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# A study of the effects of managers' good character traits and perceived organizational support of employees

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## Abstract:

**BACKGROUND:** The present study was aimed to investigate the effects of managers' good character traits and perceived organizational support (POS) of employees in one of the therapeutic and educational centers of Kermanshah, Iran.

**MATERIALS AND METHODS:** In this applied, descriptive, correlational, and cross-sectional study, the statistical population included the employees of one of the therapeutic and educational centers of Kermanshah. Besides, Cochran's formula was employed to determine the sample volume ( $n = 166$ ), and the samples were selected using simple random sampling. As for data collection, the standard questionnaires of managers' good character traits and POS of employees were utilized. To analyze the collected data, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test and Pearson's correlation coefficient test were used using the SPSS Statistical Software Version 18.0. Moreover, the structural equation approach was employed using SPSS 22 (version 22.0, SPSS Inc., Chicago, IL, USA).

**RESULTS:** The results of the present study demonstrated that managers' good character traits and POS of employees positively and significantly correlated ( $P = 0.81$ ). In addition, there were positive and significant relationships between each of the components of managers' good character traits and POS of employees, and all hypotheses were supported.

**CONCLUSION:** Overall, the results of the present study showed that managers' good character traits significantly contributed to increasing the POS of employees, thereby increasing the satisfaction with the performance of the therapeutic and educational center.

## Keywords:

Employees, good character traits, managers, perceived organizational support

## Introduction

In the information age, the modern IT-based technologies have dramatically affected all aspects of human life, but there is a consensus that the largest and most original capital of any organization is still its human capital since it is employees that establish and vitalize organizations and identify and direct their paths.<sup>[1-5]</sup>

One of the problems faced by managers is keeping the key and professional staff. Besides, not only does increasing the organizational support increase the

organizational commitment, the intention to leave the organization is sharply reduced,<sup>[6-9]</sup> and the workforce will be more in line with the organization's values and objectives, thereby leading to the enhancement of the productivity and performance of organization and facilitation of the achievement of organizational goals.<sup>[2,10-12]</sup> Organizational support is the generalized feeling and beliefs of individuals in this regard that the organization has toward cooperation, support, and assistance given to its members and is concerned about their prosperity and future.<sup>[13,14]</sup> Hence, the concept of understanding organizational support lies in the context of the theory of

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social exchange that it always used to understand the relationship between employees and managers,<sup>[15,16]</sup> and it is based on the value that the organization has for the welfare, comfort, and security of its workforce that they have a special interest in the organization, which is believed to be perceived organizational support (POS), thereby reflecting the quality of social exchanges that occur between the employees and employers.<sup>[7,17-20]</sup>

In fact, the POS is considered an important explanatory framework for understanding the relationship between employees and the organization and is discussed as a structure of social exchange. The organizational support theory also states that employees develop general beliefs about the extent that the organization supports their needs and values, which is based on the interaction of managers with organizational representatives.<sup>[21,22]</sup>

The root of POS is the interactive commitment, based on which attachment, effort, and commitment to the organization are associated with social and material revenues<sup>[23-25]</sup> and, in fact, the POS is the importance that the organization has for its employees' efforts and physical and mental health and expresses the level of commitment that the organization has to its employees.<sup>[24,26,27]</sup>

The concept of POS was first introduced by Choi, and although the number of studies conducted in this field was limited by the mid-1990s, this number has risen in recent years.<sup>[1]</sup>

On the other hand, every human being tends to show off his or her own appearance, but physical appearance cannot remain beautiful without the support of good character traits in the long run. Therefore, one should pay attention to their good character traits, which is more important for managers than others who manage the affairs of others.<sup>[28,29]</sup>

