

Examining the Relationship Between Manager's Character with Employee's Commitment and Trust Towards the Organization

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Abstract: The purpose of this research is to examine relationship of manager's character with employee's commitment and trust towards the organization in a management and planning organization. The researcher identified the dimensions manager's character based on the existing literature and proposed a conceptual model to test the hypothesized relationships. Conceptual framework was tested by structural equation modeling. A sample of 218 people employed in management and planning organization was selected by convenience sampling approach. A self-administrated questionnaire was used to collect data. The results showed that good character dimensions including faith, justice, temperance, wisdom, love and courage were positively associated with organizational trust. Further organizational trust had a significant influence on commitment to the organization. This is the first attempt at explicating the good character of manager's in describing employee's commitment and trust towards organization.

Key words: Good character, commitment, trust, employee, courage

INTRODUCTION

Character is evaluated by how people behave in the organizations. While it is standard for directors to establish choose criteria for capabilities, it is argued that it is rare for manager's to discuss the dimensions of character they expect in qualified candidates. Chemers (2000) believed that management research can focus on the functions that manager's should implement to be successful in the workplace. He mentioned that manager must generate an image that arouses trust in followers extends relationships with subordinates that enable subordinates to move towards individual and collective objective achievement and utilizes their knowledge, skills and material resources to accomplish the organization's mission (Barker and Coy, 2003). In order to install trust in followers and to extend relationships that enable subordinates to move toward achievement a manager needs character. Character has been defined as doing the right thing despite outside pressure to the contrary (Lickona, 1991). Systematic and comprehensive character assessment is seldom conducted well often depending on an absence of negatives rather than concentrating on positive character dimensions. The manager's character has significant outcomes for subordinate's emotions, behaviors and performance. It is expected that employee's trust towards organization and their commitment are the

main outcomes of character in public sector. Based on social exchange theory. When employees perceive the character of managers because of acceptable and suitable behavior of managers with them then they would response by more commitment to the organization and consequently, it would lead to more trust to the organization and its objectives. As a result, they are expected to improve their performance in the workplace. According to above discussion, it is expected that the perceptions of employees about the character of managers in the public sector can affect their commitment and trust towards organization. Hence, the main question of current study is that whether good character of managers can affect their commitment and trust in a public organization.

Dimensions of manager's character: The importance of manager's character is making inroads in the business environment. Managers with good character achieve results that transcend everyday organizational outcomes. A study of world best managers over the past 150 year revealed that managers who have strong character would produce a better environment for everyone while management generally is vital to the moral, social, political and economic situation of society. Character extends over time. It is believed that much of a manager's character is formed early in his/her life (Gander *et al.*, 2012). However,

it is not clear that exactly how much or how early character extends but it can be claimed that character does not change rapidly. Observable behavior of a manager is an indication of his or her character. This behavior may be weak or strong, bad or good. Researchers identified that good management includes more of character than personality. However, we often take the character of manager for granted. It is expected that good managers are strong in character that is to have a moral imperative underwrite their actions. These managers with good character have been recognized as authentic leaders. They are what they believe in; show consistency between their ethical reasoning, values and actions; extend positive psychological states such as optimism, hope, confidence and resilience in themselves and their associates and are respected for their integrity. Literature review revealed that the character of manager has six major dimensions (Lickona, 1991).

Faith: Managing based on a clear set of positive core values that are demonstrated through management actions.

Justice: Managing by conducting what is right even when it is difficult and costly; managing in a selfless way and fostering personal and team accountability.

Temperance: Managing with personal passion, humility and self-control.

Wisdom: Managing by effectively applying accumulated knowledge and experience to current circumstances.

Love: Managing by demonstrating a genuine care, concern and compassion for employees.

Courage: Managing by boldly seizing opportunities and seriously dealing with challenges.

Hope: Managing by sincerely and convincingly articulating a bright future especially when the immediate situations are bleak.

