on a daily basis relationship, coexistence “.

3.1.2 Competence

For SERVTEC two main attributes are highlighted. The first is training and the second it is previous experiences, but the practical demonstration of competence is considered a key factor for the maintenance of trust. As stated by respondents:

DT: “First vocational and academic training, so if the person has a good training is already a positive factor to build trust because it assumes that it is competent to perform their tasks, then the qualification is one of the attributes. Experience is another important attribute, if that professional has shown on other occasions, including in other companies, which consistently showed good results, you can trust. Then I consider the training, experience “(...) It is not the matter of always believing blindly when operator says that operations are doing very well, should I just believe in it? Not at all! It is not the way how it works. The other part has to start proving throughout results.”

CH: “The competence demonstrated in practice is that generates confidence in the work and generates professional and personal confidence from a manager onto the employee and also with a client of the company”

PN: “For me the confidence attributes is the competence, honesty, training, where the employee is looking for improvements in the company, there are people who bring problems, but also provide solutions, so these are all things we will evaluate and trust me ta very attached to it, to work “

For the formation of SERVTEC consortium skills identified within the five companies and the time they have on the market were important attributes when building trust. In this example we have the concept of consortium as a sum of powers, and this in turn can generate trust:

DT: “(...) we intended to form the consortium because we had confidence that the consortium members are companies that have a name in the market, has already provided services, so you have formed the consortium. So the first trust is respect, everyone should respect each other, everyone has their responsibility”

ZH: “The SERVTEC is a joint that contains a very characteristic factor, that all participants are local companies. Trust only becomes stronger as all the people had a certain way, some connection. I knew all companies and, in a sense, the previous history of all of them”

PR: “The union of companies from a same state to form a consortium and the fact that all of them have competencies in specific areas are great assets for the state. So you can somehow block foreign competition and I think this is healthy because each one defines its proper ground. Consortium is the union of skills. So I would say, first, that a consortium is healthy as you do not have the power to do this alone. So the truth junction skills, partnerships and opportunity, joining all this we have a positive result and that's what creates confidence. Then you have the sum of technical skills with political powers”

CH: “You only consort when you have some information about the companies which you will join to make a consortium, as their time on the market, their experience, their size. However you only really start to gain confidence with the time you spend together with these companies, you know? “

3.1.3 Honesty

Another attribute evident in trust is a matter of honesty. The interviewees dealt with aspects of acting with ethics, transparency, act with integrity and correction, confirming thus the prospect of O'Neill (2013) in which states that trust requires, elementally, a special look for honesty. If a person is honest, we have good reason to trust them, because they are trustworthy (O'NEILL, 2013).

CH: "(...) A lot of people mention honesty, ethics, transparency in the time when they are selling [good and/or services], with the idea that this is a great competitive advantage. I think this is an obligation of every human being and then I think the question of trust is much more than to show in practice these attributes"

ZH: "I have here a person who is my right hand, it is my office manager and this person started here in the company as a telephone operator, and worked at all sections of the company until become my office manager. So trust can be seen when you show real effort, [when you] do the right thing, [to] act with correction, probity, and over time you are able to evaluate it"

PN: "Trust, I think, is first linked to the person's honesty, but not limited to it; professional honesty is also very important. When I talk about honesty it does not only mean financially. I think honesty includes other things in general; if the professional is a good person [and if] he or she is going to show you confidence in his work, for example. We already have more time on the road to see if that professional is giving you a correct, consistent [result], so I think that what makes trust is the day-to-day living working relationship with the right person"

3.1.4 Mutual Respect

Respect for each other, for the information of each company, reciprocity and fellowship were considered essential factors for building confidence in the consortium. These considerations confirm perspective of Marioti and Souza (2005), Pirani (2010) and Alves et al (2011), in which reciprocity tends to increase the level of trust between people. This increase is strengthened gradually:

