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## Investigating the Effective Factors of Farmers' Trust in Trainers (Case Study: Agricultural Center of Ilam Province)

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### Abstract

The main objective of the current paper is to investigate the effective factors on the farmers' trust in trainers using structural equation modeling. the current paper is an applied one and it is also a descriptive-survey research regarding the data gathering methods. It is a correlative study and particularly it is based on structural equation modeling. the statistical population of the study includes all the farmers, gardeners, and poultry and livestock farmers (traditional and industrial) residing in Ilam Province which adds up to 58858 people. The sampling method is multi-step random sampling method and in order to calculate the size of the sample, the maximum variance and Morgan's table were used and determined the size to be 384 participants. in order to evaluate the validity of the questionnaire, context validity method was used and the questionnaire was confirmed by ten experts. In order to evaluate the stability the Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient was calculated to be 0.8824. the results of the study show that there is a positive significant relationship among the characteristics of the trusting party (farmers), the characteristics of the trusted party (trainers) and the environmental characteristics with the farmers' trust in trainers and all the three hypotheses of the study were confirmed.

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## 1. Introduction

Without the presence of trust among the people of any community, the society will fall apart because most of the human relationships are based on the uncertainty. Human interactions will be preserved by trust more than rational reasons or individual considerations (Simmel, 2004). Trust will facilitate human growth and the flourishing of their talents and capabilities. Also it changes his relationships with others and the world into a creative and booming relationship so that the individual can experience calmness, security, liberty and independence together with others (Putnam, 1993). Trust emerges from the context of human actions, particularly from those sets of action which are directed towards the future and it is a kind of qualitative relationship which in Coleman's words "facilitates the power to take action". Trust is a facilitator for interactions in the social atmosphere which minimizes the cost of social negotiations and interactions and it plays a key role in solving the problems associated with social discipline. In other words the concepts related to trust have the potential to explain social relationships which include the vertical distinctions related to personal and public spaces (Azkia and Qafari, 2011). From Johnston's point of view, organizational trust facilitates the processes of economic and social networks, since trust is a significant structure in the interaction model (Batt, 2008). He believes that in order to build a social relationship, one should be able to create an atmosphere full of trust which in turn it reduces the fear of rejection and increases the hope for acceptance, support and confirmation. Trust is not a constant and unchangeable personality trait, rather social trust is an aspect of social relationships which is constantly changing and evolving; and this is the social behaviors of people which decrease or increase the trust level in social relationships. Also the social actions of people for creating and preserving trust possess a magnificent importance in mutual relationships (Johnston and Bachman, 2003). Basically the prerequisite for establishing a relationship with others in the modern societies is that the people should expand their ties beyond local communities and this requires that, despite what is considered normal in traditional societies, people would not look at those who are not friends as enemies and the strangers would not be considered enemies. People should see each other as a unique individual with distinct capabilities and specificity should be replaced by universality (An'am, 2002). Based on the theory of peasant subcultures by Rogers, one of the characteristics of farmers is distrust in personal relationships as well as the low tendency towards the new things (Mohseni Tabrizi, 2003). Hence, their treatment with others always bears some ambiguities. The rural community and the farmers in the modern world are repeatedly encounter new creations and technologies. This class of society often participates in the training classes held by the trainers but due to their distrust in strangers as well as any new concept or entity attend the classes with the prejudice that changing the traditional methods which are based on their experience are wrong. Hence, often we cannot witness any major changes in the rural community and the cultivating procedures. The element which should be extensively considered here is the element of trust; the trust that should be present in the relationships between the farmers and the trainers.