Organizational commitment: Commitment is one of the most important organizational concepts that have been investigated in management literature due to its significance for organizational effectiveness. Commitment can be defined as the degree to which an employee is loyal to his/her organization. Organizational commitment has been found to have significant relationship with productivity, satisfaction and turnover (Mathieu and Hamel, 1989). Porter *et al.* (1974) asserted that

organizational commitment is “the relative strength of an employee’s identification with and involvement in a certain organization”. Meyer and Allen (1997) pointed out that employees who have strong commitment remain in the organization because they feel that they want to.

Three fundamental components associated with the definitions of organizational commitment have been mentioned in literature including affective, continuance and normative (Turner and Chelladurai, 2005). Affective commitment is psychological attachment to organization. It refers to “a positive affection toward the organization, reflected in a desire to view the organization success in its goals achievement and a pride feeling of being member of the organization”. Continuance commitment is the costs related to leaving the organization. It refers to “an employee’s awareness of the costs of leaving the organization” (Meyer *et al.*, 1993). A continuance committed employee finds it difficult to leave his or her organization due to the fear of the unknown opportunity cost of leaving the organization or having few or no alternatives. Employees with high level continuance commitment remain a member of the organization because they need it (Nagar, 2012). Normative commitment is the perceived obligation to remain with the organization that has implications for the continuing participation of the employees in the organization (Tella *et al.*, 2007). In other words affective commitment happens when employees want to stay; continuance commitment happens when the employee needs to stay and the normative commitment happens when the employee feels she/he should stay in the organization (Suma and Lesha, 2013).

Organizational trust: Rust can be defined as “the belief in the integrity, character and ability of a leader”. Organizational trust may be used in various ways. One form of trust is interorganizational trust or the trust between two or more organizations. For instance a manufacturing company trusts a transportation company to transfer its products in a timely manner. Organizational trust can be better explained as intraorganizational trust, a term that is used in various manners: some researchers concentrate on the relationship between employees and their immediate supervisors while others look at the relationship between employees and those running the organization (e.g., senior managers). The role of interpersonal trust within work groups and work teams can also be viewed as a facet of organizational trust. Trust is most advantageous if it pervades the organization and is seen at all levels from top management to supervisors and frontline employees. As trust is a reciprocal process management is essential for establishing a trust-based organization. When trust is given and it is visible that the

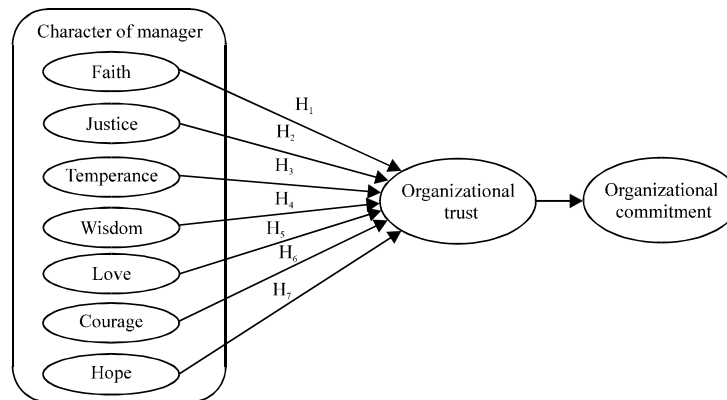


Fig. 1: Conceptual model

employee being trusted is acting in a trustworthy way then trust will enhance. Management's role is to facilitate the process. Two important management roles are modeling trust and team building. Team building in organizations helps to trust building because interdependence generates the dynamic for reciprocity. Reciprocity is created by the complex task environment and the boundaries of time, skill and control that the individuals have. Leadership within an organization is either direct leadership (supervisors or managers) or top leadership. Distinguishing between the levels of leadership can influence the consequences of empirical studies of leadership and trust. The issue of leadership reference (top management versus supervisory) is important because it may provide guidance on whether an organization should focus resources on establishing trust in supervisors or in its senior management. In addition, supervisors play a significant role in facilitating senior organizational management. supervisors act as a medium between top management and frontline employees.

