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STUDYING THE FACTORS AFFECTING STRENGTHENING THE COMMUNITY TRUST AMONG WHEAT FARMERS OF SHOUSHTAR CITY

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to examine factors affecting strengthening community trust among wheat farmers of Shoushtar city. In this study, a questionnaire was used as measurement tool. This study is an applied one based on research purpose and non-experimental research in terms of data collection method. Statistical community of this study includes all wheat farmers of Shoushtar city which their number is equal to 14,000. Sample size was measured 250 people using Cochran formula. Sampling method was random. To determine validity, external validity method was used. Cronbach's alpha values were calculated to determine the reliability of the survey instrument and the reliability of research instrument was approved. Questionnaire of this survey has validity with a total alpha of 0.832. Results achieved showed that level of social trust of 33.9% of respondents were high and 61.7% of respondents have a moderate level of confidence. Generally, level of social trust is in an upward moderate level. In studying actors affecting the social trust of wheat farmers in Shoushtar city, stepwise regression analysis was used. The results showed that five variables of the knowledge of local management (40.2 %), variable of cosmopolitan orientation (13.1 %), history of membership in rural organizations (6.5 %), variable of rates of ground water (1.8 %) and the use of information resources (0.9 %) explained changes related to social trust among wheat farmers. In total, these five variables explain almost 60.6% of social trust variable changes.

Keywords: *Social Trust, Community Management, Social Capital*

INTRODUCTION

Today the villages as a center for farmers and manufacturers and as the major food production centers requires careful planning and improvement of rural management in order to stabilize economic growth, political stability and increase rural participation, reducing unemployment, poverty and prevent the destruction of natural resources in order to increase the level of production (Bazi and Hedayatai, 2010: 180). One of the most important elements that can have an important role in improving the management of rural practice is public confidence in the rural areas. One of the major concerns of social scientists is how to establish the unity and cooperation in the community and its continuity. Sociologists paid attention to this issue as functional necessitates to maintain and continuity of the community. These fundamental problems are also manifested in different forms (Mollaie *et al.*, 2008). Research results showed that social trust is a factor in increasing social participation and finally the productivity of production factors (Matlabi *et al.*, 2008). The increase and enhance of social trust is important and necessary to improve the rural management. Hence, identification of factors affecting rural social trust is important to improve the rural management process. Trust is an integration mechanism that creates and maintains unity in social system (Adler and Kwon, 2002). In fact, confidence is the greatest facilitator of organization effectiveness, even better than information, because information may be high, but its richness is related to trust (Aspin, 2004). Trust phenomenon can be considered from different dimensions so that trust is formed based on these dimensions. From one point, confidence is based on five dimensions: Integrity, technical skills and knowledge in the field of human relations, stability or durability, predictability, good judgment when dealing with different situations, loyalty and the freely exchange of ideas and information.

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What is certain is that all dimensions of trust can facilitate relationships and the relationships based on trust (Abdulbaghi and Dlouhy, 2007). Stone (2001) considers the key element of social capital in transferring confidence. Social capital is a trust-based relationship in the community and it can be considered as an appropriate set that is created in the nature of social relationships and make social life more pleasant and desirable. Anthony Giddiness considers trust and its impact on the development process as the underlying infrastructure in the modern world. When the level of social trust is high, people assistance and cooperation in social fields will be higher and social damages will be low (Akbari, 2004). Attention to social trust is not a new idea, but it dates back to several centuries. Enjoying the new community of unique features such as futurism, mutual dependence, the extent and diversity of the communities, proliferation and differentiation of social roles, extending the selection system, institutional complexity and increasing ambiguity, anonymity and enhancing oblivion and being strange to social environment, attention to social trust and its role in social life sees a cultural-oriented growth that has a tendency to turn from hard concepts to soft ones. Such a turn follows by a deeper attention to the concepts of trust and we saw a new wave of issues related to trust in the social sciences, especially sociology during the last two decades (Azkia and Ghaffari, 2007). All social groups have a certain amount of trust radius that means the rate of extending cooperation circle and the mutual trust among members of a group. In conclusion, we can say that the higher a social group has trust radius, the more will be social capital. If a social group has positive extraversion than members of other groups, trust radius of this group goes beyond from its inner limit (Aalawi, 2001).

