

Designing a Model for Managerial Rhetoric

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ABSTRACT

A verbal strategy used by managers to create a favorable self-image is rhetoric, which opposes integrity. The aim of the study is to design a managerial rhetoric model utilizing a descriptive-correlational research approach grounded in structural equation model (SEM). A total of 278 public school principals with more than five years of work experience were selected from a population of 1,007 principals in Sistan and Baluchestan Province using the Cochran sampling formula and simple random sampling. The tool used for gathering data was the managerial rhetoric survey. To analyze the data, confirmatory factor analysis, Pearson correlation coefficient, and structural equation model were conducted using SmartPLS software. The results of the factor analysis indicated that the factor loading for each construct is satisfactory and the questionnaire possesses suitable validity. Cronbach's alpha values ranged from 0.78 to 0.94, demonstrating good internal consistency across the study measures. The path analysis results indicated that causal factors ($\beta=0.39$, $t=7.70$, $p=0.01$), contextual factors ($\beta=0.37$, $t=4.60$, $p=0.01$), and intervening factors ($\beta=0.14$, $t=2.032$, $p=0.05$) each had a significant positive effect on the development of managerial rhetoric. The findings further revealed that managerial rhetoric had significant positive effects on individual ($\beta=0.58$, $t=11.64$, $p=0.01$), organizational ($\beta=0.49$, $t=9.22$, $p=0.01$), and social ($\beta=0.51$, $t=10.70$, $p=0.01$) outcomes. The results indicated that the choice of managers ought to rely on ethical criteria, expertise, management abilities, work experience, and managerial reputation, rather than on party and political connections.

Introduction

Managers in organizations prioritize managing their image (how they are perceived by others) and aim to achieve popularity, trust, and respect by cultivating a favorable perception of themselves in others' minds (Mir & Nastiezaie, 2022). Indeed, the way others view them can influence their popularity, skills, dedication, the benefits they get, and the pace of progression within the organization (Moeini Korbekandi & Tabarsa, 2022). Typically, managers employ two kinds of verbal strategies (self-talk and spoken expressions) along with non-verbal strategies (facial cues, body language, and personal space) to control their image (Yazdani Ziarat & Damghanian, 2013). A verbal strategy used by managers to foster a favorable perception of themselves is rhetoric, which opposes truthfulness. Honesty stands as the essential value needed for any genuine leader, encompassing not only refraining from deception but also conveying the complete truth (Bauman, 2013), consistency between one's statements and behaviors, as well as fidelity to one's pledges and obligations (Simons et al., 2011). While honesty in communication and conduct is a fundamental ethical principle in the workplace, certain managers attempt to enhance their image and mislead the public by showcasing and endorsing positive aspects while concealing



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shortcomings ([Ghorbani, 2018](#)). The methods employed by these managers to sway others involve rhetoric ([Mollinger-Sahba et al., 2020](#)). Rhetoric represents a form of organizational hypocrisy, characterized by a significant disparity between what managers say and what they do ([Winkler et al., 2020](#)). Managerial communication can be observed in the public and private sectors alike ([Eryölmaz & Eryölmaz, 2015](#)).

A significant challenge faced by the administrative and social systems in less developed countries is the disparity between rhetoric and actions, making it essential to address the dominance of a rhetorical culture over practical approaches ([Kiakojoori & Eshagh Nimvari, 2014](#)). Today, employees observe a range of strategies employed by rhetorical managers, including fallacies, excessive talk, projection, arrogance, exaggeration, appealing speeches, manipulation of language, evading proper responses to specialists, aimless chatter, inconsistencies in words and actions, verbalizing without action, volatility in communication and behavior, dishonesty in work and conduct, failure to keep commitments, justifying poor and inappropriate performance, obscuring one's mistakes, glossing over one's actions, tarnishing competitors' reputations, attempting to mask flaws, misleading the audience with linguistic tricks, boasting, insincerity, veiling mal intentions with a deceptive facade, articulate and beautiful language, self-promotion, language manipulation, indulgence for advancement, flattery, convoluted speech, pretentiousness in communication, misleading individuals with complex and vague terminology, and lack of transparency in accountability ([Seify et al., 2022](#)).

Review of the Literature

In slang, rhetoric refers to meaningless and hollow words ([Foss et al., 2014](#)) that are employed to mislead others and serve the selfish interests of managers ([Ihlen & Heath, 2018](#)). [Booth \(2009\)](#) claims that rhetoric is an alluring, unproductive, and deceitful form of language. As per [Sophia \(2017\)](#), rhetoric refers to the manipulation of reality through a discourse that misrepresents the truth. [Mohammadi \(2018\)](#) claims that rhetoric represents a form of hypocritical conduct (a discrepancy between beliefs, words, and actions) where an individual aims to mislead others through deceitful language. Rhetoric is an unexpected and stimulating but not truthful and efficient form of communication that a manager employs to manipulate the perception of others.