Social exchange theory and hypotheses development: A social exchange relationship can be defined as "involving unspecified obligations" that there are "favors that create diffuse future obligations not precisely defined ones and the nature of the return cannot be bargained about but must be left to the discretion of the one who makes it". The exchanged resources may be socio-emotional such as respect, care and loyalty or impersonal (such as financial) (Wikhamn and Hall, 2012). It is only the first resources that tend "to generate feelings of personal obligations, trust and gratitude". A social exchange relationship is based on the principle of reciprocity. An exchange begins with one party providing another with a benefit. If the recipient reciprocates and a series of beneficial exchanges happens the feelings of mutual obligation between the parties are generated. A broad notion of reciprocity

includes a feeling of an obligation to repay favorable behavior. The exchange or reciprocation in social relationships would become stronger when both parties tend to provide resources valuable to the other but which of the two parties (organization or employees) starts the exchange first in an organizational setting? Research shows mainly organizations as initiators. Positive actions directed at employees by the manager's contribute to the establishment of high-quality exchange relationships (Eisenberger *et al.*, 2001). These exchanges are used to explain the positive consequences that ensue when employees respond to character of manager. Hence, it is expected that the manager's character can influence the employee to be committed to the interest of the organization or for his personal interests and gains and thereby influencing their character as well. Further it is widely agreed that organizational commitment and trust are interrelated. In fact, it is believed that both commitment and trust are fluid processes generated by symbolic interaction with organizational actors where the interaction with these actors, over time, affects commitment to the organization (Harrison and Doerfel, 2006). Commitment integrates a number of behavioral and emotional aspects such as pro-active participation and the feelings of pride and loyalty to the organization (Jacobs, 2008). According to social exchange theory, it is expected that trust precedes commitment. Trust to a relationship among employees and organization is a predictor of the degree to which employees would commit to an organization. Therefore, the following hypotheses are presented:

- H₁: Faith, justice, temperance, wisdom, love, courage and hope each one as a part of manager's character is positively associated with organizational trust
- H₂: Employee's trust is positively associated with organizational commitment (Fig. 1)

Literature review: A review of prior research indicated that no study has addressed the relationship between manager's character and employee's organizational commitment. However some works that are similar to our work, in terms of subject, would be mentioned. Investigation of the effect of good character of managers on employee's happiness based on Islamic principles has revealed that there is a direct and positive relationship with employee's happiness (Nasr, 2009). Further, there was a significant relationship between ethical climate and organizational commitment of employees in one side and between trust and commitment in another side. In addition, it was recognized that interest, efficiency, friendship, team working spirit, individual emotions and social responsibility have a significant relationship with organizational commitment (Shirazi and Ahmadi, 2013). Further, the results indicated that good character has a positive influence on quality of working life and organizational citizenship behavior. Quality of working life has also a positive impact on organizational citizenship behavior. Other research shows that good character of managers has a positive effect on trust and organizational citizenship behavior of employees. Additionally, the two variables in turn have significant effects on employee's knowledge sharing. Although, there is significant relationship between personality characteristics of employees and organizational commitment in terms of normative and affective but it was not significant relationship with continuance commitment (Pasha and Khodadadi, 2008). In their study of Taamin Ejtemai Organization of Chaharmahal Bakhtiari Province, Nasr (2009) identified seven factors of good character including trustworthiness, braveness, wisdom, enthusiasm and humor. According to their findings, trustworthiness and braveness had higher mean among others. In addition, Sarros found that character is multidimensional and is different in terms of demographic characteristics of managers (such as age, gender, superiority and years of working as executive manager). Some researchers investigated good character in work place and using a sample of 887 women nurses found that employee's behaviors in workplace and experience patterns are affected by good character of hospital managers. In fact, good character of manager leads to performance improvement and positive outcomes of employees in work place (Gander *et al.*, 2012). In another research, Islam found that employee-manager relationship, organizational learning culture and organizational commitment are correlated each other. The results of structural equation modeling suggested that organizational commitment mediated the relationship between organizational culture and turn over intention.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Measurement: To achieve the study objectives, a self-administered survey questionnaire was developed based on the findings of the literature review. The questionnaire was pre-tested and revised. The survey consisted of ten parts covering the following issues: faith, justice, courage, temperance, wisdom, love, hope, commitment, trust and demographics. In the manager's character section including seven parts at the first of questionnaire with 21 items respondents were asked about their perceptions about character of manager (Lickona, 1991). In the organizational commitment section, with 3 items respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement on their commitment to the organization (Dello *et al.*, 2013). In the organizational trust section with 3 items, respondents were asked about their trust to the organization (Von and Martins, 2010). Measurement of all variables were carried out by a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The advantage of using an interval scale is that it permits the researchers to use a variety of statistical techniques which can be applied to nominal and ordinal scale data in addition to the arithmetic mean, standard deviation, product-moment correlations and other statistics commonly used in management research. The measures are presented in Table 1. The last section of the questionnaire gathered respondent's demographic information such as age, gender and education.

