Global Journal on
Humanites & Social Sciences

Issue 4 (2016) 08-16

Selected Paper of 3rd World Congress of Administrative and Political Sciences, (APDOL-2014)
28-29 November 2014, University of Barcelona, Barcelona, Spain.

# Effects of managers' good characterson affective organizational commitment in consultant engineering firms

**Reza Abachian Ghassemi*,** Faculty of Administrative Sciences and Economic, University of Isfahan, Isfahan, Iran.
**Abbas Abbaspour,** Faculty of Psychology and education, University of Allameh Tabataba'i, Tehran, Iran.
**Ali Nasr Esfahani,** Faculty of Administrative Sciences and Economic, University of Isfahan, Isfahan, Iran.
**Ehsan Ekradi,** Faculty of Psychology and education, University of AllamehTabataba'I, Tehran, Iran.

**Suggested Citation:**
Abachian Ghasemi, R., Abbaspour, A., Nasr Esfahani, A. & Ekradi, E. (2016). Effects of managers' good characterson affective organizational commitment in consultant engineering firms, *Global Journal on Humanites & Social Sciences.* [Online]. 04, pp 08-16. Available from:http://www.world-education-center.org/index.php/pntsbs

Received June 06, 2015; revised July 16, 2015; accepted October 20, 2015.
Selection and peer review under responsibility of Prof. Dr. Andreea Iluzia IACOB
©2016 Academic World Education & Research Center. All rights reserved.

**Abstract**

The present study aimed atanalyzing the effects of good charactersof managers on affective organizational commitment of employees to the organization. Data were collected using a self-administrated questionnaire including leadership characters and affective commitment measures adopted. A sample of 100 employees from Consultant Engineering Firms was used. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and a linear regression analysis were used to test the relationship betweenmanagers' good characters and affective commitment. The results show that the good characters of leaders including love, justice, and wisdomaffect affective commitment of employees. It is expected that when employees perceive such characters of amanager, they feel more affectively attached to their organizations andfeel a sense of loyalty towards their organization.

Keywords: good characters, affective commitment, consultant engineering firms.

*ADDRESS FOR CORRESPONDENCE: **Reza Abachian Ghasemi,** Faculty of Administrative Sciences and Economic, University of Isfahan, Isfahan, Iran. *E-mail address*:r_abachian@yahoo.com / Tel.: +98-912-208-7053

## 1. Introduction

The importance of the character of leadership is making inroads into the business world. Johnson & Johnson (J&J), the major manufacturer of health care products in the United States, views character as a leadership essential. It is believed that leaders with good character can give a company a significant competitive advantage. The company actively seeks to recruit and be represented by people of exceptional character. Johnson & Johnson's stance is supported bya research which suggests that in leadership, good character counts. According to Frances Hesselbein, the chairman of the Drucker Foundation, leadership that achieves results goes beyond *how to be*, and becomes *how to do*; this type of leadership is all about good character.

So, in other words, in order to get things done personally and organizationally, one first needs to get in touch with his or hercharacter. Leaders with good character achieve results that transcend everyday organizational imperatives and outcomes such as employees' commitment. A studyof world leaders over the past 150 years asserts that managerspossessing strong character will create a better world for everyone, while leadership generally is vital to the social, moral, economic, and political fabrics of society.However, we often take the character of leadership for granted. We expect good leaders to be strong in character, that is, to have a moral imperative underwrite their actions.

These leaders with character have been identified as authentic leaders: They are what they believe in; show consistency among their values, ethical reasoning and actions; develop positive psychological states such as confidence, optimism, hope, and resilience in themselves and their associates; and are widely known and respected for their integrity (James, Cooper, and Santora, 2007). It can be expected that the chacter of managers can be one of the main antecedents of employees behaviour in the organizations, particularly affective commitment. There exists a substantial amount of research on antecedents and outcomes of organizational culture, leadership behaviour, organizational commitment, job satisfaction and employee performance. For example, work ethics (Yousef, 2001), person-organization fit (Silverthorne, 2004), national culture (Lok and Crawford, 2004), task structure and role ambiguity (Tan, 2005), and turnover (Poh, 2002).

Much of these focused on independent relationships, such as culture and performance, or commitment and performance (Rashi, Sambasivan and Johari, 2003). However, to our knowledge, there is no research on the relationship between managers' character and employees' commitment to the organization. Thus, the current study tryies to fill the research gap in the area of linkage between character and commitment. The paper has practical implications for managers and consultants in management development, and ultimately could bring about superior performance in their respective organizations.