ZH: "(...) You do so, because the guy trusts you, and if the guy trusts you, you should make it reciprocal, and do your best. As you said I've worked with some guy, PN has always been my competitor on the maintenance area, but it was always very right, very correct, and made no action to deliberately harm another. We always had respect and alternating in some places I won the bidding. Four years passed and he was waiting to end the contract and he was there, came in with the lowest price to win it back. We never resent each other and, if it turned into a bad time someday, it was a momentary thing I you lose and you're upset because you lost your business, but it passed because there was no incorrect procedure on the other side, or no damning action. (...). With this person PN we established trust; you can identify that guy has principles, and that's a thing, we have our perspective but we can make mistakes, but I think we do. Then you have to see how to avoid it and establish a relationship of trust. So, if you act correctly the guy trusts you and then you are required to make a reciprocal, and do better. "(...) "That's what I mean, if you can learn to live with people, with their differences, you end up learning from it and evolving"

DT: “In the specific case of our consortium we have... and you said well, there is co-operation and competition. To the market we compete with each other, so one of the points I consider it is necessary to maintain this trust is to respect the information of each company. It is not because we are in a consortium that we will want to open the company’s information to another one. So, we need to respect the expertise that each company presented before entering the consortium. If some guy has a sense of camaraderie, sense of trying to add, and he has also been concerned with the company, we want him to see that if there is a colleague having difficulty, personal or professional and he comes along and he is interested also try to solve it, that is because he works in that way for the company as a whole. I believe it is a matter of fellowship and commitment”

CH: “I think the greatest proof of confidence that we can make is, for example, having the manager of the consortium in my structure, every morning, noon and night we would be concerned about any strategic information of our company, which would be much more accessible to anyone else, but that does not worry me, you know, as I told you, I look very forward, I think if you spend time with some nitpicking, with some small things you will not think big, then that’s the way we see”.

PR: “If a person treats me well both in front and behind me and she respects me, she does what I ask in the best possible way, without criticizing me and that is what will generate trust”.

PN: “Our meetings I think it has always been very open, very transparent and with great respect between companies, every problem that we had in the consortium we discussed it, always reached consensus, although with discussions, disagreements but that’s part of it. But thus, we always reached a consensus to reached the objectives in the best possible way”

For SERVTEC respondents, reciprocity is a mutual correspondence through voluntary trust dedication. It is important to reinforce that confidence in one or more partners is relevant to SERVTEC, and example of good relationships between the consortium members reflect the consortium as a whole.

In this sense, the prospects for Pirani (2010), and Alves et al (2011) confirm that if a partner company complies with positive expectations, the other company tends to develop higher level of confidence in the partnership, which in turn reduces future concerns about opportunism (PIRANI, 2010; Alves et al, 2011).

ZH: “Another example, there was not yet a consortium and someone came to me, it was about 11:30 in the morning and asks: (...) Can you start this afternoon? And I said “But the other guy has a project?”, and he said he thought there was a project already. Then, the next morning I started working and there was not even a contract, nor a value accorded, absolutely nothing.

DT is an example of this trust, it spreads in the consortium (...) Before that had another very interesting thing with DT, some guy called me to do a call center in Itapetinga São Paulo, then I came to him in the office and said, “There is no sense in you hiring me, it is not that I do not want to do the work, but it will be very expensive”.(...) and if it was with another company I would always be suspicious... “. So I said, “okay, I’ll take the flight now and I see here with the staff” and it was a business that we did very well. (...) So I want to give you two strong examples of confidence; no one hires another person without setting the price if you are not sure that that person will behave properly and reliably. This guy knows me from long ago”.

Despite that the theoretical framework does not mention that the assumption of personal challenges can build trust, this discussion is important since it was evident in responses that assuming challenges impact on the development of trust. In this sense, it can be considered that personal proactivity can be a confidence-building factor:

ZH: “When you evaluate certain people and you give them challenges and they fulfill them efficiently, they will come up in the company and in a prominent place. So this process is a process that involves an achievement and this achievement will generate reliability, so you have faith that everything you ask that person will do with care so you trust the information. Then see! The main expression is that ‘If you want, you can.’ No one learns how to ride a bike looking another person doing it. You have to get the bike and ride it, show results!”

