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## **Effect of Leadership Behavior on Non-Profit Organization Trust and Organization Loyalty**

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### **Abstract:**

*In recent years, the number of non-profit organizations has increased considerably and their organizational scale has grown. Non-profit organizations have thus become an important research field. In comparison to for-profit organizations, volunteers and workers are the most precious human resource for non-profit organizations. They are critical for managers of non-profit organizations. Hence, in non-profit organizations, leadership behavior is an important indicator of the ability to accomplish organizational goals. With ineffective leadership, employees' job performance is inferior and the turnover rate can increase. Thus, leadership behavior plays a significant role in organizational members' loyalty. This study aimed to probe into and demonstrate the importance of leadership behavior on non-profit organizations. First, this study explored literatures related to leadership behavior, organization trust and organization loyalty. Secondly, according to the analytical result, it established five studies. The researcher treated university and college Hsiang-Hai Club of Buddha's Light International Association, Young Adult Division as the subjects and distributed a total of 250 questionnaires, with 182 valid retrieved questionnaires. The questionnaires are explored using reliability analysis, correlation analysis, regression analysis and a moderating validation, to test the hypotheses as a reference to elaborate data. According to the research findings, leadership behavior is important in non-profit organizations and results in organization loyalty through organization trust, which has moderating effect. Finally, this study further discussed the previous results and proposed suggestions for future research and non-profit organizations.*

**Key words:** Non-profit organization; Leadership behavior; Organization trust; Organization loyalty

### **1. Introduction**

With the diversity of economic and social development, people's consciousness of their rights has increased. Many public issues propose different demands; hence, various types of non-profit organizations have arisen. Non-profit organizations have become important in modern society; however, with the vigorous development of non-profit organizations, the pressure and problems also increase.

The master of management, Drucker (1990), suggested that the "21<sup>st</sup> century is the era of non-profit organizations which provide the opportunities for individuals' control, contribution and improvement." As to organizational management, according to Drucker (1990), non-profit organizations should accomplish organizational tasks by various managerial methods. In other words, non-profit organizations can learn management from for-profit organizations to create sustainable operation. According to past research, Drucker (1990) indicated that management of non-profit organizations is based on their mission. The accomplishment of the mission relies on volunteers' participation and identification. Therefore, non-profit organizations should have their members focus on task accomplishment according to management, and the leaders must reinforce organizational performance by human resources in order to fulfill the organizational mission (Sun, 2004a). Leadership is an important tool for accomplishing organizational goals. With ineffective leadership, employees' job performance will be inferior. Therefore, leaders play significant roles in organizations on organizational members' loyalty (Shih, 2005).

When enterprises encounter the challenge of environmental change, the managers' leadership behavior becomes important. In corporate operation and management in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, management's leadership and efficacy are critical for organizational performance. Managers should adopt the most appropriate leadership to enhance employee loyalty and result in maximum leadership efficacy and competitive advantage. Humans are the most critical assets of organizations. Employees' organizational commitment is not only the research topic focused on by organizational management scholars but is also the organizational issue concerned by business management workers. According to most literatures and theories, a high degree of organizational commitment will enhance organizational efficacy. Therefore, research on employee loyalty and commitment to organizations is meaningful.

In for-profit and non-profit organizations, human resource management is critical. By properly using the talents, organizations can effectively use resources and have efficient management. In comparison to other organizations, for non-profit organizations,

human resources are a more precious asset. However, nowadays, there are urgent problems in the human resource management of non-profit organizations, such as a shortage of funds, employment population structure changes, changes in employee values, and turnover of employees with high capacity and limitation of promotion (Pyner, 1997). According to the above literatures, some non-profit organizations might encounter these problems. The impact of these issues on organizations was one of the motives of this study.

According to human resource management proposed by Pyner (1997), in comparison to for-profit organizations, non-profit organizations have more difficulty in dealing with human resource management. Employees in for-profit organizations work to make money or for other reasons. However, members in non-profit organizations are mostly volunteers or employees with low pay. How to manage and maintain organizational operation in these organizations is difficult. Thus, non-profit organizations should pay attention to organizational management. All organizations work to construct their image or high-quality brand reputation. Excellent talents will make an effort to enter such organizations and trust them. After they enter the organizations, how will leaders guide them and enhance their organization trust and loyalty? This study not only explored the problems encountered by non-profit organizations but also tried to determine if leadership behavior would influence member loyalty, using the Hsiang-Hai Club as an example, as well as how to reinforce members' organization loyalty by organization trust. This was the second motive of this study.

