

Impact of Cognitive and Affective Trust on Commitment to Change: A Mediation Analysis

Hamid Reza Oreyzi, Hajar Barati

Department of Psychology, Educational Science and Psychology College, University of Isfahan, Isfahan, Iran

ABSTRACT

Purpose – Trust is considered as an important variable affecting organizational effectiveness (Shaw, 1997) which is known as trust level that employees have in their managers. It appears as if trust in supervisor has an essential role in making an effective means between organizational commitment and commitment to organizational change.

method – in the current research that was conducted on 225 employees of Electricity Distribution Company of north Isfahan, organizational commitment questionnaire of Baulfour and Wechsler (1996), commitment to organizational change questionnaire of Barati and Oreyzi (2012), and trust in supervisor questionnaire of MCallister (1995) was used.

Findings – results of the research showed that there existed direct and indirect relationship between organizational commitment (OC) and commitment to change (CTC) and boot strap analysis showed that this relationship is established through mediating role of trust in supervisor (TIS). Exchange dimension of OC and CTC was mediated by cognitive component of trust, identification dimension was mediated by affective component of trust and affiliation dimension was mediated by cognitive and affective components.

Conclusion – It was suggested to managers and organizations to try to create trust in subordinates if they want to create organizational commitment and commitment to change.

KEYWORDS – organizational commitment, commitment to change, trust in supervisor, mediating variable, Boot strap test.

INTRODUCTION

Specific circumstances of active companies have resulted in that competitive advantage is no longer dependent on tangible assets, but also it depends on intangible assets or intellectual capitals (Alam Tabriz, Rajabi Fard, Haji Baba Ali, 2010). Nevertheless, intellectual capitals do not mean only knowledge, competency or creativity, but it is a combination of three types of structural capital, human capital and social capital that produces wealth for organizations. OC is a human capital of organizations that keeps employees loyal to goals and missions of an organization. Trust in colleagues and TIS are parts of social capital of an organization that builds the internal aspect of this kind of capital and finally technologies and organizational structure including software applications and employment methods make organizational capitals (Stewart, 1997). The present research aims to investigate relationship between two kinds of human capital i.e. OC and CTC. This relationship is studied with taking intra-organizational social capital (TIS) into consideration that during change, helps those employees that were committed to the organization before changes, remain committed after changes and it is therefore a cultural adhesion that keeps employees committed to the goals and missions (Sanchez and Izares, 2007). Roth (1979) showed that people in society make calculations when they want to trust in others and these calculations occur especially when intra-organizational changes and trust in organization are at stake. It is obvious that during change process, employees pay attention to supervisors and their opinions and focus on them, because supervisors affect changes direction. Relationship between OC and CTC with mediating role of trust has rarely been investigated in researches but the logic and philosophy behind that is simple. During change process, many employees get worried and leave the organization. What keeps them in the organization before and after change is the amount of commitment to the organization because low levels of commitment increases the possibility of leaving an organization (Meyer et al, 2002). Increase in OC can lead to decreasing propensity to leave job, absence and job leaving (Hackett et al, 2001) and increasing job performance (Caremlı and Freund, 2001; Cichy, Cha and Kim, 2007). But the question is that which variable determines that OC turns into CTC in organizations. Each of employees feels himself in a boat in the change that is steered by supervisor and they must trust in him. Therefore trust appears to have a vital role.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Organizational Commitment (OC) and Its` types

OC has been under attention by researchers from many years ago. Noble and Mokwa (1999, p. 61) defined organizational commitment as “the extent to which a person identifies with and works toward organization-related goals and values”. From its introduction to organizational researches up to now, many theorists have dealt with it and many classifications have been proposed for OC. one of which is Baulfour & Wechsler classification (1996). In this classification, three types of commitment i.e. exchange commitment; identification commitment and affiliation commitment have been

*Corresponding Author: Hamid Reza Oreyzi, Department of Psychology, Educational Science and Psychology College, University of Isfahan, Isfahan, Iran. Tel:0983117932556 Fax:098311668, dr.oreyzi@edu.ac.ir.

proposed. *Exchange commitment* is a computational process through which an individual calculates his own benefits like salary and perks, promotions and things like that. In *identification commitment*, employees in all levels tend to be participated in decisions, their role in organization and in *affiliation commitment*, a feeling of commitment based upon affective and rational relationship and link is propounded (Oreyzi, Alimohammadi and Gol Parvar, 2008).