## 2. Theoretical background

### *2.1. Character of managers*

The character of leadership model proposed by Eastman (2010) has two basic propositions. First, leadership is inside out; manager's character gives rise to his/her leadership. Since character fuels leadership, the exploration of character is of paramount concern to every organizationwhich is serious about leadership development. Second, context is everything. Every leadership setting is different and the leader's behaviour must adjust to fit the group and situation that the leader is responsible for. The character of leadership model states that character is composed of seven elements: courage, justice, love, temperance, hope, wisdom and faith. Faith is leading from a clear set of positive core values that are demonstrated through actions. The following is the definitions and exemplifications of the seven elements.

Justice is leading by doing what is right, even when it is difficult and costly, leading selflessly and fostering personal and team accountability. Temperance is leading by sincerely and convincingly articulating a bright future, especially when the immediate circumstances look bleak. Wisdom is leading by effectively applying accumulated knowledge and experience to current situations. Love is leading by demonstrating a genuine concern, care, and compassion for people. Courage is leading by boldly seizing opportunities and dealing with challenges (Eastman, 2010). The focus of current study is on three dimensions, including love, justice, and wisdom. Justice is a dimension of a leader that is central to followers' decisions to accept an individual's leadership.

This construct incorporates fairness and even-handedness in both procedures and outcomes, such as the allocation of work and dispensation of rewards. It includes a sense of proportionality with respect to praise or censure and recognition of the requirement of a leader to contribute to the growth and development of the societies within which they operate. Boards sometimes struggle with this dimension of character, recognizing its importance but wondering about its role in a profit-maximizing context. But leaders who act unjustly soon find themselves violating societal expectations; they court reactions such as over-regulation and excessive controls that will likely undermine long-term performance (Gandz et al., 2013).

Wisdom is the ability to draw on one's knowledge and experience to make well-formed judgments. It also involves the use of one's power and personal authority to implement an effective course of action. Wisdom underpins major decisions. Former BP CEO John Browne was the first CEO in the oil industry to openly acknowledge the impact the industry was having on the environment, and to highlight the ways of reducing green-house gas emissions. Browne advocated a responsible approach to limit the energy industry's impact on the environment through BP's "Beyond Petroleum" campaign. This approach could have impacted on the company's bottom line, but the wisdom of the decision was that it tapped into the moral conscience of society at the time (Jameset al., 2007).

Figure 1. Dimensions of leadership character model (Adpoted from Eastman (2010))

### *2.2. Affective commitment*

Organizational commitment refers to a psychological attachment of an individualtoward an organization (Mathieu and Zajac, 1990). It is a relative strength of anindividual's identification and involvement in an organization. Generally, there are three forms of organizational commitment namely affective,continuance, and normative commitments (Meyer and Allen, 1991). Continuance commitment refers to commitmentbased on the costs that the employee associates with leaving the organization.Normative commitment refers to the employee's feelings of obligation to stay with theorganization.Affectivecommitment refers to the employee's emotional attachment to, identification with,and involvement in the organization.Much of the researchundertaken in the area of organizational commitment focused on affective commitment(Brunetto and Farr-Wharton, 2003).

Empirical studies have identified organizational and personal factors as thedeterminants of organizational commitment (Allen & Meyer, 1990, 1996). Manystudies have examined the relationship between transformational leadership andorganizational commitment in a variety of organizational settings (Bono & Judge, 2003). A meta-analysis found that Affective, continuance, andnormative commitments are related to job satisfaction, job involvement, andoccupational commitment (Meyer *et al*., 2002). Employees with strong affective attachment to the organization tend to "identify with, be involved in, and enjoymembership in, the organization" (Allen & Meyer, 1990). Affective commitment is the most important component of organizational commitment in predicting turnover intentions (Joo et al., 2012).

Recent meta-analyses further provided that affective commitment had the strongest and most positive correlations with desirablework outcomes such as attendance, in-role performance, and organizational citizenship behavior among three components of organizational commitment (Meyer et al., 2002). As employees with a strong affective commitment continue employment with the organization and tend to make more effort for the organization, it can be said that affective commitment represents the overall organizational commitment. In this study, therefore, we focused on affective commitment rather than the other two.