The researcher treated university and college Hsiang-Hai Clubs of Buddha's Light International Association, Young Adult Division (BLIAYAD) as subjects to analyze the effect of leadership behavior on the members' organization trust and organization loyalty. According to the situation in modern society, in comparison to the past, few modern young people have the intention to participate in club activities. The Hsiang-Hai Club is a religious club, and thus, there are fewer participants. Based on the previous views and motives, this study aimed to find if leaders' leadership behavior in non-profit organizations could increase members' trust and loyalty to organizations.

The purposes of this study were as follows: (1) to probe into the relationship between leadership behavior and organization trust; (2) to probe into the relationship between organization trust and organization loyalty; and (3) to test if leadership behavior influences organization loyalty through the moderating effect of organization trust.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Relationship between leadership behavior and organization trust

Theories of leadership include many types. This study only treated leaders' leadership behavior as the dimension. According to the result of scholars such as Wang (2006), Lee (2000), Zhao (2007), and Deng (2004) who cited the research of Ohio State University, leadership behavior can be divided into the structures of consideration and initiation. These two factors respectively influence trust in organization and can result in identification. Thus, this study explored the consideration and initiation structures. Fleishman & Harris (1962) defined consideration as referring to people, relationship and employees. Leaders pay attention to subordinates' internal needs and encourage two-way communication, and they allow subordinates to participate in decision making. Therefore, leaders and subordinates get along well and they respect and trust each other. Initiation structure was defined as concern about production and the accomplishment of work. Leaders pay attention to the accomplishment of organizational goals. They define the members' roles according to individual expectations, distribute tasks, plan the future and establish methods to fulfill the tasks. The key is the accomplishment of organizational goals.

In organizations, leaders' different leadership behaviors will influence members' organization trust. Mishra (1996) suggested that organization trust is a multi-dimensional concept that can be classified as interpersonal trust to colleagues and supervisors and organizational trust (Berman et al., 1998). According to Lin (2004), trust exists between employees and supervisors, employees and organizations, and employees and colleagues. Therefore, organization trust includes the relationships among employees, between employees and supervisors, and between employees and organizations. Organization trust has a high degree of subjective perception. Thus, regarding subjects which are trusted, managers' capacity to be trusted by subordinates, support for employees, integrity, benevolence, the key factors for employees to trust organizations, and managers and employees' personal tendency to trust others will positively influence organization trust (Tsai, 2004).

Organizational members' formation and construction of organization trust are influenced by managers' behavior. Therefore, managers' managerial style and interaction with employees can result in employees' organization trust (Tsai, 2006). Yen & Fang (2006) suggested that through leadership, leaders will create maximum productivity, encourage organizational members to develop creative problem-solving skills, and strengthen members' morale and satisfaction. Based on the previous literatures, this study proposed the following hypothesis:

H1: Leadership behavior significantly and positively influences organization trust.

### 2.2. Relationship between leadership behavior and organization loyalty

Leadership is the most critical factor of management, as it is the process to encourage organizational members to accomplish goals using better measures (Holt, 1990). Theories on organizational behavior define leadership differently. However, leadership is extremely important in organizational behavior and cannot be neglected.

The definition and measurement of organization loyalty can be divided into behavior loyalty and attitude loyalty (Bei & Chiao, 2001). According to the research of Chiu & Tai (2008), Chan (1999), Dutton et al. (1994), and Mak & Sokel (2001), this study defined behavior loyalty as follows. When members conduct intentional, significant and continuous behavior, the members will have commitment and loyalty to the organizations. When there is reciprocal behavior between the members and organizations, society will perceive fair treatment from the organizations and have continuous loyalty. Attitude loyalty was defined as the

consistency between the members' personal goals and organizational goals. Commitment is treated as a strong identification with and involvement in organizations. It is the employees' active and positive attitude toward organizations. When members have active and positive attitudes toward the organizational goals and value identification, have a strong work attitude and correlation with the organization, the members will be loyal to the organizations.