Data collection and analysis: The questionnaires were distributed based on a convenience sampling method and collected at Management and Planning Organization in Tehran during February, 2016. Three hundred questionnaires were distributed and 218 usable samples were obtained after excluding the incomplete ones, yielding a 72.6% response rate from those who agree to participate. Cronbach's alpha was used to verify the internal consistency reliability. Data analysis involves descriptive statistics using SPSS and structural equation modeling using AMOS structural equation program. AMOS is designed to estimate and test Structural

Table 1: Demographical characteristics of respondents

Characteristic	Frequency	Percentage	CF (%)
Age			
25 or below	38	17.43	17.43
26-35	75	34.40	51.83
36-45	62	28.44	80.27
Above 45	43	19.73	100
Gender			
Male	166	76.15	76.15
Female	52	23.85	100
Education			
Diploma	4	1.84	1.84
Bachelor	100	45.87	47.71
Master	89	40.83	88.54
PhD	25	11.46	100

Equation Models (SEMs). SEMs are statistical models of linear relationships among latent (unobserved) variables and manifest (observed) variables. AMOS is used to investigate the causal relationships where the path coefficients are tested for significance and goodness of fit. The overall model fit measures were used to evaluate the fit of the structural model. In estimating the Goodness of Fit Indices (GFI) for measurement and structural models, χ^2 (Chi-square) test was used. In addition, the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) was used as an absolute fit index. The Incremental Fit Index (IFI), the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) and the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) were used as incremental fit indices. Standardized estimates were used in reporting the causal relationships between the exogenous and endogenous constructs. The path diagram of the structural model specified (Fig. 1) is proposed based on the past literature.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Sample: Of a total sample 218 respondents, 76.15% (166) were male and 23.85% (52) were female. A large majority of

respondent's age were between 26 and 35 = (34.40%) and 36-45 = (28.44%). In addition, the respondent's education was mainly bachelor (45.87%) and master (40.83%). Descriptive statistics are displayed in Table 1 and 2.

Structural model: The proposed structural model was estimated by Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) which included a test of the overall model fit and individual tests of the significance of the relationships among the variables. These tests indicated the relationship among character dimensions of manager, organizational commitment and organizational trust. The estimations of the parameters and the overall fit index of the measurement model are based on the Maximum Likelihood (ML) method. The basic conditions assumed for the use of ML estimation are met or closely approximated in the study. Further, the sample is sufficiently large ($n = 218$ cases) over the recommended size of 200 cases, the scale of observed variables is continuous and no violations of multivariate normality are found in the survey responses.