## 3. Hypothesis development

As mixed findings are observed in prior studies as described in the theoretical background,hypotheses are proposed to test the relationships between the variables, as shownin Figure 1. Good character of managers is likely to enhance followers' emotion inattaching to a leader who provides a clear direction and appreciates their efforts. Wepropose that good character of managers has a positive impact on affective organizational commitment. Thus:

H1. Manager's character of love is associated with affective commitment of employees.

H2. Manager's character of justiceis associated with affective commitment of employees.

H3. Manager's character of wisdomis associated with affective commitment of employees.

## 4. Methodology

### *4.1. Sample and procedures*

The sampling frame was drawn from 100 employees of Consultant Engineering Firms in the area of Tehran, Iran. A convenience sampling approach was used to collect data. Since, Persianis the first language in Iran, a Persian version of the questionnaire was used. The questionnaire followed thetranslation-back-translation approach by two professionals in order to establishmeaning conformity (Schaffer and Riordan, 2003).

### *4.2. Measures*

Managers' character was operationalized by using the questionnaire of the Character of Leadership Model (CLM) (see Eastman, 2010). The instrument has beenused extensively in the literature on leadership character. Good character of manager was measured by 12 questions, including wisdom with 4 items, justice with 4 items, and love with 4 items. The respondents were asked to answer the questins on a five-point Likert scale ranged as Never, Seldom, Sometimes, Usually, and Always.

The Affectice Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (AOCQ) adopted from Ohana (2014) was used to measure thedependent variable. The instrument contains 4 items and is designed to

measurethe degree to which subjects feel committed to the employing organization. All items weremeasured on a seven-point Likert-type scale, ranging from (1) Strongly disagree to (5)Strongly agree.

### *4.3. Data analysis*

Confirmatory factor analysis and Cronbach's alpha were used to evaluate validity and reliability ofthe instrument. Furthermore, multiple regression was used to test the effects of good character of managers onaffective organizational commitment. This methodis commonly used by cross-cultural researchers.

## 5. Results

Demographic variables of the respondent sample were extracted by asking questionson age, gender, marital status, and number of years worked with thecurrent manager. Table I summarizes thedemographic information of the sample population for this study.

Table 1. Summarized statistics of respondents

| Demographic variable | Percentage of sample |
|---|---|
| **Age** | |
| 20-29 years | 26 |
| 30-39 years | 54 |
| 40-49 years | 12 |
| 50 and above | 8 |
| **Gender** | |
| Male | 83 |
| Female | 17 |
| **Education level** | |
| Secondary | 5 |
| Diploma | 18 |
| Graduate | 57 |
| Postgraduate | 20 |
| **Marital status** | |
| Single | 72 |
| Married | 28 |
| **Number of years worked with current manager** | |
| Less than 3 years | 37 |
| 3-6 years | 28 |
| 7-10 years | 18 |
| More than 10 years | 17 |

Table 2 shows that the means, load factors, and the internal consistency reliabilities of the scales. Hence, the collected data were robust, representative of the samples, and normal. Cronbach's α coefficient for all variables was above acceptable level of 0.69, indicating the reliability of instrument. In addition, item loadings of the final scale ranged from 0.45 to 0.92 that are above 0.5, indicating the validity of instrument.Therefore,parametric analysis techniques are possible in thesubsequent sections.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics

| Factor | Mean | Load factors | Cronbach's α |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Justice** | | | 0.845 |
| My direct manager seizes opportunities to do what is right, even if not personally rewarding. | 3.25 | 0.47 | |
| My direct manager establishes simple and clear guidelines for people to follow. | 3.14 | 0.45 | |
| My direct manger accepts accountability for own efforts and for the actions of others. | 3.42 | 0.58 | |
| My direct manger holds others accountable for their actions; ensures that people receive fair treatment and equal opportunity | 3.36 | 0.64 | |
| **Wisdom** | | | 0.810 |
| My direct manager understands own strengths and exploit them for the good of the organization. | 3.75 | 0.71 | |
| My direct manager Invests time and energy in self-development and growth. | 3.69 | 0.86 | |
| My direct manager expands knowledge to explore information and experiences in other, often unrelated, fields. | 3.58 | 0.92 | |
| My direct manager seeks information from others | 3.73 | 0.86 | |
| **Love** | | | 0.865 |
| My direct manager gives full attention and show genuine interest in others. | 3.11 | 0.62 | |
| My direct manger accepts question and input from team members. | 3.17 | 0.69 | |
| My direct manager discusses and then openly negotiates others their expectations of own performance | 3.26 | 0.81 | |
| My direct manager demonstrates a genuine concern for the lives of the people you lead. | 3.33 | 0.46 | |
| **Affective commitment** | | | 0.749 |
| The organization has personal meaning to me. | 3.49 | 0.86 | |
| I am proud of my organization. | 3.74 | 0.82 | |
| I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organization | 3.62 | 0.77 | |
| I like to tell people that I work for this organization | 3.87 | 0.68 | |