Ding (2002) used international tourism hotels in Taichung as examples and demonstrated that among the factors of turnover intention, leadership behavior, job satisfaction and organizational commitment have significantly a negative correlation with turnover intention. Zhang (2002) treated marketing personnel for insurance companies as subjects and showed that there is a negative correlation between supervisors' leadership and turnover intention. Leadership behavior will positively influence members' organization loyalty. Based on the previous literatures, this study proposed the following hypothesis:

H2: Leadership behavior significantly and positively influences organization loyalty.

### *2.3. Relationship between organization trust and organization loyalty*

Regarding for-profit organizations, Holden & Chow (1997) suggested that trust is a critical factor in the creation of loyalty between buyers and sellers. In trading relationships, trust can lower the risk. According to Kennedy et al. (2001), when customers' trust in salespersons and manufacturers increases, it will strengthen the relationship. However, in non-profit organizations, Sun (2004b) suggested that the operation of non-profit organizations is based on trust and mutual dependency. Therefore, with a trust relationship, a low-cost work team can be established to accomplish the goals. According to the previous literatures, organization trust is not only important in for-profit organizations but is also influences the operation of non-profit organizations.

According to the research of Doney & Cannon (1997), in for-profit organizations, trust can establish long-term relationships with customers. In other words, trust can lead to customer loyalty. It was inferred that in non-profit organizations, trust between members and organizations can reinforce members' organization loyalty. However, according to the research of Chiu & Tai (2008), Chang (2004), Yang & Chen (2006), Price (1997), and Ricketta (2005), when organizations have attractive characteristics, members will seek for organizational support. Organizations enhance member satisfaction by stimulation. Members will trust the organizations, develop positive affection toward organizations, actively participate in activities, and make other contributions. They will have high intention to stay in the organization and their loyalty to the organization will be reinforced. Thus, based on the previous literatures, this study proposed the following hypothesis:

H3: Organization trust significantly and positively influences organization loyalty.

### *2.4. Relationship among leadership behavior, organization trust and organization loyalty*

According to numerous studies, an organization requires an excellent leader who must be responsible for members and have courage and care. The leadership behavior will influence members' participation by activities. Hence, because of leadership behavior, the members will have organization trust (Shih (2004), Yen & Fang (2006), Su (2003). Trust relationships not only exist in interpersonal relationships; organizational members will trust the whole organization as well. This is known as non-personal trust (Robert et al., 1998). The best leadership is when the leader helps the organizational members work and accomplish the goals. When leaders enhance organizational development, all members can approach, know, participate in and contribute to the organizations. It means to carry out psychological contract by leadership. Morris (2001) suggested that with happiness and group compatibility in the workplace, leaders can create spiritual harmony in organizations and enhance members' organization trust. The change results in higher organizational effectiveness. Skillful leaders use interpersonal relationships in organizations to trigger members' loyalty and morale.

Organization loyalty is usually treated as members' attitude or affection toward organizations. It is usually regarded as the intensity of individuals' affection after trusting specific organizations. Therefore, members' loyalty can be members' perception as one of the organizations and their actual performance (Mak & Sockel, 2001; Hales & Gough, 2003). Ricketta (2005) mentioned that organizational commitment is the employees' internal perception. When organizations provide proper functions, it will help establish reliable and reciprocal relationships. Organizations will be further developed, and organizational members will be highly loyal to the organizations. Organizational members will have higher organization trust because of the leaders' leadership behavior, and employees will realize that their goals are consistent with the organizational goals. Hence, when organizational members' organization trust is reflected in the interpersonal relationship development of their work or the group, they will develop organization loyalty (Mael & Ashforth, 1989).

Finally, based on research of Feather & Rauter (20004), Ricketta (2005), and Udechukwu (2007), when organizations have characteristics that attract members, organizational members will seek for organizational support. Organizations satisfy organizational members by stimulation. Hence, organizational members will trust the organizations and gradually develop positive affection, have more interaction with the organizations, and show an active attitude and behavior at work. In addition, organizational members will be more loyal to organizations. Based on the previous literatures, this study proposed the following hypothesis:

H4: The effect of leadership behavior on organization loyalty will be moderated by organization trust.