CH: “I think confidence is exactly in how you show the results. I never had a chance to be part of the CPOR or to be in the military, but what you see, even when you study when you see some things related to a lot of tactics, team work, the result, this people has always been very tough but then, you see that when one works and achieve, you gain the possibility increasingly being urged to do more and then that manager gives you the opportunity to get and it gives you two steps forward, then the person do the job. Then the guy gives two steps forward then you hand again, and this is where you gain confidence in a very objective way”

DT: “Trust is in the ability of an employee who wants to help the others and also to accept challenges in business and stick to them, so I think it is important”

It is worth noting that attitudes to take personal challenges are related to the daily activities of each company and its relationship with the staff and not necessarily the consortium environment. However, it is believed that this feature can be reflected in SERVTEC once it was considered relevant for the respondents.

3.2 Accountability and Control Mechanisms

Accountability as a moderating factor of trust in relationships was proved to be more appropriate in the divisions of responsibilities of each partner in the provision of services to the Government of the State of Pernambuco. In this sense, the answers respondents understood that the division of responsibilities leads to efficient accountability and higher level of confidence:

DT: “So what is it that creates confidence in my opinion ... is the past of the company and the present in order to behave well and give an account of what you are doing and also respect, as the main factor. It is each company fulfilling its obligation. For example, if my role in the consortium is to do the service of 1st level and 2nd level then monthly payments we provide presenting accounts systematic reports that the number of contracted and provided people is being obeyed, the metrics of service levels are following there is a control of human resources to ensure the training of each employee... So that’s what has to do is to pay to the result that each partner is doing. So, trust exists and it is necessary, it is now also need to pay regard to maintaining the trust”

PN: “I think that, the key, above all, in a relationship of a consortium is consistency, consistency in the distribution of activities, consistency in the participation of each company within the consortium and the participation is on the division of tasks each one performs that today is very divided”

CH: “I believe that when managers start to have a greater understanding that only dividing the responsibilities they will get multiply results, I think that’s where it ends a bit this barrier of fear of a competitor”

For O’Neill (2013) accountability plays an important role in building trust. In SERVTEC accountability demonstrated relevant in the control and responsibility division. In this sense, accountability is operationalized through the systematic reports presented at the meetings, where each company has it and shares the activities with partners.

Accountability also helps to multiply operating results at SERVTEC, representing a synergy of activities which are distributed efficiently. There is therefore that coherence distribution of each participant activity which helps to achieve higher confidence levels.

Questions regarding knowledge of the terms of the contract as a control mechanism, for example, showed little impact on trust. In this respect, it confirms the perspective of La Taille (2006) for whom there are not enough rules or guiding regulations, but they are essential to people who may believe that these regulations will be effectively respected and truthful.

PN: “I think the contract is a legal instrument that you have on hand to catch someone when he did not fulfill its obligations. But that does not represent the consortium’s reality where everyone knows and strictly complies with its obligations and, because of this, it is working out “

ZH: “The contract is a beacon of what was hired, then you avoid opportunistic behavior and that things are not interpreted incorrectly. The contract is a north, I would not say that it generates confidence but it is an instrument for such. Trust is intrinsically in partner, then you say, it is difficult to make a consortium with four companies I’ve never seen in my life, a circumstance someone says “Look, you need to join a consortium here” the guy invents entering this consortium without knowing the contract is the only guarantee and in that sense, it builds trust. In SERVTEC-PE I would say that the contract remains instrument, but it is significantly less force than it has when you’re dealing with strangers.

PR: “If I tell you I do not know entirely the terms of the contract, would you believe me? Well, as I know the people I’m dealing with and I trust them, the contract is merely a formality. But if the reverse the story changes because they did not know anyone, before participating in the consortium would fight to leave everything tied in the contract”

Whether very or somewhat formalized in SERVTEC, control mechanisms are important to ensure that activities are carried out in a planned manner, contributing to improved operational processes. However, confidence is directly in the consortium partners, this post can be seen that there is a direct relationship between the mechanisms of control and accountability, with the predisposition of entrepreneurs to fulfill its contractual obligations and provide account of its operational activities. An aspect considered important in the trust category in SERVTEC is that it is not uniform and trust grows along as the relationship grows and decision making thus confirming the prospect of O'Neill (2013):

