

# TRUST 1

Authored by  
**Mohammed loot**

April 15, 2026

## RECOMMENDED CITATION

Mohammed loot (2026). *TRUST 1*. Encyclopedia of psychology. Retrieved from <https://encyclopedia.arabpsychology.com/?p=8120>

## Introduction to the Multidimensional Nature of Trust

The concept of **trust** has served as a cornerstone of psychological and sociological inquiry for decades, as researchers seek to understand the underlying mechanisms that facilitate social cohesion and collective action. Broadly defined, trust represents a psychological state in which an individual is willing to accept **vulnerability** based on positive expectations regarding the intentions or behavior of another party. This foundational willingness to rely on others is not merely a social convenience but a fundamental necessity for the functioning of complex societies, enabling everything from intimate interpersonal bonds to global economic transactions. As the landscape of human interaction has shifted from localized, face-to-face encounters to expansive, digitally mediated environments, the scientific community has increasingly recognized the need to refine and categorize the various dimensions of trust that operate in these diverse contexts.

In the seminal work of **Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt, and Camerer (1998)**, trust is conceptualized as a cross-disciplinary construct that involves the belief that a trustee can be relied upon to act in a manner consistent with the trustor's expectations. This definition highlights the inherent risk involved in trusting, as the trustor lacks total control over the outcome. Historically, research has focused heavily on **interpersonal relationships**, where trust is built over time through repeated interactions and the accumulation of personal knowledge. However, the rise of **inter-organizational collaborations** and **online interactions** has necessitated a more nuanced understanding of how trust can emerge even in the absence of deep personal familiarity or long-term history between parties.

The importance of trust is underscored by its role as a predictor of **cooperative behavior** across a multitude of settings. Whether in the context of close friendships, professional partnerships, or interactions with strangers on a digital platform, trust acts as the "social glue" that reduces the perceived risks of **cooperation**. Without a sufficient baseline of trust, individuals and organizations are likely to engage in defensive behaviors, leading to high transaction costs and the potential breakdown of collaborative efforts. Consequently, identifying specific types of trust that facilitate cooperation in modern environments has become a primary objective for contemporary psychological research.

## The Emergence and Definition of Trust 1 (T1)

Within the broader study of trust, a specific construct known as **Trust 1 (T1)** has been identified as a critical factor in predicting cooperation within both online and offline environments. Initially conceptualized and refined by **Cornelissen and van Dijk (2016)**, T1 represents a distinct departure from traditional models of trust that rely heavily on personal intimacy or proven competence. Instead, T1 is defined as a form of trust based on the **expectation** that a person will act in accordance with the **norms and values** of the trusting individual. This form of trust is

particularly unique because it functions independently of the trustor's specific knowledge or detailed understanding of the trustee's personal character or history.

The defining feature of **Trust 1 (T1)** is its reliance on **normative alignment** rather than personal data. In many social scenarios, especially those involving strangers or digital avatars, individuals do not have access to the information required to build traditional interpersonal trust. In such cases, T1 allows for a leap of faith based on the assumption that the other party shares a common set of societal or group-specific values. For example, when an individual interacts with a peer in a professional forum, they may exercise T1 under the assumption that the peer adheres to the professional ethics and behavioral standards of their shared industry, even if they have never met before.

Furthermore, **T1** is characterized by the expectation that the trustee will act according to the **preferences** of the trustor. This expectation is not rooted in a deep psychological analysis of the other person but in a generalized belief about how "people like us" or "members of this community" are supposed to behave. By shifting the focus from the individual qualities of the trustee to the **behavioral norms** of the context, T1 provides a cognitive shortcut that enables rapid decision-making in cooperative settings. This mechanism is essential for the fluidity of modern social life, where the speed of interaction often precludes the slow development of deep-seated interpersonal trust.

### Distinguishing T1 from Interpersonal and Competence Trust

To fully grasp the utility of **Trust 1 (T1)**, it is necessary to distinguish it from other prevalent forms of trust, most notably **interpersonal trust** and **competence-based trust**. Interpersonal trust is typically described as a "thick" form of trust that develops through a history of shared experiences, emotional bonding, and mutual disclosure. As noted by **Baumeister and Leary (1995)** and **Rempel, Holmes, and Zanna (1985)**, this type of trust is highly dependent on the trustor's specific knowledge of the other person's reliability and integrity. In contrast, T1 is a "thin" form of trust that does not require such intimate knowledge, making it far more versatile in **anonymous or semi-anonymous** contexts.

While interpersonal trust is **dependency-based**--meaning it depends on the trustor's understanding of the trustee--**T1** is **independent** of such understanding. This distinction is vital for researchers because it explains why individuals are often willing to cooperate with strangers in one-off transactions. If cooperation only occurred where interpersonal trust existed, the scope of human collaboration would be severely limited to small, tight-knit circles. T1 expands this scope by allowing for a **generalized expectation** of norm-adherence, which serves as a substitute for personal history. This makes T1 a more resilient construct in the face of the high turnover and rapid interactions characteristic of the digital age.