## **3. Research Method**

### *3.1. Research Structure*

This study aimed to explore the relationship among leadership behavior, organization trust and organization loyalty in non-profit organizations and if leaders' leadership behavior in non-profit organizations would result in members' organization trust and loyalty. The research framework is shown as follows:

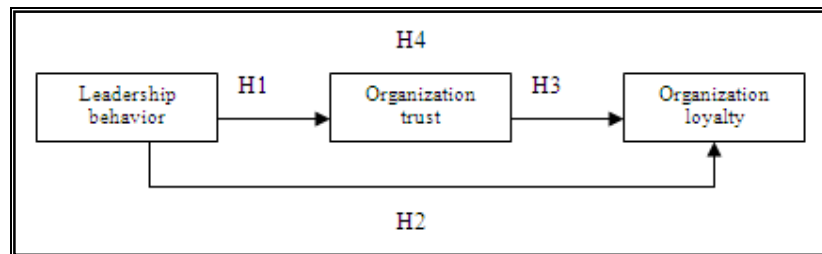


Figure 1: Research Model

### 3.2. Research subjects and questionnaire distribution

This study treated Fo Guang Shan youths (Hsiang-Hai Club) in colleges and universities of Buddha's Light International Association, Young Adult Division (BLIAYAD) as subjects. BLIAYAD can be divided into two types. One is the youth divisions of Fo Guang Shan youths in different regions (also called youth divisions) and the other is the Hsiang-Hai Clubs of Fo Guang Shan young adults in different colleges and universities. In order to encourage young students in universities to approach humanistic Buddhism and carry out meaning and value of life, at the end of 2006 BLIAYAD founded the Hsiang-Hai Club. At present in Taiwan, 14 colleges and universities have Hsiang-Hai Clubs, with approximately 280 members. The scale is expanding. This study distributed 250 questionnaires through mail and e-mails. A total of 195 questionnaires were retrieved. After eliminating 13 invalid questionnaires, the researcher obtained 182 valid questionnaires, for a valid return rate of 72.8%.

### 3.3. Design of scale

Using a questionnaire survey, this study probed into the relationships among leadership behavior, organization trust and organization loyalty. The questionnaire was developed according to the research purposes and research framework. The content of the scales is introduced as the following.

#### 3.3.1. Leadership behavior

According to the related literatures, this study defined leadership behavior below. The Hsiang-Hai Clubs, by the consideration and initiation structures, design mutual effect between the leaders and the members, for the leader to accomplish specific goals. By their characteristics and unique leadership, the leaders enhance organizational cooperation and participate in goal management. As to the measurements of dimensions, this study adopted the consideration and initiation structures in leadership behavior suggested by Fleishman & Harris (1962).

Regarding the items of leadership behavior, based on the two dimensions and a pretest and posttest, this study reorganized 10 items and measured the members' perception of the leader's leadership behavior using a Likert 7-point scale. Answers ranged from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree", and the scores included 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7.

#### 3.3.2. Organization Trust

It mainly measures the members' organizational trust after perceiving the leader's leadership behavior. This study defined organization trust as the belief or expectation of members toward the reliability of and their confidence in the leader, other members and the organization in the Hsiang-Hai Club. As to the measurement of dimensions, this study adopted supervisors trust, colleague trust and organization trust as suggested by Remple et al. (1985).

Regarding the items of organization trust, based on the three dimensions, this study reorganized 10 items and measured the members' organization trust using a Likert 7-point scale. Answers ranged from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree", and the scores included 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7.

#### 3.3.3. Organization loyalty

It measures the members' organization trust on organization loyalty. This study defined organization loyalty as the members' responsibility to treat the affairs in the club as personal business, contribute to the club, and regard the goal of the club or leader as the priority. This study adopted the scale of Hales & Gough (2003), and the scale included attitude loyalty and behavior loyalty.

Regarding the items of organization loyalty, based on two dimensions, this study reorganized 10 items and measured the members' organization loyalty using a Likert 7-point scale. Answers ranged from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree", and the scores included 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7.

## 4. Research Results

This study used regression analysis to test the effect of leadership behavior on organization trust, the effect of leadership behavior on organization loyalty, the effect of organization trust on organization loyalty, and the moderating effect of organization trust between leadership behavior and organization loyalty. The results are shown as follows.

#### 4.1. Effect of leadership behavior on organization trust

According to Table 1, in the regression analysis of leadership behavior and organization trust, leadership behavior was an independent variable and organization trust was a dependent variable. The result for  $R^2$  was 0.434, which showed that the explained power of leadership behavior on organization trust was 43.4%. Based on the result of the coefficient estimation, the standardized regression coefficient of leadership behavior on organization trust was 0.694 and significance was 0.000. Thus, the regression model was statically meaningful. Leadership behavior would influence organizational members' organization trust; therefore, H1 of this study was supported.