As presented in Table 3, the reliability of the measurement items was verified using Cronbach's α to

Table 2: Psychometric properties of measures

Construct	Item	Standardized loading	t-statistic	Mean	SD	Cronbach's α
Faith CR = 0.836, AVE = 0.631	FA1	0.627	8.820	4.41	1.302	0.788
	FA2	0.614	8.693	4.39	1.177	
	FA3	0.573	-	4.38	1.189	
Justice CR = 0.813, AVE = 0.593	JU1	0.653	9.040	5.35	1.135	0.760
	JU2	0.567	8.184	5.32	1.194	
	JU3	0.604	-	4.86	1.298	
Temperance CR = 0.898, AVE = 0.628	TE1	0.510	7.214	3.99	1.254	0.727
	TE2	0.523	6.287	3.57	1.624	
	TE3	0.647	-	4.01	1.322	
Hope CR = 0.882, AVE = 0.601	HO1	0.629	5.897	3.63	1.421	0.759
	HO2	0.621	5.683	3.77	1.011	
	HO3	0.697	-	3.69	1.000	
Wisdom CR = 0.902, AVE = 0.724	WI1	0.715	6.288	3.88	1.321	0.804
	WI2	0.752	6.531	4.10	1.226	
	WI3	0.564	-	3.94	1.603	
Love CR = 0.844, AVE = 0.665	LO1	0.702	9.483	3.72	1.202	0.889
	LO2	0.591	8.464	3.33	1.175	
	LO3	0.590	-	3.65	1.081	
Courage CR = 0.801, AVE = 0.670	CO1	0.518	-	4.16	1.801	0.767
	CO2	0.627	7.551	4.22	1.852	
	CO3	0.520	6.790	4.11	1.828	
Commitment CR = 0.935, AVE = 0.728	COM1	0.754	8.367	3.792	1.621	0.758
	COM1	0.670	7.261	4.012	1.238	
	COM1	0.567	-	3.670	1.362	
Trust CR = 0.776, AVE = 0.691	TR1	0.893	9.993	4.251	1.582	0.834
	TR2	0.856	8.910	3.899	1.494	
	TR3	0.729	-	3.726	1.679	

CR: Construct Reliability, AVE: Average Variance Extracted

Table 3: Correlation matrix

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Faith	1.000								
Justice	0.356	1.000							
Temperance	0.408	0.371	1.000						
Hope	0.396	0.395	0.381	1.000					
Wisdom	0.424	0.321	0.415	0.398	1.000				
Love	0.387	0.352	0.347	0.408	0.402	1.000			
Courage	0.470	0.403	0.299	0.420	0.277	0.266	1.000		
Commitment	0.316	0.342	0.306	0.275	0.269	0.244	0.335	1.00	
Trust	0.421	0.393	0.288	0.264	0.273	0.243	0.411	0.361	1.00

All of the correlations are significant at the 0.05 level

Table 4: Maximum likelihood estimates (n = 218)

Independent variables	Dependant variable	Estimate	Standardized estimate	SE	t-statistic	p-values
Faith	Trust	0.266	0.259	0.065	2.012	**
Justice	Trust	0.228	0.202	0.070	3.267	0.001*
Temperance	Trust	0.217	0.213	0.073	3.226	**
Wisdom	Trust	0.352	0.346	0.069	5.074	**
Love	Trust	0.105	0.119	0.050	2.082	0.037*
Courage	Trust	0.336	0.529	0.046	7.320	**
Hope	Trust	0.277	0.282	0.060	4.582	**
Trust	Commitment	1.020	0.971	0.096	10.672	**

**Significant at the $p < 0.001$ level (two-tailed); *Significant at the $p < 0.05$ level (two-tailed); Model fit statistics: Structural model; Normed Chi-square = 2.926; GFI = 0.923 > 0.90; NFI = 0.912 > 0.90; CFI = 0.910 > 0.90; TLI = 0.916 > 0.90; RMR = 0.42 < 0.50; RMSEA = 0.044 < 0.08: good fit; Cut-off value: 1.0-3.3

assess the internal consistency of the constructs in the applied model. The level of internal consistency for each construct was acceptable with the alpha ranging from 0.727- 0.889 which exceeded the minimum hurdle of 0.60. All measurement items had standardized loading estimates of 0.5 or higher (ranging from 0.510-0.893) at the alpha level of 0.05, indicating the convergent validity of the measurement model. Construct reliability was verified to estimate convergent validity; each construct had acceptable construct reliability with the estimates ranging from 0.776-0.935.