Commitment to change(CTC) and Its` types

An important development in academic research is the recognition that employees can be committed to many different work-related foci. Recent work suggests the importance of considering objects of commitment in addition to the organization itself, such as supervisors or change initiatives (Herscovitch and Meyer, 2002). In view of the fact that change is inevitable in today's changing environment, change and its management is a fundamental principle in organizational development and management. Such a conclusion should not seem exaggerated because each organization that disregards change, has endangered itself (Singh & Shoura, 2006). Steady change in an organization is dependent on its acceptance by employees and if there is not such a kind of acceptance, change is futile, therefore employees' CTC is very vital (Zahedi and Mortazavi, 2009). Conner(1992) describes CTC as a factor that creates cohesion between individuals and change goals and beliefs and the main factor in change projects failure is lack of commitment in individuals(Ning & Jing, 2012). Dolcourt& Zuckerman (2003) showed that CTC can increase motivation and endeavors of employees and decrease the possibility of absence, job leaving and dissatisfaction in employees. CTC also facilitates the trainings (Dulkort, 2000). Cunningham (2006) showed that as CTC increases, adaptation to changes is easier and job leaving increases. CTC is among the main factors involved in change support and plays an important role in change successful implementation (Vakola& Nikolaou, 2005; Keller, 2008). Cummings and Worley (2007) showed that the fundamental activity in any kind of change, is the identification of individuals commitment achievement because if there is not any commitment, change will be difficult and no change program will be successful unless it is understood and committed by employees(Jafarpour, 2011). Meyer and Herscovitch (2001) define CTC as a force that involves an individual in a change process. A force that involves an individual and reflects: a) tendency to support the change based on belief in inherent advantages of change(affective commitment to change or AC), b) recognize costs that comes with change support or failure(continuous commitment to change or CC), and c) obligation feeling for supporting change(normative commitment to change or NC). In other words, employees can support change because they want, they are obliged or they must.

CTC can be defined with three components of "*exchange commitment to change (ECC)*", "*identification commitment to change(ICC)*" and "*affiliation commitment to change (ACC)*", where exchange commitment is a computational process through which an individual calculates his own benefits like salary and perks, promotions and things like that.. In fact, these benefits and advantages in case of lack of support by the individual will be endangered. In identification commitment to change employees tend to participate in all levels of decisions and in AC to change, commitment is based on some kind of affective and rational relationship and link.

The Role of Trust

Studies have showed that the more trust is present in an organization's atmosphere, the higher is CTC and this CTC reduces absence and tendency to leave job (Chawla & Kelloway, 2004). Presence of trust allows an organization to focus on long-term activities and can act as an effective element in organizational change affectivity (Boudelae, Kooshki and Sattarinasab, 2011). Having trust means that the speech or promise of someone else is reliable (Ergeneli, Ari & Metin, 2007). In other words, trust means to decide to rely on someone else based on a common agreement. From one perspective, trust is related to organization and means trust of employees in their organization where they are working. Trust in organization has many advantages like favorable organizational performance (Ashja', Nouri, Oreyzi and Samavatian, 2010) and improves relations, cooperation, job satisfaction and citizenship behavior (Wales, 2006). There exists also a relationship between affective commitment and trust (Kirkman & Rosen, 1999). From another viewpoint, trust within an organization arises from trust in managers and supervisors and not the organization itself. Levinson (1965) believes that employees tend to see the behaviors of the organization's managers as the organization's own behavior Cho, Johanson and Guchait, 2009). Employees also know that supervisors' assessment of the subordinates is sent to higher levels of the organization and affects manager's viewpoint (Yoon and Thye, 2000). In other words, organization is an abstract concept and organizational trust depends on trust in the people in charge. Trust in supervisor can shape organizational trust feeling (Li, 2005). Although trust is bilateral, and must be established between employees and supervisors but trust in supervisor is more important because it is not possible that people trust in someone that do not believe in him or they believe he decreases their perks (Robbins, 2011). Trust can improve the relationship between employees and management and therefore help keep employees. Employees believe when they trust in managers and supervision, they feel they have ownership and commitment (Javaheri Kamel, 2010).