Table 3 presents the correlations within the constructs. overall relationships among the four sub-constructs of manager character were positive and significant. Further, the their relationships with affective organizational commitmentwere positive and significant.

Table 3. Variables correlation

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1. Justice** | - | | | |
| **2. Wisdom** | *0.74 | - | | |
| **3. Love** | *0.76 | *0.81 | - | |
| **4. Affective commitment** | *0.54 | *0.58 | *0.50 | - |

Notes: *$p \leq 0.001$

To test the hypotheses using SPSS 18, multiple regression was used. This method was selected as the order in which independent variables are entered into the regression equation were known, and

were based on logical or theoretical considerations (Ahmad, 2001). Tables 4, 5 , and 6 show the results of regression analyses.According to Table 4, $R^2$ is 0.674 that is significant at the level of 0.05. It means that three independent variables including wisdom, love and justice have explaind 67 percent of dependant variable of affective commitment.

Table 4.Model Summary

| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 0.821[a] | 0.674 | 0.669 | 0.31757 |

a. Predictors: (Constant), Wisdom, Love, Justice

Table 5 indicated the results of ANOVA analysis for the regression model. As indicated, the analysis is significant at the level of 0.05 (F=151.335, P=0.000), indicating normality of data and its suitablity for entering to the final regresson model.

Table 5.ANOVA results

| Model | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Regression | 45.786 | 3 | 15.262 | 151.335 | 0.000[a] |
| | Residual | 22.187 | 220 | 0.101 | | |
| | Total | 67.973 | 223 | | | |

Notes:a: Predictors: (Constant), Wisdom, Love, Justice
Dependent Variable: AffectiveCommitment

Finally, Table 6 indicates the results of regression analysis. Variables have been analyzed by Enter Method. It is revealed that all ofthe hypotheses have been accepted at the significance level of 0.05. According to multiple regression analysis, the independent variables of love (β=0.117, t= 1.901), justice (β=0.324, t= 3.537), and Wisdom (β=0.423, t= 4.872) had a positive, strong and significant influence on affective organizational commitment of employees in Consultant Engineering Firms. It is abvious that among independant variabes, wisdom (0.423), justice (0.324) and love (0.117) had the most influence on the construct of affective commitment of employees, respectively.

Table 6.Coefficients

| Model | | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | B | Std. Error | Beta | t | Sig. |
| 1 | (Constant) | 1.083 | 0.122 | | 8.858 | 0.000 |
| | Love | 0.099 | 0.052 | 0.117 | 1.901 | 0.049 |
| | Justice | 0.279 | 0.079 | 0.324 | 3.537 | 0.000 |
| | Wisdom | 0.324 | 0.067 | 0.423 | 4.872 | 0.000 |

Note: Dependent Variable: AffectiveCommitment

## 6. Conclusions and recommendations

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of managers' character on affective organizational commitment. It was expected that good character of managers enhance employees' affective commitment. The results indicated that three dimensions of manager character including love, justice and wisdom have a significant influence on affective organizational commitment of employees in Consultant Engineering Firms.It is obvious that if managers can improve the investigated characters in their leadership process, it would lead to more affectively commited employees. To date, no empirical research has been done to investigate the relationships of these constructs. This study, therefore, is unique in that it has helped to fill this gap in an effort to improve our understanding of the role of good chacter of maangers and affective organizational commitment in the Iranian environment and beyond.

The present study has theoretical and practical implications. One of the theoreticalimplications is that the good character of manager is a valid construct not only inthe service sector (in our case, engineering services) but also in the manufacturing sector. On the other hand,this study emphasized how psychological (character of manager) and behavioral (affective organizational commitment) aspects willhelp organizations and HR managers to understand employees' intention to leave or stay in theorganization.Turnover intentions have become the main problem for HR managers, sinceorganizations are becoming more active in seeking to hire their rivals' best employees.It is thought that being an manager with good character is essential to retain and gain key andtalented employees. This has affected overall organizationalperformance because most talented and well-skilled individuals are shifting their jobstowards those organizations where the managers have good character and respect them in the work place.