A significant factor influencing rhetoric is the inappropriate real situation of modern society. Dishonesty and trickery are very prevalent in daily life nowadays, to the extent that [Cañal-Bruland \(2017\)](#) claims that total honesty is a scarce asset in routine exchanges and discussions. [Kopp et al. \(2018\)](#) viewed lying as an intentional aspect of daily and social interactions. [Sarkadi et al. \(2021\)](#) discovered that deceit and falsehoods arise when societal norms and regulations hinder the revelation of truth and sincerity. According to [Islam et al. \(2012\)](#), rhetoric and misleading communication are impactful when the social system endorses and assimilates them. [Gaspar et al. \(2013\)](#) noted that deception is prevalent in social exchanges. As noted in the research by [Methasani et al. \(2017\)](#), deception is frequently employed in negotiations to mislead others, impacting the negotiator's decision. [Ayazi \(2022\)](#) concludes that in today's society, not only is dishonesty prevalent at most levels of society, but it has gradually become a norm and an inevitable part of life. [Mokhtari et al. \(2022\)](#) found that the majority of people do not tell the truth in everyday interactions. [Mohaddesgilvani and Falsafi \(2015\)](#) concluded that empty talk, fallacies, and exaggerated statements are common and common in the world of politicians and are abundantly seen in political propaganda, including election campaigns.

A contributing factor influencing rhetoric is inherent self-interest. [Blum \(1980\)](#) argues that individuals are naturally self-serving and tend to evade losses; occasionally, because of their strong desire for wealth, status, and self, they deceive and engage in unethical actions to reach their objectives. [Fatahi et al. \(2010\)](#) discovered that as individuals' self-interest within an organization increases, their capability to engage in unethical behaviors decreases, leading to the perception that dishonesty in both words and actions is a negative characteristic. [Nazemi and Imani \(2018\)](#) assert that when personal self-interest is misplaced, it becomes common to lose integrity in both speech and actions. [Sheybak and Nastiezaie, N. \(2024\)](#) discovered that people who prioritize personal benefits over organizational interests tend to overlook privacy and neglect the rights of others in their everyday interactions. [Zarghamifard et al. \(2016\)](#) discovered that the self-interest and profit motives of managers reduce honesty while enhancing rhetoric and deception.

A different causal element influencing rhetoric is perceptual fear (the fear of generating a negative impression). [Seify et al. \(2022\)](#) discovered that perceptual anxieties like insufficient positive feedback, external influences, pressure from upper management on middle and lower management, criticism of managers, fear of controversy, and psychological stress enhance rhetoric. [Moeini Korbekandi and Tabarsa \(2022\)](#) discovered that managers employ imagery strategies to safeguard their favorable reputation among others. [Mir and Nastiezaie \(2022\)](#) discovered that a key reason managers engage in imagery management behaviors is the desire for positive evaluation from others, both within the organization and externally. [Ming Chung et al. \(2015\)](#) discovered that managers employ impression management linguistic strategies (such as rhetoric) because of their fear regarding inadequate performance. Consequently, it is reasonable to employ rhetorical strategies to enhance one's image in the perception of others.

Another contributing factor influencing rhetoric is personality characteristics. [Seify et al. \(2022\)](#) determined that intrinsic traits, personality flaws, untruthfulness in actions and conducts, absence of self-assurance, agreement in fiscal issues, talkative nature, longing to persuade others, aspiration to be the focus, and a tendency to speak more than perform contribute to the rise of the rhetoric phenomenon. Nevertheless, in comparison, authentic organizational leaders exhibit traits of trustworthiness, transparency, ethics, honesty ([Obuba, 2023](#)), commitment to values and beliefs, and a commendable human nature even when facing different circumstances and pressures ([Mir & Nastiezaie, 2022](#)), and thus do not rely on rhetoric. [Zarghamifard et al. \(2016\)](#) similarly found that individuals with elevated organizational self-esteem usually view themselves as significant, meaningful, and valuable, and have a strong conviction that they are crucial members of their organization. They adhere to ethical values, uphold principles, and refrain from lying or engaging in unethical behavior for personal gain.

An element that shapes the context for rhetoric is the culture of the organization. [Hellriegel and Slocum \(1996\)](#) discovered that in organizations where a competitive culture exists rather than a collaborative one, managers often resort to deceit. [Ghaffari et al. \(2019\)](#) discovered that an unfavorable organizational culture contributes to creating a duplicitous organization characterized by numerous inconsistencies between words and actions. Conversely, [Sharifzade et al. \(2019\)](#) found that when an organizational culture emphasizes the importance of honoring commitments, fairness and justice, honesty and integrity, trust in a higher power, dedication to objectives, genuineness, collaboration and teamwork, along with self-regulation, managers are less inclined to engage in demagoguery.