Researches show that trust in high-level management is more important in some cases. For instance, when it comes to change especially shrinking and privatization, trust in supervisor and management results in more interest and therefore tendency to stay in the organization because perception and understanding can decrease a danger that is specific to these changes (Spreitzer& Mishra, 2002). Without feeling trust, those individuals that have remained in the organization after changes implementation, become pessimistic, feel less interest and will worry about their job (Niehoff, Moorman, Blakely &

Fuller, 2001). The research of Brashear, Manolis & Brooks (2005) showed that trust reduces job leaving through equity. The result of lack of trust is nothing but job leaving (Brashear, Manolis & Brooks, 2005). Trust enables a company to focus on long-term activities and can be an effective element in change process (Baird and Amand, 1995).

For the first time, Lewis & Weigert (1985) noticed to this point that trust has two cognitive and affective components, i.e. it can be either cognition-based or affection-based. *Cognition-based trust* is created through self-perception and interest from performance signs and others activities reality and is based on cognitive reasoning. For example, if a person is affected by professional educations, experiences or performance roles of a reliable person, tendency to develop trust based on cognition will be created in such an individual. In contrast, *affective-based trust* is created by social excitement contracts which are beyond a commercial or occupational relationship (Kim, 2005). Although trust origin and its type might be different based on this viewpoint, but the important issue is that cooperation and interaction among organization's members will disappear without trust (Javaheri Kamel, 2010). Attention to the affective and cognitive dimensions affects job satisfaction (Oreyzi and Golparvar, 2010) and organizational citizenship behavior (Sabahi, 2008) and this shows the importance of affective dimension in industrial analysis. In view of the fact that affiliation commitment and identification commitment have both affective and cognitive aspect, it appears as if this dimension has relationship with both affective and cognitive aspect of trust, while exchange commitment looks like to have more relationship with cognitive aspect of trust because it is based on profit and loss calculations and is highly related to profit-seeking subject proposed by Bentam. Investigation of social networks in entrepreneur environments (Larson, 1992) has shown that in exchange relationships, cognitive aspect of trust is important.

Based upon what we reviewed up to now, research hypotheses can be as follows:

H1. Cognitive and affective trusts mediate the relationship between identification commitment and identification commitment to change.

H2. Affective and cognitive trusts mediate the relationship between affiliation commitment and affiliation commitment to change.

H3. Cognitive trust mediates the relationship between exchange commitment and exchange commitment to change.

The following is the proposed model for the research:

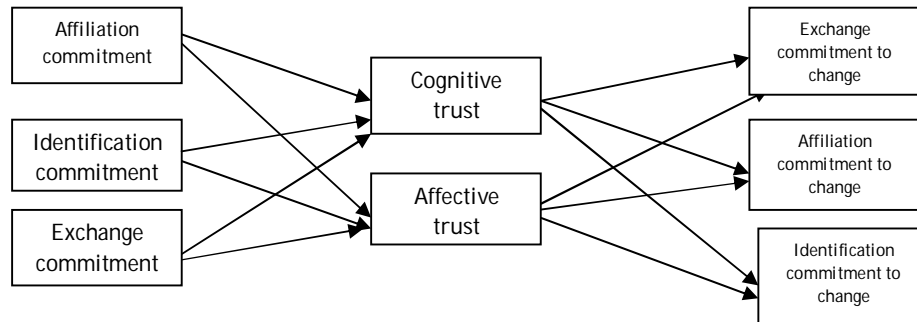


Figure 1. Hypothesized empirical model of organizational commitment, trust & commitment to organizational change

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Data collection

Research sample was 225 employees of Electricity Distribution Company of north, south and west of Isfahan city that responded to the questionnaires. Their average age was 39.62 and standard deviation was 14.67 and the average and standard deviation of their work experience was 14.83 and 9.62 respectively. 45 people of the sample members answered to the questions of the questionnaires again to test reliability.

Measure

Measurement instrument for organizational commitment was 9-item organizational commitment scale of Baulfour & Wechsler(1996). In this questionnaire, 3 questions measure IC, three questions measure AC and the other three questions measure EC. This questionnaire was used on a 7-point Likert scale from 1(completely disagree) to 7(completely agree).