Dependent variable	Independent variable	Estimate of $\beta$	t	$R^2$	Significance
Organization trust	(constant)	1.796	5.894	0.434	0.000
	Leadership behavior	0.694	11.738		
Note: * $p < 0.05$ , ** $p < 0.01$ , *** $p < 0.01$					

Table 1: Regression analysis of leadership behavior on organization trust

#### 4.2. Effect of leadership behavior on organization loyalty

According to Table 2, in the regression analysis of leadership behavior and organization loyalty, leadership behavior was an independent variable and organization loyalty was a dependent variable. The result for  $R^2$  was 0.301, which showed that the explained power of leadership behavior on organization trust was 30.1%. According to the result of the coefficient estimation, the standardized regression coefficient of leadership behavior on organization loyalty was 0.627 and the significance was 0.000, indicating that the regression model was statistically meaningful. Leadership behavior would influence organizational members' loyalty to organizations; therefore, H2 of this study was supported.

Dependent variable	Independent variable	Estimate of $\beta$	t	$R^2$	Significance
Organization loyalty	(constant)	2.026	5.514	0.301	0.000
	Leadership behavior	0.627	8.800		
Note: * $p < 0.05$ , ** $p < 0.01$ , *** $p < 0.01$					

Table 2: Regression analysis of leadership behavior on organization loyalty

#### 4.3. Effect of organization trust on organization loyalty

According to Table 3, in the regression analysis of organization trust and organization loyalty, organization trust was an independent variable and organization loyalty was a dependent variable. The result for  $R^2$  was 0.478, which showed that the explained power of organization trust on organization trust was 47.8%. Based on the result of the coefficient estimation, the standardized regression coefficient of organization trust on organization loyalty was 0.750 and the significance was 0.000, indicating the regression model was statistically meaningful. Organization trust would influence organizational members' organization loyalty; therefore, H3 was supported.

Dependent variable	Independent variable	Estimate of $\beta$	t	$R^2$	Significance
organization loyalty	(constant)	1.220	3.867	0.478	0.000
	Organization Trust	0.750	12.839		
Note: * $p < 0.05$ , ** $p < 0.01$ , *** $p < 0.01$					

Table 3: Regression analysis of organization trust on organization loyalty

#### 4.4. Validation of moderating effect of organization trust

According to Baron & Kenny (1986), the moderating effect of the moderator between the independent variable and the dependent variable must be validated according to three steps. First, it should be confirmed that there is a significant standardized regression coefficient between the independent variable, moderator and dependent variable. Second, there must be a significant standardized regression coefficient between the independent variable and the moderator. Third, after including the moderator, the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable will be lowered by moderator. When it becomes insignificant, a full moderating effect exists. When it is lowered and still significant, a partial moderating effect exists.

In this study, the independent variable was leadership behavior, the moderator was organization trust, and the dependent variable was organization loyalty. Leadership behavior was set as X, organization trust was set as Y and organization loyalty was set as Z. In order to validate the moderating effect of organization trust, the following three conditions must be satisfied:

Condition 1: Leadership behavior significantly influences organization trust ( $X \rightarrow Y$ ).

Condition 2: Leadership behavior significantly influences organization loyalty (X->Z).

Condition 3: After including organization trust in leadership behavior, they influence organization loyalty (X,Y->Z) and regression coefficient of leadership behavior (X) will be lowered.

According to the supported H1, leadership behavior significantly influences organization trust. Hence, Condition 1 was supported. According to the supported H2, leadership behavior significantly influences organization trust. Condition 2 was therefore supported.

Based on Table 4, after including organization trust as a moderator, leadership behavior on organization loyalty was significant. After including organization trust (Y) in Table 8, the coefficient of leadership behavior (X) was lowered (0.188<0.627). Condition 3 was therefore supported. Regarding the relationship between leadership behavior and organization loyalty, by the moderating effect of organization trust, leadership behavior will positively influence revisit intention. H4 was therefore supported.