Character is defined as one's mood, and psychologically, one's mood is an aspect of humans' relatively stable personality traits in terms of morality and social status.<sup>[30]</sup> Good character is also the extent to which one lives on the basis of high-level values.<sup>[31]</sup> In fact, the adherence of individuals to values will be the real yardstick of measuring their character. Therefore, people with good character traits accept a wide range of virtues and act on it and have long-term interest in themselves and others.<sup>[32]</sup>

Having collected the viewpoints of Islamic elites and management professors through the Delphi Method, Zarei Mahmoodabadi *et al.* (2018) introduced some of the good character traits of managers based on the Islamic teachings, including good manners, tolerance of

difficulties and hardships, commitment to promises and agreements, the presence among employees, exercising justice, and compassion.<sup>[33]</sup>

The aim of improving character traits is to provide an environment, in which all individuals care about each other and behave with each other in a respectful manner, thereby creating an atmosphere of trust in the organization.<sup>[34]</sup>

Given the results of studies conducted about the effects of managers' good character traits on organizations, the present study was aimed to investigate the effects of managers' good character traits and POS of employees with the aim of presenting a suitable solution for using these concepts in hospitals considering the existence of different levels of management. It should be noted that boosting the level of POS of employees could enhance job satisfaction and ultimately increase the employees' productivity and make the organization more successful in achieving its goals.

## Materials and Methods

### Participants and setting

This research is applied in terms of purpose, and in terms of descriptive, correlational, and cross-sectional study, it is a type of correlation that reviewing documents and questionnaires were used for data collection. The standard questionnaire of managers' good character traits was developed by Nasr Esfahani Questionnaire<sup>[34]</sup> and in the POS questionnaire was developed by Eisenberger Questionnaire<sup>[35]</sup> on five-point Likert scales. Moreover, the validities of the questionnaires were confirmed by face validity and their reliabilities were confirmed by Cronbach's test (0.79 and 0.83).

The statistical population included the employees of one of the therapeutic and educational centers of Kermanshah. It includes the staff of the administrative and medical departments, and in fact, an attempt has been made to determine the proportion between the number of staff in different departments to determine the sample size of the statistical population. Besides, the Cochran's formula was employed to determine the sample volume ( $n = 166$ ), and the samples were selected using simple random sampling.

In analyzing data, the descriptive and inferential statistics were used. The former was used to examine the demographic questions. In the latter, the hypothesis of the normal distribution of samples was first investigated using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test and then, using the Pearson's correlation coefficient test, the relationships between the independent and dependent variables were examined.

In addition, in the present research, the structural equation modeling was used for testing the model of measuring the effects of managers' good character traits on the POS of employees and testing the research hypotheses. Based on the conceptual model, six obvious variables and two hidden variables, managers' good character traits and the POS of employees were evaluated.

To fit the model, the fitting criteria in the structural equation modeling were used. In Table 1, the fitting indexes and acceptable fit in this study are presented.

## Results

Of the total 166 participants in the present study, 57% were women and 43% were men. The highest percentage of participation belonged to the 20–30 age group (37%), and the lowest percentage belonged to the 50-years-and-older age group (13%). These results indicate that most respondents were in the 20–30 age group. In addition, the highest percentage belonged to the bachelor's degree (49%), as opposed to Ph.D. education and higher with the lowest percentage (10%), an indication that most of the respondents held bachelor's degrees. In terms of work experience, the highest percentage belonged to 11–15 years of work experience (28%), whereas the lowest percentage belonged to over 20 years of work experience (12%). These results indicate that most respondents had 11–15 years of work experience [Table 1].

The results indicated that the value of Pearson's correlation test between managers' good character traits and POS of employees measured 0.81, an indication that there was a positive and direct relationship between the two variables. In other words, the higher the managers' good character traits, the more the employees will perceive the organizational support [Table 2].

The results of Pearson's correlation test between the components of managers' good character traits and POS of employees demonstrated that there was a positive and significant relationship between the two variables.