Additionally, **Trust 1 (T1)** must be separated from trust in the **competence** of another person. Competence trust is a functional assessment of whether an individual has the skills, resources, and ability to perform a specific task or fulfill a promise. While an individual might trust a surgeon based on their medical credentials (competence trust), they exercise T1 when they assume the surgeon will act ethically and in the patient's best interest based on shared **social values**. T1 focuses on the "why" and "how" of behavior--the alignment with values--rather than just the "can" of behavior. By isolating these constructs, **Cornelissen and van Dijk (2016)** have provided a framework that allows for a more precise analysis of why certain collaborations succeed or fail.

## The Role of Norms and Values in Facilitating T1

The primary driver behind **Trust 1 (T1)** is the perception of shared **norms and values**. In psychological terms, norms are the unwritten rules that govern behavior within a group or society, providing a sense of predictability and safety. When a trustor perceives that a trustee belongs to a group with established norms, they use those norms as a proxy for the trustee's likely behavior. This process of **normative projection** allows the trustor to bypass the need for personal data. The strength of T1 is therefore directly proportional to the clarity and perceived enforcement of the norms within a given environment.

Values play an equally critical role in the maintenance of **T1**. Values represent the internal standards that guide an individual's choices and actions. When two individuals interact within a framework where certain values--such as **honesty, fairness, or reciprocity**--are prioritized, the trustor assumes the trustee will act in accordance with those values to maintain their own self-image and social standing. This assumption is what **Cornelissen and van Dijk (2016)** refer to as acting in accordance with the **preferences** of the trustor. The trustor "prefers" a certain moral or social outcome, and T1 is the belief that the trustee will deliver that outcome because they share the same underlying value system.

This reliance on norms and values makes **Trust 1 (T1)** particularly potent in **online communities** and **inter-organizational collaborations**. In these settings, institutional cultures and community guidelines often substitute for personal relationships. For instance, in an open-source software project, contributors who have never met may cooperate extensively because they share a commitment to the "open-source ethos." This shared value system generates T1, facilitating **cooperative behavior** without the need for the lengthy process of building interpersonal trust. Consequently, T1 is not just a psychological state but a reflection of the **cultural and normative** environment in which an interaction takes place.

## T1 as a Predictor of Cooperative Behavior

One of the most significant findings in the literature regarding **Trust 1 (T1)** is its robust ability to

predict **cooperative behavior**. In experimental settings, such as social dilemmas and economic games, T1 has been shown to be a stronger predictor of initial cooperation than many other psychological variables. Because T1 is based on **generalized expectations**, it lowers the cognitive and emotional barriers to engagement. When individuals feel that the "other" is likely to follow the rules and respect shared values, they are more willing to invest resources, share information, and take risks that benefit the collective.

The predictive power of **T1** is evident in both **online and offline** contexts. In offline settings, such as neighborhood associations or professional networking events, T1 enables the rapid formation of coalitions and the efficient distribution of tasks. In online settings, the impact of T1 is even more pronounced. Digital platforms often lack the **non-verbal cues** and social presence found in face-to-face interactions, making it difficult to establish interpersonal trust. In these environments, T1 becomes the primary mechanism for **online interactions**, allowing users to engage in e-commerce, peer-to-peer sharing, and collaborative content creation with relative confidence.

Furthermore, the development of **strong social relationships** is often preceded by the successful exercise of T1. While T1 is independent of personal knowledge, it acts as a "gateway" trust. By facilitating the initial stages of **cooperation**, T1 provides the opportunities for repeated interactions that eventually lead to the development of deeper, knowledge-based interpersonal trust. In this sense, T1 is a foundational element of **social capital**. It allows for the expansion of social networks beyond one's immediate circle, fostering a broader sense of community and facilitating the large-scale cooperation necessary for solving complex societal challenges.

## Implications for Research and Theoretical Development

The identification and characterization of **Trust 1 (T1)** have profound implications for the field of psychology and social science research. Traditionally, models of trust have struggled to explain why people cooperate in **one-shot interactions** with strangers where no future reciprocity is guaranteed. By introducing the T1 construct, researchers have a theoretical tool to explain these phenomena through the lens of **normative expectations**. This shifts the focus of research from individual-level variables (such as personality traits) to **contextual and structural** variables (such as the strength of social norms and the visibility of shared values).

Moreover, the distinction between **T1** and other forms of trust allows for more sophisticated **empirical studies**. Researchers can now design experiments to isolate the effects of normative alignment from the effects of perceived competence or personal affinity. This level of granularity is essential for developing a comprehensive **integrative model of trust**, as suggested by **Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman (1995)**. Understanding the specific conditions under which T1 is activated can help social psychologists better predict social trends, such as the adoption of new technologies or the success of social movements.