In addition because the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) from all nine constructs exceeded the minimum criterion of 0.5 (ranging from 0.593-0.728) convergent validity was assured. To test the discriminant validity among the constructs we estimated correlations among the constructs to determine whether they were significantly different from 1; the confidence intervals of the correlations calculated as correlations $\pm 1.96 \times$ standard error of estimate did not contain 1, so these results indicated the discriminant validity of the measurement model. The correlations for the constructs are shown in Table 4. Overall, these measurement results are satisfactory and suggest that it is appropriate to proceed with the evaluation of the structural model (Table 3).

Structural model: Figure 2 shows the overall explanatory power the standardized path regression coefficients that indicate the direct influences of the predictor upon the predicted latent constructs for the model and associated t-values of the paths of the research model. The model fit

indices of the structural model and the cut-off values for those fit indices are presented in Table 4. The goodness-of-fit statistics show that the structural model fit the data reasonably well. The nine-item model produced a Chi-square of 924.5 (df = 316, $p = 0.000$). While the overall Chi-square for this measurement model was significant ($p < 0.05$) it is well established that this statistic is sensitive to large sample sizes. To alleviate the sensitivity of the Chi-square statistics, the value of Chi-square is commonly divided by the degrees of freedom. The re-estimated Chi-square value was 2.926 and this new value is within an acceptable cut-off value range, from 1.0-3.0. The Goodness Fit Index (GFI = 0.923, with 1 indicating maximum fit) Comparative Fit Index (CFI = 0.910, 1 = maximum fit) the comparative fit index (NFI = 0.912, with 1 indicating maximum fit) Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI = 0.916, 1 = maximum fit) and the Incremental Fit Index (IFI = 0.938) met the proposed criterion of 0.90 or higher. Finally, the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA = 0.044 with values < 0.08 indicating good fit) one of the indices best suited to our model with a large sample, indicated that the structural model was a reasonable fit.

Table 4 presents the results of the individual tests of the significance of the relationship among the variables. Among the eight relationships tested two were found to be significant at the alpha level of 0.05 and six relationships were significant at the alpha level of 0.001. Faith had a significantly positive impact on organizational trust with $\beta = 0.259$, $t = 2.012$ and $p = 0.000$, indicating that faith was an important antecedent of employee's trust.