Insufficient demand is another element that establishes the environment for rhetoric. [Zanganeh et al. \(2019\)](#) discovered that people in society can convert their genuine needs into a collective demand via social demand and positive engagement, thereby compelling accountable institutions to react sensibly. [Ebrahimpour and Bahonar \(2016\)](#) determined that amplifying the voices of the people serves as a strong catalyst for change and holds significant promise for enhancing the responsiveness and sensitivity of public institutions. Even though demand is crucial, [Rajabi Farjad and Rezaei \(2017\)](#) note that numerous organizational managers have understood that many employees are aware of the realities regarding organizational challenges and issues, yet they lack the courage to voice these truths and, in reality, have chosen organizational silence over advocating for their needs. [Farajollah et al. \(2022\)](#) discovered that, regrettably, the people in our society exhibit a profound social indifference and fail to respond to social issues and harms. This disregard reflects a minimal level of social demand, and this societal apathy has established itself as the prevailing culture, making it challenging to alter this culture.

An additional element that shapes the context for managers' political rhetoric and behaviors is. [Fani et al. \(2014\)](#) assert that political behaviors are inherently self-serving, prompting organizational members to participate in political activities and seek to uphold or advance their interests through diverse political strategies and approaches. [Sowmya and Panchanatham \(2008\)](#) discovered that when employees see others progressing via political actions, they are inclined to participate in political behavior more frequently. [Bing \(2011\)](#) found that people who possess networking abilities recognize others with valuable resources or connections and form social networks with them, thereby acquiring social capital and social support for themselves. [Blickle et al. \(2010\)](#) discovered that managers are more inclined to earn the trust and backing of coworkers when they participate in political behaviors and influence strategies; their actions, characterized by seeming sincerity, are not viewed as dishonest.

Another element contributing to the discourse of environmental mandates is the lack of accountability among officials and managers. [Dehghanpour Farashah et al. \(2023\)](#) discovered that although the concept of public accountability is crucial for enhancing the performance of government organizations, there is evidence showing that this matter is not adequately addressed, and less developed countries rank low globally concerning accountability and organizational transparency metrics. [Geramian \(2020\)](#) found that centralized authority and decision-making, absence of a specific public oversight mechanism, an ineffective bureaucratic system, a deficiency in meritocracy, and non-compliance with laws and regulations significantly undermine accountability in developing nations. Olfati et al. (2021) identified the barriers to manager accountability, ranking them by significance: individual, functional, structural, organizational, legal, cultural, behavioral, and managerial obstacles. [Romzek and Dubnick \(2018\)](#) discovered that the absence of mandatory accountability in government entities underpins managerial discourse.

A contributing factor hindering the development of rhetoric is institutional corruption. [Seify et al. \(2022\)](#) discovered that managers who have unstable self-esteem and insufficient work ethic tend to be more susceptible to rhetoric. [Belschak et al. \(2018\)](#) discovered that managers possessing Machiavellian traits employ rhetoric to manipulate, exhibit autocratic behavior, focus on self-interest, dominate others, and pursue personal benefits. [Forghandoodt Haghighi et al. \(2014\)](#) discovered that Machiavellian managers view it as acceptable to employ any means, irrespective of its ethical implications, to attain their objectives and to communicate in line with people's desires. [Riazi Moghaddam and Keshavarz \(2024\)](#) outline the traits of Machiavellian leaders as dishonesty, trickery, ambition, acting, and communicating in accordance with others' desires.

Among the elements hindering Brewers rhetoric are poor intelligence and ethical conduct. [Plinio et al. \(2010\)](#) highlighted the deficiency of ethical conduct and the absence of moral leaders as the greatest difficulties facing modern organizations. Saifi et al. (1401) discovered that managers lacking moral intelligence show a higher inclination towards rhetoric. Conversely, [Bameri and Nastiezaie, \(2016\)](#) argue that managers possessing high moral intelligence connect their actions and words with ethical standards. [Mosharaf Javadi et al. \(2021\)](#) also discovered that leaders possessing high moral intelligence exhibit a significant inclination towards being honest in their thoughts, words, and deeds, refrain from hiding the truth, steer clear of Machiavellian behavior, align their words with their actions, adhere to promises, complete commitments, and act in a transparent manner.

The ineptitude and fragility of management are additional elements that disrupt the dominance of rhetoric. [Jabbarzadeh Kangarluie and & Radi \(2019\)](#) discovered that ineffective managers, because of their limited skills, fail to offer complete and precise information to others, and they also tend to give misleading information to conceal their inadequacy, resulting in minimal transparency. [Setayesh and Kazemnejad \(2012\)](#) determined that effective managers possess greater knowledge and understanding about the organization's stakeholders and environmental contexts, enabling them to appropriately apply ethical standards and maintain organizational transparency. [Seify et al. \(2022\)](#) discovered that insufficient work mastery, absence of required expertise, lack of control and competence in work, inadequate ability in executing managerial duties, limited cognitive abilities, lack of experience, and managerial inflexibility hinder the occurrence of rhetoric.