CTC measurement tool was 9-item questionnaire of Barati and Oreyzi(2012). This questionnaire is actually the very (Baulfour & Wechsler, 1996) organizational commitment questionnaire that its questions were changed to measure CTC. In the mentioned questionnaire, 3 questions measure IC to change (like "I admire the exerted changes in my organization", $\alpha=0.67$), 3 questions measure AC to change (like "my colleagues do not pay attention to changes impacts on me", $\alpha=0.65$), and the other three questions measure EC to change(like "my activities in changes direction are appreciated in the organization", $\alpha=0.62$). After reliability analysis and factor analysis, this questionnaire was answered by the respondents on a

7-point Likert scale from 1(completely disagree) to 7(completely agree). The change to be considered was submitting tasks to contractors and moving towards privatization (firstly south and then west and finally north region) in which employees have sensitivity towards supervision increase degree, participation in profits and activities volume change and reduction of job security.

Trust in supervisor was also measured by trust questionnaire of (Mc Allister, 1995). This questionnaire has 11 questions and two dimensions of cognitive trust and affective trust are measured with it and it is responded by respondents on a 7-point scale from 1(very disagree) to 7(very agree). To calculate validity coefficient, a term was added in every sub-scales and the general spirit of that scale was present in it and the general relationship with scale was measured.

RESULT

In table 1, the findings of exploratory factor analysis of trust in supervisor questionnaire have been shown. It is obvious that factor loadings and Eigen-values are at favorable level and the questions related to each factor has an appropriate factor loading on that factor.

Table 1. Exploratory factor analysis of trust in supervisor questionnaire

| Scale | Question number | Question text | Factor loading | Eigen value |
|-----------------|-----------------|--|----------------|-------------|
| Affective Trust | 1 | My relation with my supervisor has formed through participation. | 0.87 | 2.02 |
| | 2 | I take part in my supervisor's hopes, opinions and feelings. | 0.84 | |
| | 3 | I can speak to my supervisor easily and I know that he carefully listens to me. | 0.83 | |
| | 4 | If I know my supervisor is being transferred to somewhere else I feel sad and I think if I get transferred, he will have such a feeling. | 0.79 | |
| | 5 | When I share my problems with my supervisor he responds empathetically and constructively. | 0.77 | |
| | 6 | My supervisor and I have a relationship based on affective investment in work environment. | 0.76 | |
| Cognitive trust | 7 | All of the people that work with my supervisor even if they are not friend they respect and trust in him. | 0.91 | 1.65 |
| | 8 | My supervisor's viewpoint with respect to his job is based on devotion to work and professional principles. | 0.87 | |
| | 9 | The list of my supervisor's activities leaves no doubt for me that he is a competent person and well-prepared for his position. | 0.85 | |
| | 10 | I am certain that my supervisor will never make my work more difficult carelessly. | 0.78 | |
| | 11 | If others had more information on my supervisor(for instance about his background) I would watch his activities more carefully .. | 0.76 | |
| | 12 | My colleagues that work with my supervisor trust in him. | 0.71 | |

Descriptive indices resulting from research variables have been shown in table 2. It is observed that the highest average related to affiliation commitment to change and the least average belongs to affective trust. Also the highest standard deviation belongs to exchange commitment and the least standard deviation belongs to exchange commitment to change. Retest reliability coefficient and Cronbach's alpha and validity coefficient is at favorable level. In table 2 also, intercorrelations coefficients of the research variables are presented. It can be seen that these coefficients are significant at 0.01 and 0.05 level. This means variables are related. Furthermore the diagonal coefficients are actually reliability coefficients that are favorable.