PR: "Talking about the consortium, you have five companies, competitors; honestly there is not one hundred percent of trust. It's difficult! Now what happens is that the daily lives and decisions and the behavior of these decisions will demonstrate whether there is a trust or not, right? (...) Decisions that affect all partners and decisions are somewhat in agreement and that makes you verify that there is an alignment of ideas in the consortium and this will generate greater confidence levels. I say that in the consortium confidence hundred percent will never exist. There may be sometimes an improvement in the relationship, but to trust a hundred percent in a competitor is difficult"

ZH: "I am suspicious by nature, so my soul is suspicious, but I'm much more suspicious and very inside my rings. It's that thing, I'm very sociable, I'm laughing, etc., but I'm there observing, I do not live on the street doing networking, it's not my style. The consortium cannot say I trust all in all up because we are competing, but in fact the daily lives of our relationship will determine these levels of trust"

Although not mentioned in the reference, the research showed that trust can be fostered by the "coopetition veiled" with the consortium members, considering the activities assigned to each company and the service levels provided in monthly reports. This is an internal competition with the consortium for the search of the best customer service ratings. This results in an informal activity that helps in fostering trust in SERVTEC:

ZH: PN serves very well and then see, we're competing with something else, within the consortium, has a veiled competition, at least between ZH and preferred to maintain the highest service rate than the other and the winner is the consortium as a whole, for example someone did 97% and I did 96%, oh we have the story "because you didn't do 97% of service this month, we were nearly 100%". Then, I got to someone in PN and said "Congratulations, buddy". You see there is no competition, say to each other directly; each one does their own work. There is a competition to become excellence, pro consortium, it is the healthiest competition, right? When it came out the first time the service level report of the companies that make part of contact hours, I was the last. PN in first, CH second and ZH in third
And some guy in PN said "this is not compatible with ZH," but I said with some joke tone "when I saw the report here I have seen that something was wrong, this is not much like you". And there is that thing of vanity, so then there are very good feelings you have, to compete with each other within a project of excellence, achieve excellence in business, then this competition is very healthy that indirectly helps to rely more companies. It is veiled, because no one comes for each other to say "look, I did better than you,". No, but everyone sees and wants to do better, so we're there in 98%, 99% aiming to achieve excellence in business which is very nice".

Illustration 04 - Consolidation of the Results.

TRUST IN COOPETITION – RESULTS SUMMARY			
ANALYSES CATEGORIES	Trust concept	Trust is defined as the hope in others, a credit of faith. It is believed that the professional, through their behavior and attitudes, will do best for the company.	Main authors: Ripperger (1998), Locke (2001) e Rousseau, (1998); La Taille (2006).
	Trust attributes	The main attribute of confidence in SERVTEC-PE is relationship time, compliance with the word, competence, and respect to information strategies of each company. Issues such as honesty, vocational training, reciprocity, personal housekeepers, were also cited as trust attributes.	Main authors: Peyrefitte (1999); O'Neill (2013).
	Economic environment	The economic environment influences companies equally since all are technology-based and participate in the same industry. Trust can be influenced by this environment due to the resilience of each front company to contingency situations the new economy.	Main authors: Zanini and Almeida (2009)
	Accountability/Control mechanism	The division of responsibilities leads to efficient accountability and greater confidence level in SERVTEC-PE. It is demonstrated by systematic reports presented at the meetings. The mechanisms have little influence on the generation of trust since before deciding the constitution of SERVTEC-PE. The contract and the durations of consortium can be trusted generators, but it is not the case with SERVTEC-PE as it existed a prior relationship.	Main authors: O'Neill, (2013), O'Neill (2013), Zanini and Almeida (2009), Fernandes (2008) Gregory e Hicks (1999).

Source: The authors, 2017

CH: “Sometimes I wonder in my service rates to the consortium and to my clients. I want to be equal to or above the percentage of my colleagues and with that we even play “who did more in that month, and the next?” This is really cool, Eder, because motivates you to do a great job to show their peers and the customer who is the main winner of our game”.

The veiled competition can be considered as healthy jokes of the partners in order to achieve higher service levels with the clients. There is therefore an internal arrangement where each company seeks to achieve 100% of the service levels required by the contract. This informal activity becomes an excellent service for the entire consortium.

The above illustration 4 shows a summary of data analysis results. This is the summary of the respondents’ answers in order to clarify their trust understanding which are aligned with recent literature listed in references.