Pathological moral politics is yet another element disrupting the emergence of rhetoric. [Mohammadi \(2018\)](#) discovered that rhetorical managers exhibit hypocritical behaviors, as they aim to mislead others through insincere speech. Given that managers who exhibit the unethical trait of narcissism engage in behaviors that defy norms and seek attention, they exploit the organization to further their personal goals and enhance their status ([Olsen & Stekelberg, 2016](#)), depend heavily on their desires for admiration and influence ([Xu, 2024](#)), and tend to involve themselves in risky endeavors, such as manipulating accounting information and committing fraud ([Bazrafshan & Rezaei Nasab, 2020](#)), it is expected for them to utilize rhetoric to emphasize and amplify their self-image.

Research indicates that rhetorical behavior is not only a negative characteristic for successful leaders but also leads to numerous repercussions, including heightened organizational pessimism and self-interest ([Eskandarpour et al., 2021](#), [Winkler et al., 2020](#), [Kazemi et al., 2020](#), [Amirkhani et al., 2021](#)), distortion of truth, neglect of moral and social responsibilities (Aihlen and Hayes, 2018), deviant actions,

organizational pessimism, absenteeism, and turnover (Vogelgesang et al., 2013), lower job satisfaction, diminished organizational identity, reduced job belonging, decreased organizational citizenship behavior, employee well-being, job performance, organizational performance, effectiveness, and vitality (Kannan-Narasimhan & Lawrence, 2012), reduced organizational interactions (Connelly et al., 2015), loss of organizational trust and commitment (Moorman et al., 2018), a diminished perception of organizational politics (Nayyeri et al., 2018), reduced self-confidence, motivation, and organizational loyalty (Lau et al., 2020), less employee voice (Elsitohai et al., 2018), diminished hope in society (Safarishali & Tavafi, 2018), the emergence of deviating organizational behaviors; interpersonal conflicts, hypocritical actions, organizational misalignment, reduced trust, cooperation, cohesion, and organizational empathy (Hadavi Nejad & Kalvandi, 2017), and lowered ethical standards in the workplace (Shiri et al., 2015).

Based on the preceding literature, this study aimed to develop a model of managerial rhetoric. Specifically, it sought to identify the factors that contribute to the development of managerial rhetoric and to examine its individual, organizational, and social consequences.

Method

The research approach is descriptive-correlational utilizing the structural equation model. the statistical population consisted of 1,007 public school principals with more than five years of work experience in Sistan and Baluchestan Province, Iran. Using the Cochran sampling formula, a sample of 278 principals was determined, and these participants were selected through simple random sampling, aligning with Klein's guideline (1998) that indicates the sample size for structural equation model should be ten times the number of parameters in the model. The instrument for data collection was a 96-question survey on managerial rhetoric, modified from the study by Seify et al. (2022). The survey was made up of three sections: the initial section, containing 3 questions, explored the concept of rhetoric. The second section, consisting of 51 items, investigated the reasons behind managers' rhetoric, categorized into 1) causal factors: adverse real conditions (6 items), perceived anxiety (6 items), inherent profit motivation (6 items), personality characteristics (6 items), 2) contextual factors: organizational culture (9 items), environmental pressures (6 items), politicization (6 items), lack of demand (6 items), 3) intervening factors: low moral intelligence (6 items), pathological moral politics (6 items), institutional corruption (6 items), and managerial incompetence (6 items). The third section, comprising 27 items, analyzed the outcomes of managers' rhetoric regarding 1) individual impacts: heightened pessimism towards the manager (3 items), short-lived achievements (3 items), 2) organizational impacts: reduced efficiency and effectiveness (3 items), diminished organizational trust (3 items), lowered ethical standards (3 items), and 3) social impacts: reduced hope in society (3 items) and diminished public trust (3 items). The survey was assessed using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from very low (1) to very high (5). To assess the validity of the questionnaire, alongside gathering feedback from experts regarding the face and content validity, a construct validity analysis was conducted using confirmatory factor analysis. Data analysis was conducted using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS software. The analysis followed a two-stage procedure. First, the measurement model was evaluated to assess internal consistency reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity of the constructs. Second, the structural model was examined to test the hypothesized relationships within the proposed framework. In addition, Pearson correlation analysis was performed to explore the bivariate relationships among the study variables prior to SEM analysis.

Results

To assess construct validity, factor analysis was conducted to examine the underlying structure of the measurement model. This procedure was used to verify whether the observed items loaded significantly on their respective latent constructs, thereby providing evidence of the model's structural integrity. The results confirmed that the factor loadings met the recommended thresholds, supporting the adequacy of the measurement model in representing the proposed constructs.