Dependent variable	Independent variables	Estimate of $\beta$	t	R <sup>2</sup>	Significance
Organization loyalty	(constant)	0.890	2.597	0.493	0.010
	Leadership behavior	0.188	2.328		0.021
	Organization Trust	0.633	8.248		0.000
Note: *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.01					

Table 4: Regression analysis of organization trust on organization loyalty

#### 4.5. Validation result of hypotheses

According to the previous statistical result, this study reorganized the empirical result of the hypotheses in Table 5:

Hypotheses	Empirical result
H1: Leadership behavior positively and significantly influences organization trust.	Supported
H2: Leadership behavior positively and significantly influences organization loyalty.	Supported
H3: Organization trust positively and significantly influences organization loyalty.	Supported
H4: Organization trust has a moderating effect between leadership behavior and organization loyalty.	Partial moderating effect

Table 5: Empirical result of this study

## 5. Conclusion and Suggestions

### 5.1. Conclusion

This study attempted to find if leadership behavior in non-profit organizations would enhance members' organization trust and loyalty. This study also tested the moderating effect of organization trust between leadership behavior and organization loyalty. The analytical results are shown as follows.

#### 5.1.1. Effect of leadership behavior on organization trust

According to the analytical result, leadership behavior significantly and positively influences organization trust, and H1 was therefore supported. In non-profit organizations, with the leaders' positive leadership behavior, organizational members will trust the organizations. Hence, managers or leaders in non-profit organizations should improve their leadership behavior in order to obtain the organizational trust of the members.

#### 5.1.2. Effect of leadership behavior on organization loyalty

According to the analytical result, leadership behavior significantly and positively influences organization loyalty. H2 was therefore supported. In non-profit organizations, organizational members will develop organization loyalty by the leaders' positive leadership behavior. Hence, managers or leaders in non-profit organizations can obtain organizational members' loyalty through the use of positive leadership behavior.

#### 5.1.3. Effect of organization trust on organization loyalty

According to the analytical result, organization trust significantly and positively influences organization loyalty. H3 was therefore supported. In non-profit organizations, members' organization trust will strongly influence organization loyalty. Therefore, in non-profit organizations, managers or leaders can be trusted by members through communication and interaction with members in order to reinforce their organization loyalty. Likewise, when organization loyalty is higher, members will continue their participation or recommend and invite the relatives to join in organizational activities.

#### 5.1.4. Moderating effect of organization trust between leadership behavior and organization loyalty

According to the analytical result, leadership behavior will positively influence organization loyalty by organization trust. Organization trust has a moderating effect on the relationship between leadership behavior and organization loyalty. This finding the views of scholars such as Yu (2006), Lin (2004), Blau (1964), and Liou (1995), and validated the critical role of organization trust between leadership behavior and organization loyalty in non-profit organizations. Therefore, in non-profit organizations, when improving leadership behavior, managers must determine if their leadership behavior will reinforce members' organization trust in order to effectively strengthen the members' loyalty.

According to the previous empirical results, in the Hsiang-Hai Clubs of BLIAYAD founded in the Fo Guang Shan system, Hsiang-Hai Club leaders' leadership behavior will result in the members' trust and loyalty to the club. Therefore, the human resource issues encountered by the Hsiang-Hai Club are mainly from the leaders' leadership behavior. Hence, leaders must establish the mission and objectives for the club and guide the members to accomplish the goals and tasks. Previous research findings can serve as a reference for other non-profit organizations or religious groups. The findings demonstrated that Hsiang-Hai Club can represent non-profit organizations or religious clubs.

#### *5.2. Suggestions and research contributions*

The previous conclusions were generalized by the findings. As to suggestions for management practice, this study suggested that Hsiang-Hai Club should carefully select leaders and hold courses to cultivate future leaders and cadre. Since the leaders can recognize the aims and goals of the club, they can modify and cultivate personal leadership behavior in order to attract more young people to join in the activities of Hsiang-Hai Club.

From the perspective of management, the ultimate goal of a non-profit organization is to accomplish the mission. Thus, managers must introduce the organizational mission and objectives to participants or members, who will thus recognize the value and significance of the organizational activities. According to the findings, in non-profit organizations, when the participants or members do not understand the organizational goals and missions, they will not attempt to understand the significance of the activities. The research results also demonstrated that if the leaders can probe into the organizational goals and mission, as well as guide members to understand and participate in organizational activities through their personal leadership behavior, it will result in members' organization trust. By trust in the leaders, members and organization, the members' organization loyalty will be strengthened.

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