Trust is the first component of social capital that points out the kind of relationship among people. Emphasis on trust, compared to other types of relationship in research literature, has a prominent role. In addition, the assessment of positive emotions or the level of mutual interactions at national level is a difficult task. A major part of this theory relates to social level based on the discussion of trust and trust is closely related to the generalized connection and generally it is a good indicator for positive and mutual relationships (Mousavi, 2006).

Theorists such as Giddens (1998) also distinguish between different types of trust. Trust to special people and subjective trust involves awareness of risks and a trusted person. So as actor can easily judge on the value of trust to certain individuals (based on information on the history, motivations and competencies), he/she can have ideas and beliefs about the value of trust to extended other. People also can have beliefs about value of trust to abstract systems such institutions. This process can be named as the level of institutional trust. This is what Giddens calls the idea of trust in expert systems. The actor may have no knowledge of the person who built his/her house or car, but have a degree of trust compared to the standard system, regulation, supervision and quality control (Alwani and Shirvani, 2006). In a society that there is more social trust, costs will significantly reduce, entrepreneurship will grow and productivity will increase. The results would be the same about cohesion and participation. Sincerity and commitment accelerate the development process in a community. Many studies have been conducted in various countries, which prove the claim. Although social trust is created generally, it cannot be clearly separated and distinguished from mutual or credit trust. They are interwoven and mutually reinforce each other. Mutual trust that is done by interpersonal communication shape social trust. Similarly, social confidence increase individuals' ability to build mutual trust. Mutual trust strengthens the sense of moral obligation and thus makes credit trust more stable. The present study was thus designed to answer the following questions:

- What is the status of social trust among Wheat farmers of Shoushtar city?
- What factors impact on social trust among Wheat farmers of Shoushtar city?

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research method in this study is survey descriptive method. The purpose of this study was to examine the role of local management in fostering social trust among the Wheat farmers of Shoushtar city. In this study, a questionnaire was used as measurement tool. This study is an applied research in terms of purpose and in terms of data collection method, it is the type of non-experimental research and

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correlational descriptive studies in term of method that collected data in filed research method. Statistical community of this research includes all wheat farmers of Shoushtar city that equal to 14000 people. The sample size was calculated using Cochran formula which evaluated 250 ones. Sampling method was done randomly by making a list of Wheat Farmers in Shoushtar valley. The main instrument of data collection was the questionnaire. To determine validity, external validity was used. Because the external validity depends on the judgment and opinions of experts on the subject, to determine validity and doing required revisions, the questionnaire was given to a panel of experts and the final questionnaire was set after the conclusion of their opinions. To determine the reliability of the survey instrument after the distribution of 30 questionnaires as the initial test, Cronbach's alpha values were calculated for different parts and the reliability of research instrument was determined. This research questionnaire has validity by having total alpha of 0.832. Social trust in this study was measured with 11 items in Likert format. In this study, to identify the factors affecting social trust, regression analysis was used.

Findings

Personal and Professional Characteristics of Wheat Farmers

Results achieved from personal and professional features of what farmers show that 20.4% of respondents resident in West Shabieh village, 31.3% in Sardarabad rural area and 18.3% in Shahid Modares rural area. The average age of respondents was 39.3 years old, 95.2% men and 4.8% are women and 76.5% were born in rural areas and 23.5% in urban areas. Also 64.8% of respondents choose their permanent residence in villages and 84.3% are married, 6.5% in just reading and writing level, 7.4% at the elementary level, 19.6% were diploma, 27% at upper-diploma level and 34.3% were undergraduate level.

Economic Features of Wheat Farmers

Studying economic features of wheat farmers show that they have an average of 4.7 hectares of irrigated land. In investigating the amount of dry land, it was found that wheat farmers in the region have an average of 4.3 hectares. Evaluation of light livestock showed that respondents have on average of about 10.87 livestock. In studying large livestock, results showed that respondents have an average of 1.5 heavy livestock. Studying the condition of machinery ownership showed that only 4.10% of respondents have the private machinery ownership. Monthly household expenditure survey showed that the average monthly fee is 1106008 Rials. Survey of the main occupation of respondents showed that 44.8% of respondents are employees and just 37.9% of them announced their main job as agriculture.

-studying social status showed that 24.3% considered a low level of dignity for themselves and 28.7% have high dignity level, which it can be said that level of dignity in moderate respondents is upward (Table 1).