There were some further limitations to our study. First, given that the present study was based on a convenience sample we recommend a more rigorous examination of character in managers is appropriate using a larger and more representative sample. Second, future research should also extend the present findings by examining the linkages among character, leadership, and job outcomes in different work contexts and different cultures. Third, the measures of character developed in this study require further psychometric evaluation. Future research, using techniques such as exploratory factor analysis, is required to evaluate the construct validity of the CLM.

## Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank the Consultant Engineering Firms for data collection. Further, the authors thank Dr. Mohammad Reza Jalilvand for his constructive comments on the ealrlier draft of paper.

### References

Ahmad, K. (2001).Corporate leadership and workplace motivation in Malaysia, *International Journal of Commerce & Management*, *11*(1), 82-101.

Allen, N.J., & Meyer, J.P. (1990).The measurement and antecedents of affective, continuance and normative commitment to the organization, *Journal of Occupational Psychology*, *63*(1), 1-18.

Allen, N.J., & Meyer, J.P. (1996). Affective, continuance and normative commitment to the organization: an examination of construct validity, *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, *49*(3), 252-276.

Bono, J. & Judge, T. (2003). Self-concordance at work: toward understanding the motivational effects of transformational leadership, *Academy of Management Journal*, *46*(5), 554-571.

Brunetto, Y. & Farr-Wharton, R. (2003). The commitment and satisfaction of lower-ranked police officers: lessons for management, *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies & Management*, *26*(1), 43-63.

Eastman, P. (2010). Character of leadership, *Leadership Excellence*, ProQuest Hospital Collection. 19.

Gandz, J.,Crossan, M., Seijts, G., & Reno, L. (2013). leadership character and corporate governance, *Ivey Business Journal Online*, Access on: http://search.proquest.com.ezplib.ukm.my/docview/1370362785?accountid=41453

James, S., Cooper, B. K., &Santora, J. C. (2007). The character of leadership, *Ivey Business Journal Online*, Available at: http://search.proquest.com.ezplib.ukm.my/docview/216176068?accountid=41453

Joo, B.K., Yoon, H.J., & Jeung, C.W. (2012).The effects of core self-evaluations and transformational leadership on organizational commitment, *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, *33*(6), 564-582.

Lok, P., & Crawford, J. (2004). The effect of organizational culture and leadership style on job satisfaction and organizational commitment: a cross-national comparison, *Journal of Management Development*, *23*(4), 321-38.

Mathieu, J.E., & Zajac, D.M. (1990). A review and meta-analysis of the antecedents, correlates, and consequences of organizational commitment, *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *108*(2), 171-194.

Meyer, J.P., & Allen, N.J. (1991), A three-component conceptualization of organizational commitment, *Human Resource Management Review*, *1*(1), 61-89.

Meyer, J.P., Stanley, D.J., Herscovitch, L., & Topolnytsky, L. (2002).Affective, continuance, and normative commitment to the organization: a meta-analysis of antecedents, correlates and consequences, *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, *61*, 20-52.

Ohana, M. (2014). A multilevel study of the relationship between organizational justice and affective commitment, *Personnel Review*, *43*(5), 654 - 671

Poh, F.F. (2002). *The relationship between employee intention to leave and job satisfaction and organizational commitment,* MBA dissertation, Faculty of Business and Accountancy, Universiti Malaya, Kuala Lumpur.

Rashid, M.Z.A., Sambasivan, M. & Johari, J. (2003).The influence of corporate culture and organizational commitment on performance, *Journal of Management Development*, *22*(8), 708-28.

Schaffer, B.S., & Riordan, C.M. (2003). A review of cross-cultural methodologies for organizational research: a best practices approach, *Organizational Research Methods*, 6(2), 169-215.

Silverthorne, C. (2004). The impact of organizational culture and person-organization fit on organizational commitment and job satisfaction in Taiwan, *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, *25*(7), 592-599.

Tan, W.L. (2005). *A partial test of path-goal theory of leadership in the domain of Malaysia*, MBA dissertation, Faculty of Business and Accountancy, Universiti Malaya.

Yousef, D.A. (2001). Islamic work ethic: a moderator between organizational commitment and job satisfaction in a cross-cultural context, *Personnel Review*, *30*(2), 152-69.