Table – 1: Factor analysis

Factor		B(T)	Factor		B(T)
Causal factors	Q1	.81(28.04)	Intervening factors	Q34	.90(56.61)
	Q2	.87(36.73)		Q35	.84(32.68)

Contextual factors	Q3	.84(30.54)	Deceptive words	Q36	.89(43.62)
	Q4	.85(32.93)		Q37	.55(9.84)
	Q5	.77(24.88)		Q38	.71(17.20)
	Q6	.80(27.97)	Fallacies	Q39	.84(26.27)
	Q7	.78(29.01)		Q40	.88(35.75)
	Q8	.73(21.17)		Q41	.81(24.16)
	Q9	.71(20.47)	Hyperbole	Q42	.92(45.06)
	Q10	.79(29.01)		Q43	.65(10.77)
	Q11	.81(32.27)		Q44	.73(13.38)
	Q12	.80(31.40)	Individual consequences	Q45	.71(12.30)
	Q13	.85(28.26)		Q46	.72(16.90)
	Q14	.84(27.10)		Q47	.66(14.57)
	Q15	.96(134.17)	Organizational consequences	Q48	.79(24.45)
	Q16	.97(165.23)		Q49	.81(29.69)
	Q17	.96(137.59)		Q50	.86(37.84)
	Q18	.94(75.71)	Social consequences	Q51	.80(24.04)
	Q19	.95(104.51)		Q52	.76(20.18)
	Q20	.79(21.12)		Q53	.82(33.13)
Intervening factors	Q21	.80(22.15)	—	Q54	.75(18.35)
	Q22	.78(22.06)		Q55	.88(50.57)
	Q23	.74(15.47)		Q56	.79(27.78)
	Q24	.73(15.12)	—	Q57	.87(38.44)
	Q25	.70(16.60)		Q58	.70(15.90)
	Q26	.72(16.82)		Q59	.77(23.08)
	Q27	.72(17.42)	—	Q60	.76(18.35)
	Q28	.71(17.18)		Q61	.90(47.29)
	Q29	.81(28.61)		Q62	.88(34.48)
	Q30	.87(45.27)	—	Q63	.91(46.03)
	Q31	.86(43.65)		Q64	.63(10.87)
	Q32	.86(43.78)		Q65	.52(8.16)
	Q33	.87(43.04)		Q66	.60(10.35)

Factor analysis (Table 1) was conducted to evaluate the measurement model. The results indicated that all factor loadings were statistically significant and exceeded the recommended threshold, demonstrating that each item loaded strongly on its intended construct. These findings provide evidence of satisfactory indicator reliability and support the convergent validity of the measurement model, confirming that the observed variables adequately represent their respective latent constructs.

Before testing the structural model, the measurement model was evaluated to ensure reliability and validity. Internal consistency was assessed using Cronbach's alpha (α) and composite reliability (CR), while convergent validity was examined using the average variance extracted (AVE). Discriminant validity was evaluated using both the Fornell–Larcker criterion and the heterotrait–monotrait ratio (HTMT), with HTMT considered a more robust and conservative criterion for assessing discriminant validity (Henseler et al., 2015). According to established guidelines (Hair et al., 2020), acceptable thresholds are $\alpha > 0.70$, $CR > 0.70$, $AVE > 0.50$, and $HTMT < 0.85$, all of which were used as benchmarks for evaluating the adequacy of the measurement model.

Table – 2: Measurement Model Assessment

Questionnaire	Variable	Cronbach's alpha	CR	A V E	Heterotrait–Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)			Fornell-Larcker criterion		
					1	2	3	1	2	3
Factors	1.Causal factors	.95	.95	.64				.79		
	2.Contextual factors	.97	.97	.74	.87			.83	.86	
	3.Intervening factors	.96	.96	.66	.85	.76		.82	.66	.81

After confirming the relationships among the research variables, the structural equation model was estimated. The results of the structural model are presented in Figures 1 and 2:



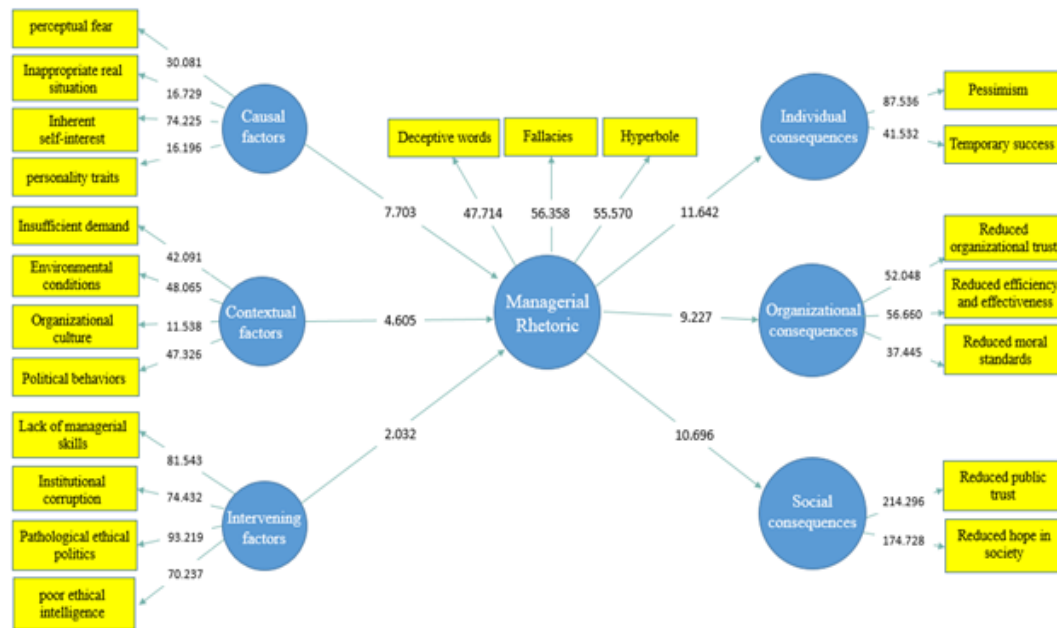


Figure -2: Model of managerial rhetoric featuring significant coefficients

Having established the reliability and validity of the measurement model, the next step involved evaluating the structural model to test the hypothesized relationships. Table 6 presents the path coefficients (β), along with their corresponding t-values and p-values, as well as the explanatory and predictive power of the model, represented by R^2 and f^2 effect sizes.

Table – 4: Structural Model Assessment

Path	β	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T (O/STD EV)	P	R^2	f^2	2.5%	97.5 %
Casual Factors -> Managerial rhetoric	0.40	0.05	7.99	0.001	0.16	0.21	0.29	0.49
Contextual factors-> Managerial rhetoric	0.37	0.08	4.77	0.001	0.11	0.15	0.20	0.52
Intervening factors-> Managerial rhetoric	0.15	0.07	2.08	0.037	0.09	0.12	0.02	0.29
Managerial rhetoric -> Individual consequences	0.58	0.05	11.17	0.001	0.33	0.50	0.47	0.67
Managerial rhetoric -> Organizational consequences	0.49	0.04	11.08	0.001	0.24	0.32	0.41	0.59
Managerial rhetoric -> Social consequences	0.51	0.05	9.28	0.001	0.26	0.35	0.39	0.60

Following the assessment of the measurement model, the structural model was evaluated to examine its empirical adequacy. Model fit was assessed using multiple goodness-of-fit indices, with particular attention to the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) and the normed fit index (NFI). These indices were used to determine the extent to which the proposed structural model aligns with the observed data. The comparative fit results for the saturated and estimated models are presented in Table 5.

Table – 5: Model fit

	Saturated model	Estimated model
SRMR	0.06	0.15

d_ULS	1.05	5.93
d_G	0.71	1.23
Chi-square	1094.45	1568.98
NFI	0.81	0.72

As presented in Table 5, the results indicate an acceptable fit between the estimated structural model and the empirical data. Specifically, the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) value of 0.02 is well below the recommended threshold of 0.08, indicating a minimal discrepancy between the observed and model-implied correlation matrices. Furthermore, the normed fit index (NFI) value of 0.89 suggests that the proposed model demonstrates a substantial improvement over the null model. Collectively, these results provide evidence supporting the adequacy of the model in representing the observed data.

Discussion and Conclusion

This study was conducted with the aim of designing a model for managerial rhetoric. One of the contributing elements influencing rhetoric is inappropriate real situation of society today. This result aligns with the conclusions drawn in the research of [Sarkadi et al. \(2021\)](#), [Cañal-Bruland \(2017\)](#), [Kopp et al. \(2018\)](#), [Islam et al. \(2012\)](#), [Gaspar et al. \(2013\)](#), [Methasani et al. \(2017\)](#), [Ayazi \(2022\)](#), [Mokhtari et al. \(2022\)](#). In discussing this result, it can be stated that lying and deception are not only entirely normal and prevalent in today's life and are often deliberate, but also that hollow rhetoric, fallacies, and overstatements are widespread in the realm of politics in less developed nations and are frequently observed in political propaganda, including electoral campaigns. Consequently, the manager who has ulterior motives behind his words and conceals his genuine identity through this deception becomes adept at assuming various roles in daily life. He conceals his real character with rhetoric and presents the persona that his social status requires.

A key factor influencing rhetoric was inherent self-interest. This result aligns with the conclusions of the research conducted by [Sheybak and Nastiezaie \(2024\)](#), [Fatahi et al. \(2020\)](#), [Nazemi and Imani \(2018\)](#), [Zarghamifard et al. \(2016\)](#). In discussing this discovery, it can be stated that a fundamental trait of humans is self-admiration, selfishness, and self-adoration. This trait compels them to pursue personal benefits and avoid danger, and possibly self-interest is the most significant motivator for humans to exert effort and labor, to gain knowledge and life abilities, and makes enduring pain and difficulties appear rational and warranted to them. From a young age, self-interest is inherent in humans, and it is they who have the ability to manage it and channel it positively, or to overindulge and utilize it as a means to fulfill their irrational wants. Consequently, whenever self-interest and selfishness choose an unethical course, it is natural for rhetoric to arise and honesty in speech and actions to decline.