Table 1: Grading level of respondents' dignity

Dignity	Frequency	Percentage	Validity percentage	Cumulative percentage
low	56	24.3	25.5	25.5
Medium	98	42.6	44.5	70
High	66	28.7	30	100
Non-Responded	10	4.3	-	-
Total	230	100	100	-

Studying cosmopolitan tendency of wheat farmers show that 10.2% have low tendency, 49.1% have average tendency and 40.7% have high tendency to towns, which it can be said that the level of urban tendency among average respondents is upward (Table 2).

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Table 2: Grading the level of respondents' cosmopolitan tendency

Urban tendency	Frequency	Percentage	Validity percentage	Cumulative percentage
low	23	10	10.2	10.2
Medium	111	48.3	49.1	59.3
High	92	40	40.7	-
Non-Responded	4	1.7	-	-
Total	230	100	100	-

Evaluation of using what farmers of mass media shows that 24.8% of respondents use it in a low level, 45.5% in a moderate level and 29.7% in a high level (Table 3).

Table 3: Grading the level of using mass media

Usage level	Frequency	Percentage	Validity percentage	Cumulative percentage
low	55	23.9	24.8	24.8
Medium	101	43.9	45.5	70.3
High	66	28.7	29.7	100
Non-Responded	8	3.5	-	-
Total	230	100	100	-

In surveying the attitude of wheat farmers to local administration, the results showed that 4.3% have positive attitude, 11.1% have negative attitude and 84.3% have a relatively positive attitude towards local administration of village (Table 4).

Table 4: Grading respondents' attitudes towards local administration

Attitude percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Validity percentage	Cumulative percentage
Negative	24	10.4	11.1	11.1
Relatively negative	183	79.6	84.3	95.4
Positive	10	4.3	4.6	100
Non-Responded	13	5.7	-	-
Total	230	100	100	-

Study of social consciousness of wheat farmers from Local Management (Village Councils) showed that consciousness level of 41.5% of respondents is in a high level, 41.9% in a moderate level and 16.6% are in a low level (Table 5).

Table 5: Rating the level of awareness of the respondents from the Village Councils

Awareness level	Frequency	Percentage	Validity percentage	Cumulative percentage
low	38	16.5	16.6	16.6
Average	96	41.7	41.9	58.5
high	95	41.3	41.5	100
Non-Responded	1	0.4	-	-
Total	230	100	100	-

Social Trust

Survey results from social trust showed that respondents gave the highest priority to the items "how you give value to transfer their knowledge and experience of its members" and in the next priorities, the item

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“to what extent do you believe that the more profitable you will be in partnership with others” and “To what extent the members of the Council welcome your criticism and show their good intention”. Results are given in Table (6). In surveying the level of respondents’ trust, the results showed that 33.9% of social trust level of respondents is in a very high level and 61.7% of respondents have a moderate level of confidence. Generally, level of social trust among what farmers has a moderate upward direction. Results are given in Table (7).

Table 6: Frequency distribution and prioritization of respondents’ views in terms of social trust

Item	Mean	Sd	CV	ranking
To what extent do you believe that in partnership with others, you have a more profitable job	3.66	1.048	0.286	2
To what extent do you believe that your colleagues will be obligated to pay their debts	3.03	1.122	0.370	10
To what extent do you believe that your colleagues are trustworthy in the Council's activities	3.29	1.088	0.231	8
To what extent do you believe that your colleagues adhere on their promise in the council	3.10	0.910	0.293	4
To what extent do you believe that in times of trouble you can count on the support of its members	3.28	1.059	0.322	6.5
To what extent do you believe that when faced with failure, you do not hide it from others?	3.25	1.019	0.314	5
How do you feel convenient in expressing your views (though opposite) in the presence of others?	3.48	1.120	0.322	6.5
To what extent the members of the Council welcome your criticism show good intentions?	3.39	0.991	0.292	3
How much you value council members in transferring your knowledge and experience?	3.67	1.042	0.284	1
To what extent do you believe your words in the council will not be used against you?	3.07	1.193	0.388	11
I am confident to the members of the village council	3.43	1.175	0.343	9

(1 = very low, 2 = low, 3 = moderate, 4 = high, 5 = very high)

Table 7: Classification of the level of social trust among Wheat Farmers

Social trust	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative percentage
Low	10	4.3	4.3
Moderate	142	61.7	66.1
High	78	23.9	100
Total	230	100	