Table 2. Descriptive indices resulting from research variables

| variable | M | SD | Test-Retest | Validity coefficient | SME | AC | IC | EC | AT | CT | ECC | ACC | ICC |
|----------------------|-------|------|-------------|----------------------|------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|------|
| Commitment | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| affiliation(AC) | 9.42 | 1.83 | 0.72 | 0.65 | 0.47 | 0.74 | | | | | | | |
| identification(IC) | 9.65 | 1.65 | 0.74 | 0.58 | 0.41 | 0.65** | 0.75 | | | | | | |
| exchange(EC) | 10.4 | 2.24 | 0.71 | 0.54 | 0.60 | 0.35** | 0.19* | 0.73 | | | | | |
| trust | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Affective(AT) | 4.65 | 1.49 | 0.88 | 0.71 | 0.16 | 0.57** | 0.43** | 0.53** | 0.85 | | | | |
| Cognitive(CT) | 4.73 | 1.37 | 0.83 | 0.73 | 0.25 | 0.26** | 0.49** | 0.22* | 0.79** | 0.89 | | | |
| Commitment to change | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Exchange(ECC) | 9.89 | 0.98 | 0.71 | 0.54 | 0.25 | 0.23** | 0.28** | 0.58** | 0.44** | 0.21* | 0.74 | | |
| affiliation(ACC) | 10.21 | 1.24 | 0.69 | 0.61 | 0.41 | 0.56** | 0.48** | 0.31** | 0.39** | 0.41** | 0.28** | 0.71 | |
| Identification(ICC) | 9.85 | 1.06 | 0.73 | 0.53 | 0.29 | 0.47** | 0.54** | 0.27** | 0.18* | 0.54** | 0.23* | 0.65** | 0.73 |

**p<0.01*p<0.05

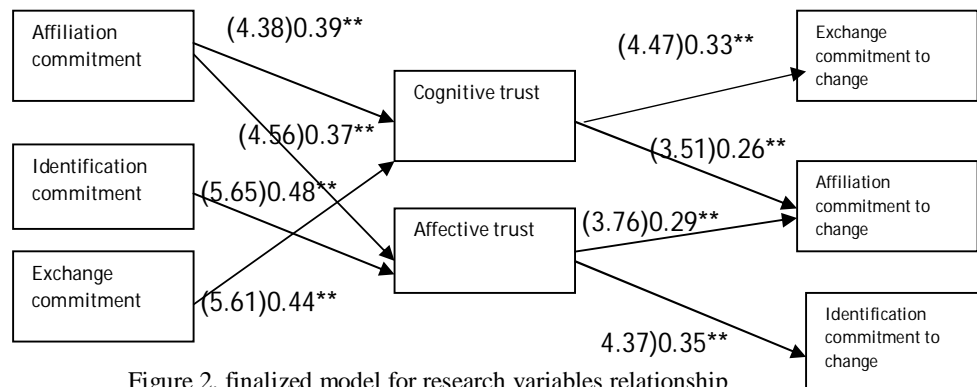


Figure 2. finalized model for research variables relationship

Figure 2 shows the final model of relationship between research variables. As it is obvious, cognitive and affective trust mediate affiliation commitment and affiliation commitment to change. Also cognitive trust mediates between exchange commitment and exchange commitment to change. The relationship between identification commitment and identification commitment to change is mediated by only one factor which is affective trust.

Table 3. Indirect effect (mediator) significance in final model

| path | quantity | Boot | Bias (absolute value) | Standard error | Certainty level =0.95 | |
|---------------|----------|------|--------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| | | | | | Lower level | Upper level |
| AC → CT → ACC | 0.18 | 0.19 | 0.002 | 0.01 | 0.22 | 0.16 |
| IC → AT → ICC | 0.25 | 0.26 | 0.004 | 0.02 | 0.26 | 0.22 |
| EC → CT → ECC | 0.23 | 0.23 | 0.003 | 0.01 | 0.25 | 0.21 |
| AC → AT → ACC | 0.21 | 0.23 | 0.002 | 0.03 | 0.27 | 0.17 |

Notes: NFI=0.89 , CFI=0.89 , TLI=0.88 , IFI=0.90 , GFI=0.91 , $\chi^2/df=2.27$, RMSEA=0.03

Paths and mediators have been shown in table 3. Certainty distance has been used to determine significance. In view of certainty distances in the second path, only affective trust mediates between IC and IC to change and only the first part of the first hypothesis is verified. Furthermore, in view of the certainty distances in the first path and end of the table, it is observed that both affective and cognitive dimensions of trust mediate between AC and AC to change (ACC) and the second hypothesis is verified. Certainty distances in the third path verify the third hypothesis i.e. the cognitive dimension of trust mediates between EC and EC to change (ECC).