One more causal element influencing rhetoric was perceptual fear (the apprehension of forming a negative impression). This result aligns with the conclusions of research conducted by [Seify et al. \(2022\)](#), [Moeini Korbekandi and Tabarsa, \(2022\)](#), [Mir and Nastiezaie \(2022\)](#), and [Ming Chung et al. \(2015\)](#). In interpreting this discovery, it can be stated that managers aim to steer clear of unfavorable assessments both within and outside the organization. Consequently, they employ image management language strategies, such as rhetoric, aimed at shaping how higher-ups and others view them, ensuring their image is seen positively, and securing popularity, credibility, trust, and respect from others. Consequently, it makes sense to employ rhetorical strategies to enhance their image in the perceptions of others.

Another causal factor affecting rhetoric is personality traits. This finding is consistent with the findings of studies by [Obuba \(2023\)](#), [Seify et al. \(2022\)](#), [Mir and Nastiezaie \(2022\)](#) and [Zarghamifard et al. \(2016\)](#). In explaining this finding, it can be said that managers with low self-esteem and work conscience, personality deficiencies, lack of honesty and integrity, Machiavellian and narcissistic personality, pride and arrogance, lack of self-confidence, blind eye to financial matters, talkative personality, desire to convince everyone, desire to be the center of attention, have a greater tendency to rhetoric. In fact, managers who have less healthy personality traits do not adhere to moral values, violate ethical principles, and resort to lies and wrong behaviors for their own personal interests.

An element that shapes the environment for rhetoric is organizational culture. This result aligns with the results of research conducted by [Seify et al. \(2022\)](#), [Ghaffari et al. \(2018\)](#), and [Sharifzade et al. \(2013\)](#). To explain this discovery, it can be asserted that rhetoric has become prevalent within the organization, employees have grown used to rhetorical managers, a culture of hypocrisy and deceit has taken root, the dominance of a relationship-focused culture in choosing managers and the neglect of appointing managers based on skills and experience, along with the existence of a competitive culture rather than a cooperative one, can create a fitting environment for the emergence of rhetoric within the organization.

Insufficient demand is another factor that generates rhetoric. This result aligns with the conclusions of research conducted by [Farajollah et al. \(2022\)](#), [Seify et al. \(2022\)](#), [Zanganeh et al. \(2019\)](#), and [Rajabi Farjad and Rezaei \(2017\)](#). To clarify this discovery, it can be observed that a majority of individuals in developing nations exhibit a significant degree of social indifference and fail to respond to social issues and injustices. This behavior stems from their minimal social demand, which has evolved into the prevailing culture within the society. Furthermore, numerous organizational leaders recognize that a large portion of their employees do not pursue demand concerning organizational challenges and matters. Thus, the absence of a culture that encourages demands and the employees' reluctance to challenge managers' rhetoric, the unquestioning acceptance of pertinent ideas by staff, their naivety and credulity, the dominance of praise and sycophancy, along with the lack of Islamic ethics within the organization can create an ideal environment for managers' rhetoric.

Another element that establishes the foundation for rhetoric is the politicization and political actions of managers. This result aligns with the results from research conducted by [Seify et al. \(2022\)](#), [Fani et al. \(2014\)](#), [Bing \(2011\)](#), [Blickle et al. \(2010\)](#), and [Sowmya and Panchanatham \(2008\)](#). To elucidate this discovery, it can be stated that the politicization of leaders to draw in employees' focus, the influence of politics in every aspect, linking the organization's existence to policies over its core mission, changing the organizational environment into one that is politically driven rather than specialization-focused, employees' perception that promotional processes are politically influenced, the rampant application of political techniques and strategies, alongside dismissing employees with dissenting views, form the foundation for rhetoric within the organization.

Another element that underpins rhetoric is environmental conditions, particularly the frailty of the culture of accountability among officials and managers. This result aligns with the outcomes of research conducted by [Dehghanpour Farashah et al. \(2023\)](#), [Olfati et al. \(2021\)](#), [Romzek and Dubnick \(2018\)](#), and [Hood \(1990\)](#). In discussing this finding, it can be noted that although accountability as a social instrument establishes the foundation for the rise of good and democratic governance and curtails rhetoric, the accountability of managers in underdeveloped nations is notably weak due to power centralization and decision-making, the absence of a defined mechanism for public oversight, an ineffective bureaucratic system, a lack of merit-based practices, and insufficient adherence to laws and regulations. Consequently, these managers perceive their words and commitments as less binding, making it likely for them to use rhetoric to enhance their prestige and credibility.