4 FINAL REMARKS

The research question for this study was: “How is the relationship of trust between the participants of the Consortium SERVTEC?”. Confidence in SERVTEC is defined by the expectation that the consortium members will not act opportunistically, with the important feature that the obligations and responsibilities of each company with the execution of the service.

The four attributes which were analyzed - length of relationship, competence, mutual respect and honesty - are important for the SERVTEC and it maintains a favorable environment for the development of an investment trust in partners, so that mutual interests are valued.

The main attribute in SERVTEC to obtain higher levels of trust is the time of the relationship between the companies. This study has shown that time is an inseparable factor for the development of trust. As time goes by on consortium relationship, more transactions are conducted and observation models are created through the trust attributes.

Another important feature to consider is that before the formation of the consortium participants were already known by each other and by the tele-service industry itself or also by the exchange of services between them. In light of this, it is said that the SERVTEC started its activities with a high level of confidence and contributed to the maintenance of business consortium.

The research also showed that the financial results of the project contributed significantly to the existence of trust between the consortium members. Based on the results, it can be stated that the existence of competition in SERVTEC, for the most part or at least for its cooperation, is supported by financial income earned by each company participant. In this sense the results are synonyms that services are running efficiently part of the party which ensures confidence in the performance of activities of the consortium.

As based on the understanding that is raised in SERVTEC, reliability means the allocation of confidence in particular aspects of each participant. The survey results showed that some skills of entrepreneurs are best viewed by consortium members, so are praised its peculiarities. At that, the judgments of particular aspects are two attributes that are the competence and honesty.

Competence is linked to demonstrations in practice through the results and honesty to the attitudes and behaviors of the consortium everyday strongly related to the fulfillment of the word and mutual respect. The fulfillment of the word corresponds to comply with the tacit agreements made in the consortium; it is the act of fulfilling the agreements downstream and upstream. Mutual respect considers strategic information of each company, as the cooperation emphasizes cooperation and competition, each participant is protecting your information within the consortium and everyone respects this behavior. The issue of accountability showed an important tool for fostering confidence as it clarifies through the reports of each partner to develop its activities and, consequently, the results generated for SERVTEC. The survey also showed that the division of responsibilities each partner brings to the provision of efficient and higher level of trust accounts as each company becomes responsible for part of the project.

About accountability itself it was found that reports of each participant are presented in the monthly meetings of SERVTEC, research has shown that the more transparent are the meetings the confidence level increases. It is important to stress that transparency is not linked to the intensity of the discussions between the consortium members, but in demonstration of the actual situation of the activities of each company to the consortium.

The mechanisms for the control such as the provision of service contracts with the Government of the State of Pernambuco and the particular term of consortium, it became clear for those at SERVTEC that these mechanisms do not have much relevance as a confidence-building instrument. It was found that control mechanisms are seen as a regulator through the activities of the partners in determining possible penalties only in cases in which these activities are not met. The research identified that in SERVTEC responsibilities of each partner were well defined and the very positive result have decreased the intervention of the control mechanisms showing the trust of the parts involved.

The companies which form the SERVTEC consortium have considered aspects such as prior knowledge of the participating companies, their competence, location, and timing. But it became clear in the research that these aspects represented, first, the business opportunity in which settled largest barrier for new entries competitors in the bidding and, primarily, the risk sharing the State Government of the project is of a high initial investment and each participant itself would not be able to take on such a large investment.

Another important aspect evidenced in the results considers the calculable confidence by estimating losses and gains in the consortium relationship. In this respect, there was expectation of smaller companies exchange information and management practices to the larger companies. Trust in SERVTEC is in this study observed as part of business relationship as it generates good results for all in this consortium.