In other words, the correlation coefficient between these components and the positive values indicated there was a direct relationship between the components. In addition,  $P = 0.000 < 0.05$ , which was indicative of the significance of these relationships at significance = 5%. Hence, it can be concluded that the components of managers' good character traits and POS of employees significantly correlate [Table 2].

In this study, six indexes were investigated to determine the appropriateness of the structural equation model. As the results of Table 3 above (model fitting) shows, the model had a good fit.

## Discussion

The aim of this study was to study of the effects of managers' good character traits and POS of employees in one of the therapeutic and educational centers. The leader's character is a key and influential source in improving the organization's culture and a standard for virtuous behavior that is perceived by employees. In fact, leaders with good character traits create organizations that are competitive and supportive of the perceptions of the employees who work in the environment. On the other hand, human beings experience a new and unprecedented period of their lives in the present age.<sup>[36]</sup> In this challenging world, organizations form the core of societies, and thus, employees equip organizations with unique capabilities, thereby leading to competitive advantages. In the meantime, the managers' good character traits also significantly contribute to increasing the POS of employees, thereby creating a spiritual environment in the organization, and adopting such an approach, as an intangible asset, is of great importance in hospitals.

The results of the present study demonstrated that managers' good character traits and POS of employees positively and significantly correlated ( $P = 0.81$ ), which was consistent with the results of studies performed by Karavardar,<sup>[37]</sup> Chiang and Hsieh<sup>[38]</sup> in which it was shown that character traits could be measured by the

**Table 1: The fitting indexes of the model**

Test	Result	Desirable range	Value	Index title
Chi-square test	Acceptable	$0 < \frac{\chi^2}{df} < 5$	1.150	$\frac{\chi^2}{df}$
RMSEA	Verifying the model	RMSEA < 0.05	0.020	RMSEA
SRMR	Verifying the model	RMR $\geq 0$	0.015	RMR
GFI	Verifying the model	GFI > 0.9	0.990	GFI
Adjusted GFI	Verifying the model	AGFI > 0.85	0.974	AGFI
Bentler-Bonett index or NFI	Verifying the model	NFI > 0.90	0.987	NFI
CFI	Verifying the model	CFI > 0.90	0.998	CFI
IFI	Verifying the model	IFI > 0.90	0.998	IFI

RMSEA=Root mean square error of approximation, SRMR=Root mean square residual, NFI=Normed fit index, GFI=Goodness-of-fit index, CFI=Comparative fit index, IFI=Incremental fit index

**Table 2: The correlation test between the components of managers' good character traits and perceived organizational support of employees**

Independent variable factors	Correlation coefficient	P
Managers' commitment to promises and agreements	0.87	0.000
Managers' justice	0.78	0.000
Managers' compassion	0.71	0.000
Manager's tolerance of difficulties and hardships	0.83	0.000
Manager's presence among employees	0.68	0.000
Managers' good manners	0.88	0.000

**Table 3: The indexes and measurements of the structural equation model (results of the model fitting)**

RMSE	GFI	CIMN/df	P	df
0.007	0.90	1.74	00.6	1.6

GFI=Goodness of fit index, RMSE=Root mean square error, df=Degrees of freedom

variables of honesty, courage, humility, sympathy, wisdom, passion and enthusiasm, and sense of humor.

### Conclusion

Therefore, improvements in managers' good character traits can help improve the POS of employees. Further, given the confirmation of the main and subsidiary hypotheses and the existence of the causal relationship between all aspects of managers' good character traits and POS of employees, it is suggested that some measures be taken both at individual and organizational levels in the workplace to take advantage of these dimensions towards improving the POS of employees, thereby providing the necessary groundwork for more effective organizations. Therefore, institutionalizing the importance and role of managers' good character traits and POS of employees in hospitals requires preparation and development of training programs and workshops for nurturing these skills in managers at different levels in different parts of the therapeutic and educational center. Besides, this suggestion can cause hospitals to be more successful in achieving their goals.

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### Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicts of interest.

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