One of the elements obstructing the presence of rhetoric is institutional corruption. This result aligns with the outcomes of the research conducted by [Riazi Moghaddam and Keshavarz \(2024\)](#), [Seify et al. \(2022\)](#), [Belschak et al. \(2018\)](#), and [Forghandoodt Haghighi et al. \(2014\)](#). To clarify this discovery, it can be stated that managers with low self-esteem, a negative disposition, and a Machiavellian trait are more inclined to utilize rhetoric for personal benefit through deceitful, authoritarian, and self-centered behaviors. They manipulate others, pursue their interests, exhibit cynicism, and remain emotionally detached, employing any means necessary regardless of ethical considerations to reach their aims, conforming to others' desires, engaging in deception and manipulation, ambition, role-playing, and adjusting their speech and actions to align with others' expectations. They discovered that managers with unstable self-esteem and lacking work ethics are more inclined to use rhetoric.

A factor hindering the development of rhetoric is the lack of intelligence and ethical conduct. This result aligns with the results from the research conducted by [Seify et al. \(2022\)](#), [Mosharaf Javadi et al. \(2021\)](#), [Bameri and Nastiezaie \(2016\)](#), and [Plinio et al. \(2010\)](#). To clarify this finding, it can be noted that managers who possess low moral intelligence associate their conduct and discourse with unethical values,

exhibit a propensity for dishonesty and deceit in communication, hide the truth, display tendencies toward Machiavellianism, show inconsistency between their words and actions, do not keep their promises, fail to meet commitments and obligations, and lack transparency. Consequently, these managers will be more inclined toward rhetoric.

The inefficacy and fragility of management also hinder the dominance of rhetoric. This result aligns with the outcomes of research conducted by [Seify et al. \(2022\)](#), [Jabbarzadeh Kangarlouie and Radi \(2019\)](#), and [Setayesh and Kazemnejad \(2012\)](#). In discussing this discovery, it can be noted that ineffective managers, because of poor cognitive skills, insufficient expertise, lack of competence in their role, failure to execute managerial responsibilities, limited experience, and rigidity, not only fail to deliver complete and accurate information to others but also attempt to mislead subordinates with rhetoric to mask their inadequacies and foster a favorable perception of themselves among others.

Pathological ethical politics serves as another obstructive element in the emergence of rhetoric. This result aligns with the results of research conducted by [Bazrafshan and Rezaei Nasab \(2020\)](#), [Mohammadi \(2018\)](#), and [Olsen and Stekelberg \(2016\)](#). In interpreting this discovery, it can be stated that unethical leaders are more prone to employ managerial rhetoric because of their desire for approval, insincere compliments and adoration from others, narcissism, aspirations for advancement, and the significance of external opinions. Indeed, dishonest managers exploit the organization to further personal gains and enhance their standing, lean more on their desires for praise and control, and show a greater tendency to engage in hazardous actions, such as altering financial records and committing fraud to conceal their ineptitude. Thus, it is common for them to turn to rhetoric to emphasize and elevate their status.

The results of this study indicate that the key effects of managers' rhetoric included organizational pessimism, decreased efficiency and effectiveness, short-lived successes, diminished organizational trust, lowered ethical standards at work, and a decline in societal trust and hope. This result aligns with the research conducted by [Alizadeh Sani et al. \(2021\)](#), [Eskandarpour et al. \(2021\)](#), [Winkler et al., \(2020\)](#), [Kazemi et al. \(2020\)](#), [Safarishali and Tavafi \(2018\)](#), [Amirkhani et al. \(2017\)](#), [Abbasi and Hashemi \(2017\)](#), and [Shiri et al. \(2015\)](#). To explain this discovery, it can be stated that when employees notice rhetoric and dishonesty in managers' actions, they begin to lose their trust and grow pessimistic about the organization since they understand that managers operate on hidden motives and deceit, prioritizing personal and short-term benefits over the values of honesty, fairness, and integrity. This negative outlook leads employees to reduce their involvement in the organization's decisions and tasks due to disillusionment; as they lose faith in the organization's and management's motives and strategies, they become less committed and loyal to management's objectives and plans. This absence of dedication and loyalty leads employees to not only feel unmotivated to reach company objectives but also to poorly execute their designated tasks, resulting in a decline in the organization's efficiency and effectiveness.

Based on the results of this research, it is recommended that the selection of managers should rely on ethical standards, management skills, work history, managerial competencies, and reputation, rather than on political parties or affiliations. Additionally, fostering a culture of demand at both organizational and societal levels; stressing managers' responsibility; assessing managers' yearly performance to gauge the fulfillment of commitments; creating an ethical framework within the organization; establishing a system for suggestions and feedback; and ensuring secure avenues for employees to express their views can significantly reduce managerial rhetoric and facilitate practical management over rhetorical approaches. It is advisable to carry out a similar study in different organizations employing a mixed method (qualitative-quantitative).

Conflict of interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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