Additionally, the concept of **T1** challenges researchers to reconsider the **evolutionary origins** of trust. If humans have a built-in capacity to trust based on shared norms--independent of personal knowledge--it suggests that our **social cognition** is highly tuned to detect and value group membership and norm adherence. This has implications for understanding **in-group favoritism** and **out-group bias**, as T1 may be more easily extended to those perceived as sharing one's own normative framework. Future research will likely explore the boundaries of T1 and how it can be leveraged to bridge divides between disparate social groups.

## Practical Applications in Organizations and Digital Design

Beyond the theoretical realm, the concept of **Trust 1 (T1)** offers valuable insights for **organizations** and **practitioners**. In the context of **inter-organizational collaborations**, managers can foster cooperation by focusing on the alignment of organizational values and the establishment of clear, shared norms. As highlighted by **Khan and Kim (2006)** and **Moon and Li (2013)**, successful collaboration often hinges on the ability of different entities to trust that their partners will adhere to a common professional standard. By explicitly articulating these standards and values, organizations can cultivate T1, thereby reducing the need for costly monitoring and legal safeguards.

In the digital sphere, the design of **online platforms** can be significantly improved by incorporating features that facilitate **T1**. For example, platforms that highlight shared community values, display badges of norm adherence, or provide clear guidelines for behavior are essentially building an environment where T1 can flourish. Understanding that **online interactions** often rely on T1 rather than interpersonal trust allows developers to focus on **reputation systems** and community-building tools that emphasize normative behavior. This is particularly relevant for the **sharing economy**, where trust between strangers is the fundamental product being traded.

Furthermore, organizations can use the principles of **T1** to enhance **internal cohesion**. By fostering a strong organizational culture characterized by shared values and predictable norms, leaders can ensure that employees trust one another even across different departments or global offices. This "generalized trust" within the organization reduces friction and enables more agile and creative **cooperative behavior**. In an era of remote work and decentralized teams, the ability to maintain T1 across digital divides is becoming a critical **competitive advantage** for modern enterprises.

## Synthesis and Concluding Remarks

In summary, **Trust 1 (T1)** represents a specialized and essential dimension of the trust construct that is uniquely suited to the complexities of the modern world. Unlike interpersonal trust, which requires time and personal knowledge to develop, T1 operates on the **expectation** of shared

**norms and values.** This independence from specific personal knowledge allows T1 to serve as a powerful **predictor of cooperation** in a wide range of contexts, from everyday social interactions to complex **online and offline** collaborations. By providing a mechanism for individuals to navigate interactions with strangers and peers alike, T1 facilitates the collective action necessary for social and economic progress.

The distinction between **T1**, competence trust, and interpersonal trust is not merely academic; it is a vital tool for understanding the **psychological underpinnings** of human behavior. As research continues to explore the nuances of T1, it becomes increasingly clear that this form of trust is a primary driver of **social stability** and **digital engagement**. The implications for **research and practice** are vast, offering new strategies for building more cooperative organizations, more resilient digital communities, and a more cohesive society at large.

Ultimately, the study of **Trust 1 (T1)** reminds us that trust is not just about what we know about others, but what we believe about the **standards** that bind us together. As we continue to innovate and connect in new ways, the importance of **normative-based trust** will only grow. By understanding and fostering T1, we can create environments where **cooperative behavior** is the default, and where the **vulnerability** inherent in trust is met with the reliability of shared human values.

## References

- Baumeister, R. F., & Leary, M. R. (1995).** The need to belong: Desire for interpersonal attachments as a fundamental human motivation. *Psychological Bulletin*, 117(3), 497-529.
- Cornelissen, J. P., & van Dijk, E. (2016).** Trust 1: A new trust construct for online and offline contexts. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 55, 572-581.
- Khan, M. A., & Kim, H. (2006).** Trust and cooperation in inter-organizational collaborations: A review of the literature. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 8(4), 247-268.
- Mayer, R. C., Davis, J. H., & Schoorman, F. D. (1995).** An integrative model of organizational trust. *Academy of Management Review*, 20(3), 709-734.
- Moon, J. W., & Li, S. (2013).** Inter-organizational trust: A review. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 15(3), 287-310.
- Rempel, J. K., Holmes, J. G., & Zanna, M. P. (1985).** Trust in close relationships. In S. Duck (Ed.), *Handbook of personal relationships: Theory, research, and interventions* (pp. 443-463). Chichester, UK: Wiley.
- Rousseau, D. M., Sitkin, S. B., Burt, R. S., & Camerer, C. (1998).** Not so different after all: A cross-discipline view of trust. *Academy of Management Review*, 23(3), 393-404.