It should be noted that an effective expansion system should constantly try to use the support and participation of the local farmers in delivering valuable services. In any expansion organization there are a few number of trained expansion staff members despite the fact the responsibility of delivering expansion services to thousands of rural families weigh on their shoulders. Preferably those local people who have the leadership proficiency can make good assistants for training agents and expansion organizations in so many different aspects. Executing expansion activities together with the local people and with a proper cooperation will create a good relationship between the trainers and the farmers which in turn increases the trust of the farmers in this kind of programs and also make them enthusiastic about their participation in the expansion activities (Oakly and Graforth, 1997). In this regard in order to preserve this relationship and the acceptance of new creativities by the trainers, trust in agricultural trainers is an element which is highly unavoidable. Regarding the importance of agriculture in the life of the studied population (Farmers in Ilam Province) as well as the progress made in the agricultural sector technologies and the need to introduce these technologies to farmers and the need to train them to be able to use new farming methods, using these technologies, the pest control methods and so on; the importance of agricultural expansion and training and holding training courses in Ilam Province is strongly felt. Of course, it should be noted that the mentioned organization (Agricultural Organization) has participated in these activities as well as possible. But the thing with grave significance here is the attitudes of the farmers towards these classes and the preservation of their participation in the future-held classes as well as using the trainers' advice in their real farming situations. In this regard the most important factor which can help the farmers is increasing the level of trust in the trainers and training material presented in these classes. Modern agricultural instructions includes the set of methods, approaches and modern technologies which are developed for increasing agricultural products quantitatively and qualitatively and are

always improved by the researchers which should be transferred to the farmers by the trainers. Modern agricultural instructions start from researching workstations where the researchers have access to all the necessary establishments. But when technological packages reach the farmers even those farms which had the best performance cannot elevate themselves to the desired level of performance. One of the reasons which can be proposed for this is the absence of positive attitude towards these instructions. Wherever the attitude towards a new technology is positive, the acceptance rate in the target community is much more (Partti, 2002). Farmers as the productive class of the society have a certain characteristics such as late acceptance, and distrust in strangers; hence the expansion of new agricultural technologies will not be accepted easily among them. Regarding this fact the main functionality of expansion programs is changing the behaviors of farmers using the training process. Hence usually change in attitude or emotions and reactions regarding specific phenomena as well as building trust are dealt with in expansion training programs. So regarding the importance of the activities of this class in the society and in order to facilitate using of new knowledge and technologies by them, it is rationally necessary to carefully evaluate the ways to expand using them as well as the barriers to do so. The result will be that the needed knowledge and skills as a whole will be accessible to the target community. It is obvious that trust as one of the important effective cultural factors will be the driving force for the reformation of the target community and hence investigating the effective factors on trust is very important regarding the mentioned aspects. Fukuyama believes that before entering into any kind of social or commercial system, adequate information should be gathered regarding the trust networks inside that network as well as the characteristics of these networks due to the fact that he considers trust as the basis for any economic or social interaction (2000). The trust network can be created among the members of a group or between distinct groups or organizations (Heidarabadi, 2010). The participation principle is one of the fundamental principles of expansion training programs. Expansion programs should be designed and executed in a way that participation of people is seen in all of its stages. But increasing the participation of farmers and the rural community in expansion programs depends on their previous experiences with this programs, their satisfaction with the outcomes and their trust in the trainers and presented programs. The distrust of farmers in trainers leads to decreasing participation in the programs and finally widening the gap between the farmers and trainers and forgetting the major objectives of the agricultural training and expansion organizations. By looking at the current status of cultivation in Ilam Province which is often for earning a living and not for commercial uses, the abundance of failed greenhouse projects, inability to return the agricultural funds and loans, youngsters not willing to engage in agricultural activities, and the current economic and social atmosphere of the society, building trust seems a necessary step to create a positive attitude among the farmers particularly the young ones and increase their participation in expansion programs.

## 2. Literature Review And Hypotheses

### 2.1. Literature Review

Different researchers in Iran and other countries have carried out distinct studies on trust some of which will be briefly mentioned in this section.

Ojaqlu and Zahedi (2005) in a paper titled “social trust and its effective factors among the residents of Zanjan City” investigate social trust using a survey method. The results of their research show that there is no significant relationship between variables of traditionalism, social basis, age, gender, marital status, residence time extent, language, watching TV and going to cinema with the variable of social trust. But there is a positive significant relationship between traditionalism and residential neighborhood as an aspect of social basis and the participants’ educational level and studying habits with social trust.