Factors affecting social trust among Wheat Farmers of Shoushtar

In studying factors affecting the social trust of wheat farmers at Shoushtar, the stepwise regression analysis was used. The result achieved in Table 8 indicates that in the first step, variable in the equation was the knowledge of local management. The variable of local management knowledge was involved in the equation. The multiple correlation coefficient (R) equals to 0.634, and the coefficient of determination (R²) was equal to 0.402. In other words, 40.2% of changes of Wheat Farmers variable in the social trust are explained by this variable. In the second step, cosmopolitan orientation variables were entered the equation. This variable increases multiple regression to 0.730 and determination coefficients to 0.533. In other words, 13.1% of the variability in social trust is explained by this variable. In the third step, membership history in rural organizations were entered the equation. This variable raised multiple

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correlation coefficient to 0.767 and the coefficient of determination as much as 0.589. So 5.6% of the social trust variable changes are explained by this variable. In the fourth step, variable of rates of ground water was involved into the equation, which this variable raises multiple correlation coefficient to 0.779 and the coefficient of determination to 0.607. So 1.8% of the changes in social trust dependency among Wheat farmers is explained by this variable. Finally, in the fifth step, using information sources were involved into the equation. The variable of multiple correlation coefficient was raised into 0.785 and the coefficient of determination was raised to 0.616. Therefore, the variable of using information sources explains almost 0.9% of changes related to social trust of wheat farmers.

Table 8: Factors affecting social trust among Wheat Farmers with the values of the coefficients

Step	Variable	R	R ²	R ² _{Adj}
1	The knowledge of local management	0.624	0.402	0.399
2	Cosmopolitan tendency	0.730	0.533	0.529
3	History of membership in rural organizations	0.767	0.589	0.582
4	Level of irrigated water	0.779	0.607	0.599
5	Rate of using of information sources	0.785	0.616	0.606

Table 9: Variables influence the amount of social trust among Wheat farmers of Shoushtar city

Independent variables	B	Beta	T	Sig
Constant coefficient	1.252	-	10.609	0.00
Cosmopolitan tendency	0.039	0.428	8.263	0.00
History of membership in rural organizations	0.043	0.388	7.271	0.00
Level of irrigated water	0.008	0.130	2.683	0.005
Rate of using of information sources	0.015	0.116	2.069	0.040

Given the regression coefficient and the constant value obtained from stepwise multiple regression analysis, research regression equation is achieved as follows:

$$Y = 1.352 + 0.039x_1 + 0.043x_2 + 0.038x_3 + 0.008x_4 + 0.015x_5$$

Based on the results of Table 9, we see that variable of local management variable with beta amount of 0.428 has the higher impact on social trust among wheat farmers of Shoushtar city. The next priority is cosmopolitan tendency variable with beta value 0.388, variable of history membership in rural organizations beta value 0.272 and the variable of irrigated water with beta value of 0.130 is the fourth variable influencing social trust among the Wheat farmers of Shoushtar city. And finally, the variable of using communication devices with beta value of 0.0116 is the fifth variable affecting social trust of wheat farmers in Shoushtar city. Totally, the above five variables explain 61.6% of changes related to research dependent variable.

CONCLUSION

According to the research findings along with the findings and Kebosombing (2005), Gelirez *et al.*, (2000), the greater the degree of membership of the rural association of respondents, the greater will be their social trust. According to the results of Mousavi (2003), Asman (1999), Nancy *et al.*, (2002) and Alang (2002), the more the social awareness of respondents, their social trust will also be increased. The results indicate that in strengthening the social trust among wheat farmers, five variables of knowledge, cosmopolitan trends, history, membership in rural organizations, amount of ground water and the amount of using information resources play a crucial role. Level of social awareness from local management is the most important variable in increasing the level of social trust among Wheat farmers of Shoushtar city. Thus the most important measure to increase social trust among Wheat Farmers is increased awareness by holding training courses and using mass media in increasing public awareness. For this reason, Training Needs Assessment of Wheat Farmers in this area is necessary. Lutez (1998) emphasizes that in order to succeed in this field, holding education and extension classes are required.

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According to the results, the following suggestions are offered:

- According to the respondents' role in fostering social awareness and social capital, it is recommended to start training courses for Wheat Farmers in selected areas to provide knowledge, attitudes and skills. Also it is recommended for this purpose that based on research findings related to the impact of social trust, it is proposed to hold meetings and workshops for villagers to increase the promotion of their knowledge about local management which this will directly influence on social trust;
- According to the fact that membership history has a significant positive impact on social trust, more experienced people are asked to provide transfer of knowledge and the promotion of social trust by sharing their knowledge and experiences to new members. To this end, holding training courses by the help of experienced people is offered.

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