REFERENCES

- ALVES, J. N.; BALSAN, L. A. G.; MOURA, G. L.; PEREIRA, B. A. D. **As relações de confiança, aprendizagem e conhecimento em uma rede do setor imobiliário.** GESTÃO.Org - Revista Eletrônica de Gestão Organizacional, v. 9, n. 3, p. 463-485, 2011.
- ARGANDONA, A. **The new economy: ethical issues.** *Journal of Business Ethics*, 44(1), 3-22, 2003.
- BACHMANN, R.; LANE, C. **The social constitution of trust: supplier relations in Britain and Germany.** *Organization Studies*, Cambridge, UK, v. 17, n. 3, p. 365-395, may/june 1996.
- BARDIN, L. **Análise de Conteúdo.** Lisboa, Portugal; Edições 70, LDA, 2009.
- DAHL J. **Conceptualizing coopetition as a process: An outline of change in cooperative and competitive interactions.** *Industrial Marketing Management*, pp. 272-279, 2014.
- DRUMMOND, Virginia Souza. **Confiança e liderança nas organizações.** São Paulo: Cengage Learning, 2007. 160p.
- FERNANDES, R. L. B. **As repercussões do exercício da liderança no desenvolvimento da confiança em relações interpessoais.** 2008. 103f. Dissertação (Mestrado em Administração). Faculdades Integradas de Pedro Leopoldo. Pedro Leopoldo, MG, 2008.
- GREGORY, R., & Hicks, C. (1999). **Promoting public service integrity: A case for responsible accountability.** *Australian Journal of Public Administration*, 58(4), 3-15.
- LANE, C. & Bachmann, R. (Eds.). (1998). **Trust within and between organizations: Conceptual issues and empirical applications.** Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2000.
- LA TAILLE, Yves. **Moral e ética: dimensões intelectuais e afetivas.** Porto Alegre: Artmed, 2006. 189p.
- LOCKE, Richard M. **Dossiê: confiança e desenvolvimento local.** *Econômica*, [Rio de Janeiro], v.3, n. 2, p. 253-281, dez. 2001.
- MACEDO, R. C.; MARTINS, R. S.; ROSSONI, L.; MARTINS, G. S. **Confiança nos Relacionamentos em Cluster de Empresas.** *Revista de Administração de Empresas*, v. 57, n. 4, p. 330-341, 2017.
- MELLO, C.M.A. **Influência das Instituições no Processo de Construção da Confiança Interorganizacional.** *Organizações & Sociedade*, v. 24, n. 81, p. 343-360, 2017.
- MARIOTTI, Daniela; SOUZA, Yeda S. de. **Relações de Confiança na Dinâmica de uma Organização.** In: Anais... XXIX ENANPAD. 2005. Brasília, Distrito Federal.
- O'NEILL, Onora. **A Question of Trust: The BBC Reith Lectures of 2002.** Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.
- PEYREFITTE, Alain. **A sociedade da confiança: ensaio sobre as origens e a natureza do desenvolvimento.** Rio de Janeiro: Topbooks Editora, 1999.
- PIRANI, S. L.; CUNHA, C. R. **A formação da Confiança: um estudo no pool da Unibraspe.** *Revista de Administração da UFSM*, v. 3, n. 3, art. 6, p. 375-392, 2010.
- ROUSSEAU, Denise M. et al. **Introduction to special topic forum: not so different after all: a cross-discipline view of trust.** *Academy of Management Review*, Mississippi, v. 23, n. 3, p. 393-404, July 1998 apud NOVELLI, José Gaspar Nayme. **Confiança interpessoal na sociedade do consumo: a perspectiva gerencial.** 2004. 228f. Tese (Doutorado em Administração) – Universidade de São Paulo, São Paulo, 2004.
- SOBRAL, F. J. B. **A Relação dinâmica entre confiança, competitividade e o processo de tomada de decisão ética em negociação.** *RAE-eletrônica*, v. 9, n. 2, art. 11, p. 1-28, 2010.
- TOMKINS, C. **"Interdependencies, trust and information in relationships, alliances and networks."** *Accounting, organizations and society* 26.2 (2001): 161-191.
- YIN, R. K. **Case study research: Design and methods.** Sage publications, 2013.
- ZANINI, M. T. F.; ALMEIDA, A. L. C. **The impact of environmental uncertainty on trust relationships.** *Revista de Administração*, v. 44, n. 4, art. 2, p. 313-326, 2009.
- ZUCKER, L. G. **Production of trust: Institutional sources of economic structure, 1840 – 1920.** *Research in Organizational Behavior*, v.8, p.53- 113, 1986.