Abaszadeh et al (2010) investigated the trust in official authorities and its effective factors in order to evaluate the social variables affecting trust in the authorities from the point of view of undergraduate students of Tabriz Azad University. The results of their study show that the average trust in official authorities from the point of the students is more than the mean value. Heidarabadi (2010) in a study to investigate the cultural and social factors affecting the social trust of the youngsters in Mazandaran Province reached the conclusion that the variables of educational level and social class had a negative relationship with social trust while there was a positive relationship between the variables of human relationships, accepting the society by the family, and religious beliefs with social trust.

Share’ Pour (2009) in a study deals with the effective factors on social trust in police forces in Mazandaran Province. The results of the study show that in determining the trust in police forces social variables and particularly

the factors related to just and effective governments are more important than individual variables and participation in volunteering organizations. Hence; the attitudes of people towards actors and the activities of governmental organizations have a significant impact on their evaluation of trust in police forces. Sligo and Massey (2007) investigated risk taking, trust and knowledge in agricultural training in New Zealand so that they can study the access of the diary producing farmers to new information and using that information as a tool in the risk situations and trust, based on the interpersonal relationships framework. The results of their study indicate that the participants show the characteristics of pre-modern, modern, and post-modern societies regarding the usage of complex interaction formats and as a combination of individual and social methods as well as their concerns in individual and professional lives. “Investigating the responsibility and trust in organizations based on some variables” is the title of a study carried out by Kursunohlu (2009) in Denizli City in Turkey. The main objective of this study was to investigate the trust given to organizations based on some underlying variables among the teachers. The results showed that there are significant differences among the teachers’ experiences of trust.

Alkoufi et al (2012) investigated standard group trust for identifying reliable people on Internet social networks. The results of the study showed that the standard group trust method used by the researchers has a grave advantage comparing to the available method for both discovering the reliable users and the ability to control unreliable users.

Kim and Ahmad (2013) investigated trust, distrust, and lack of self-confidence of the users in media sharing social communities on the Internet. The results of their study show that distrust is a strongly mental belief which is created based on the direct experiences of the individual and it is not affected by positive or negative remarks of others. They believe that even a few negative experiences can easily lead to distrust on the part of the users.

## 2.2. Reserach Hypothesis:

In this study three main hypotheses are analyzed:

- 1- There is a relationship between the characteristics of the trusting party (farmers) and farmers’ trust in the trainers of Agricultural Organization of Ilam Province.
- 2- There is a relationship between the characteristics of the trusted party (trainers) and farmers’ trust in the trainers of Agricultural Organization of Ilam Province.
- 3- There is a relationship between the underlying characteristics and the farmers’ trust in the trainers of Agricultural Organization of Ilam Province.

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1. Research Goal

The main objective of the current paper is to investigate the effective factors on the farmers’ trust in trainers using structural equation modeling. To test the propositions, a field survey using questionnaires was conducted.

### 3.2. Sample and Data Collection

The current paper is an applied study considering its objectives, also regarding the data gathering time it is a retrospective study. Regarding the nature of the data it is a quantitative study, regarding the subject characteristics it is a causal study, regarding the supervising method it is a survey research, regarding the data gathering method it is a field study and regarding the extent of ability to control the independent variables of the research it is a non-empirical study. The analysis used in this study is descriptive- correlative. The main data gathering tool in the current study is a made questionnaire which is designed and executed based on the conceptual background of the subject matter and the objectives and hypotheses of the study. the statistical population of the study includes all the farmers, gardeners, and poultry and livestock farmers (traditional and industrial) residing in Ilam Province which adds up to 58858 people. The sampling method is multi-step random sampling method and in order to calculate the size of the sample, the maximum variance and Morgan’s table were used and determined the size to be 384 participants. in order to evaluate the validity of the questionnaire, context validity method was used and the

questionnaire was confirmed by ten experts. In order to evaluate the stability the Cronbach’s Alpha Coefficient was calculated to be 0.8824.