Table 3 also, shows the fitting indices of the final model. High level of fitting indices GFI(0.91) and IFI(0.9), TLI(0.88) and CFI(0.89) (Bentler, & Bonett, 1980) and low level of RMSEA(0.03) (Browne, & Cudeck, 1993) concerning final model and also chi-squared statistic level divided by degree of freedom (χ^2/df) shows that the final model of relationship is blessed with favorable fitting. Square of X is called "bad index" because its significance shows the significant difference between estimated and observed covariance and due to its dependence on sample size; it becomes significant as sample size increases. Therefore (χ^2/df) was used and (Arbuckle, 2005) recognizes a level higher than 2 as a good fitting.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The current research investigates the relationship between organizational commitment and CTC considering trust in supervisor as mediator variable. Findings showed that there was direct and indirect relationship between organizational commitment and CTC. Hence CTC is a kind of commitment (Jafarpour, 2010), this result seems logical. Meyer and Herscovitch (2001) believe that «internal essence» of commitment, regardless of its targets is the same and Meyer and Allen(1991 and 1997) researches on organizational commitment can apply to work environment different kinds of commitment like a union, a supervisor or a change. In fact, if the employees are committed to their organization, this commitment can remain unchanged during change process in the organization.

Furthermore, the results of mediator analysis showed that this relationship is mediated by mediating role of trust in supervisor and exchange dimension of OC and CTC are mediated by cognitive dimension of trust. Researches show that trust is created through socialization process and plays a vital role in close relationships (Dejban, Nouri and Samavatian, 2011). Among these relations is relationship between supervisor and subordinates which is a kind of social exchange. Trust in supervisor is followed by positive affection and this takes place when a subordinate believes to have positive exchange relationship with an honest supervisor (Direkz and Ferrin, 2002). A relationship based on exchange which is used in exchange commitment is formed when the organization values its employees and supports them (Golparvar and Oreyzi,

2009). McAllister (1995) believes that cognitive trust in managers and supervisors is affected by three factors: racial-cultural similarities, professional contracts and reliable duty performances of colleagues. Here the professional contracts are important because they might be either written or unwritten. For instance, the fact that employees resolve their organization's problems and receive respect and support in return is a psychological contract which not only involves the employees in exchange commitment but also it causes cognitive trust and when trust is present, commitment to other target including change is developed. In contrast, when employees feel that management or organization is using them only for personal and organizational targets or they are treated badly despite dutifulness, exchange commitment is weakened (Golparvar and Oreyzi, 2009). Hence this behavior can be considered as management or organization's unreliability, cognitive trust which results from individuals' perception of others performances (Kim, 2005), is reduced and therefore the employees that are inappropriately treated and feel their managers are abusing their authorities lose their trust and feel cynical towards organizational changes (Wanous, Reichers, Austin, 2000).

The results also showed that the affiliation dimension of OC and CTC are mediated by cognitive and affective dimensions of trust. Affective dimension of trust in management is affected by citizenship behavior and interactions abundance (McAlister, 1995). From (Baulfour & Wechsler, 1996) viewpoint, affiliation commitment arises from employees beliefs about how much the organization's members care for their health in all dimensions and actually the basis for this commitment is individual's relations in work groups. Hence citizenship behavior and integrated, deep relations leading to affective trust are the basis for affiliation commitment, if these conditions are preserved during change process, CTC will be possible. (Baulfour & Wechsler, 1996) believe that affiliation commitment results from a feeling of belonging to an integrated group and (McAllister, 1995) believes that cognitive trust in management and supervisors is affected by racial-cultural similarities. In fact it can be said that racial-cultural similarities lead to perception of belonging to an integrated group which is the building block for affiliation commitment and if this integration and similarity remains during change, CTC will be resulted.

Furthermore, according to the findings, identification dimension of OC and CTC is mediated by affective dimension of trust. As stated previously, affective dimension of trust is based upon interactions (McAllister, 1995). In identification commitment, employees observation of organizational missions and goals is regarded and employees in all levels prefer to be participated in activities (Golparvar and Oreyzi, 2008). Hence interactions are important in affective dimension of trust (McAllister, 1995), participation feeling and therefore identification commitment increases and this feeling can be generalized to change process.

Finally it is recommended that supervisors add to their honest and truthful behaviors because it can create trust. To create intra-organizational trust, employees must feel security in establishing honest relations with colleagues and management. In order to develop trust, it is necessary for management and employees to be aware of their duties with respect to each other and feel responsible for creating trust.

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