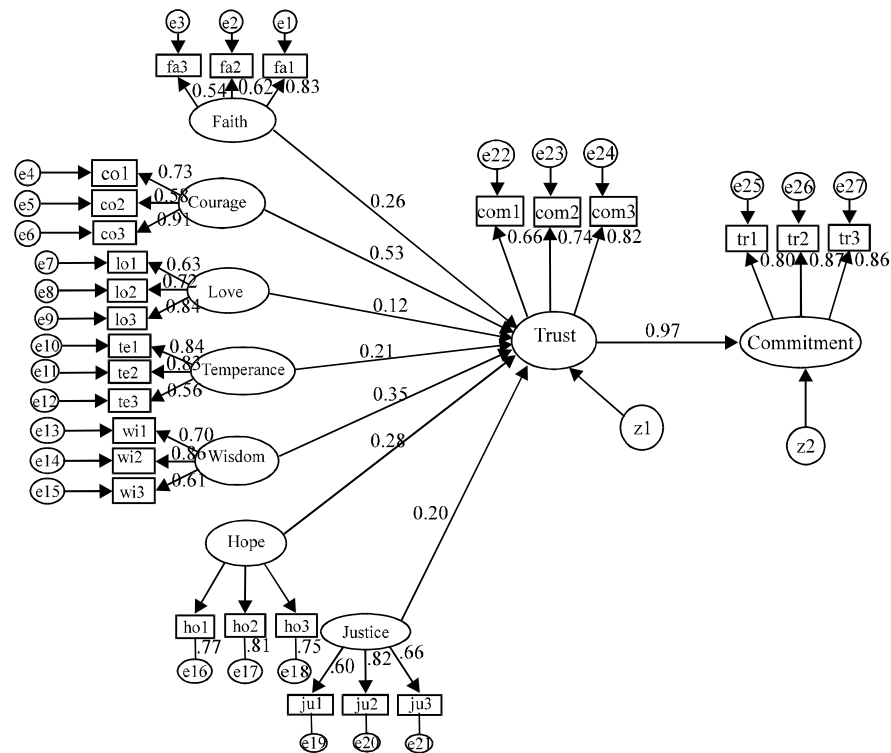


Fig. 2: Standardized regression coefficients

Justice also had a strong positive relationship with organizational trust ($\beta = 0.202$, $t = 3.267$, $p = 0.001$). Furthermore both temperance ($\beta = 0.213$, $t = 3.226$, $p = 0.000$) and wisdom ($\beta = 0.346$, $t = 5.074$, $p = 0.000$) influenced organizational trust. In addition, love ($\beta = 0.119$, $t = 2.082$, $p = 0.037$) courage ($\beta = 0.529$, $t = 7.320$, $p = 0.000$) and hope ($\beta = 0.282$, $t = 4.582$, $p = 0.000$) were positively associated with organizational trust. Finally, it results indicated that organizational trust is an antecedent of commitment towards Management and Planning Organization ($\beta = 0.971$, $t = 10.672$, $p = 0.000$).

CONCLUSION

The purpose of current study was to investigate the relationship of character of manager with organizational trust and commitment. The results of SEM showed that good character of manager in Management and Planning Organization had significantly associate with organizational trust of employees towards the organization. Further, it was revealed that organizational trust is key antecedent of employee's commitment to the organization. This finding is in line with the result of Starnes in that trust towards organization fosters organizational commitment. Our study has several practical implications for managers. Good character

reinforces a communicational bridge among people in the organization and creates a healthy working environment and leads to the success of organization. Successful managers are not people who have experienced socialization methods based on suspecting, precaution and avoiding the subordinates because these characteristics do not lead to creating the infrastructure of trust among people who are in dealing with them. Hence, trust can be educated and would be created in social experience and interactions among actors. Meritocracy of managers is an essential requirement for the organization and managers without illegality and poor performance should be selected as they would not create a trustless climate in the organization. Further, macro decision making in the organization needs courageous managers.

Conservative managers who tend to keep current status of the organization would not have an acceptable position in the recent competitive world and nobody trusts in them. Courageous managers are responsible for their behavior and organizational performance and solve the problems in a courageous manner. Hence, the organizations should educate courageous managers with high level of character have critical thinking about environment issues and use their personal experience in face with problems and can attract their subordinate's trust. Intimate and friendly treatment of managers can

foster the good character among all level of organization and may be useful against high risky situation. Hence, the awareness of subordinate's situation and considering their spiritual and emotional circumstances and removing painful factors with a friendly behavior can create a sense of love. Hence, good character is a key factor influencing organizational trust and manager's success and provides a framework for putting employees with good character as behavioral indices. Then ethical indices in the organization would be developed in a suitable way. In fact, moving towards a supportive culture in the organization should be institutionalized in the body of organization and an ethic-oriented organization should be established which in turn, it leads to high level of employee's performance and creating a growth and trust atmosphere in the organization. As a result, it is suggested that good character of managers and trust-making must be pursued with serious efforts.

Managers need to be trusted through being trustworthy and honesty behaviors as well as helping to others in problematic situations. Wisdom should be developed and critiques must be appreciated as it leads to information transmission and consequently, it can cause to more commitment and to enhance the knowledge of employees in workplace.

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