3.3. Analyses and Results

The data analysis task was done using the SPSS software application and it was carried out in two levels; namely descriptive statistics (center-oriented statistics and distribution) and analytical statistics (Spearman’s Correlation Coefficient in order to test the correlational hypotheses of the research). Also the Cronbach’s Alpha Coefficients for the individual variables of the study are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Stability Coefficients for Research Variables

Variable	Number of Items	Stability Coefficient
Trusting Party Characteristics (Farmers)	5	0.8336
Trusted Party Characteristics (Trainers)	5	0.8047
Underlying Characteristics	5	0.7728
Farmers’ Trust in Trainers	6	0.8256

4. Result and Discussion

4.1. Testing of Research Hypotheses:

**The First Hypothesis:** There is a relationship between the characteristics of the trusting party (farmers) and farmers’ trust in the trainers of Agricultural Organization of Ilam Province.

The statistical hypotheses for the test are:

H0: There is not a relationship between the characteristics of the trusting party (farmers) and farmers’ trust in the trainers of Agricultural Organization of Ilam Province.

H1: There is a relationship between the characteristics of the trusting party (farmers) and farmers’ trust in the trainers of Agricultural Organization of Ilam Province.

Table 2. The Results from Structural Equation Modeling Analysis: the First Research Hypothesis

Standard Coefficient	T-Value	Result
58%	7.98	H0 Rejected

H1 claims that there is a relationship between the characteristics of the trusting party (farmers) and farmers’ trust in the trainers of Agricultural Organization of Ilam Province. Based on Table 2, the standard coefficient between the two latent variables of trusting party characteristics and farmers’ trust in trainers is 0.58 and according to the obtained T-value (7.98) which is higher than 1.96, H0 is rejected and H1 is confirmed. So we can conclude that there is a positive and significant relationship between the characteristics of the trusting party (farmers) and farmers’ trust in the trainers. Hence the first hypothesis of the research is confirmed.

**The Second Hypothesis:** there is a relationship between the characteristics of the trusted party (trainers) and farmers’ trust in the trainers of Agricultural Organization of Ilam Province.

The statistical hypotheses for the test are:

H0: There is not a relationship between the characteristics of the trusted party (trainers) and farmers’ trust in the trainers of Agricultural Organization of Ilam Province.

H1: There is a relationship between the characteristics of the trusted party (trainers) and farmers’ trust in the trainers of Agricultural Organization of Ilam Province

Table 3. The Results from Structural Equation Modeling Analysis: the Second Research Hypothesis

Standard Coefficient	T-Value	Result
63%	8.55	H0 Rejected

H1 claims that there is a relationship between the characteristics of the trusted party (trainers) and farmers' trust in the trainers of Agricultural Organization of Ilam Province. Based on Table 3 the standard coefficient between the two latent variables of trusted party characteristics and farmers' trust in trainers is 0.63 and according to the obtained T-value (8.55) which is higher than 1.96, H0 is rejected and H1 is confirmed. So we can conclude that there is a positive and significant relationship between the characteristics of the trusted party (trainers) and farmers' trust in the trainers. Hence the second hypothesis of the research is confirmed.

*The Third Hypothesis:* There is a relationship between the underlying characteristics and the farmers' trust in the trainers of Agricultural Organization of Ilam Province.

The statistical hypotheses for the test are:

H0: There is not a relationship between the underlying trust characteristics and the farmers' trust in the trainers of Agricultural Organization of Ilam Province.

H1: There is a relationship between the underlying trust characteristics and the farmers' trust in the trainers of Agricultural Organization of Ilam Province.

Table 4. The Results from Structural Equation Modeling Analysis: the Third Research Hypothesis

Standard Coefficient	T-Value	Result
60%	8.34	H0 Rejected

H1 claims that there is a relationship between the underlying characteristics and the farmers' trust in the trainers of Agricultural Organization of Ilam Province. Based on Table 4 the standard coefficient between the two latent variables of underlying characteristics and farmers' trust in trainers is 0.60 and according to the obtained T-value (8.34) which is higher than 1.96, H0 is rejected and H1 is confirmed. So we can conclude that there is a positive and significant relationship between the underlying characteristics and farmers' trust in the trainers. Hence the third hypothesis of the research is confirmed.

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