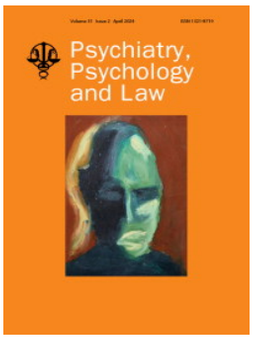

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Organizational trust and work attitudes among Chinese prison officers

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Organizational trust is an important workplace factor for organizations and their employees. There are different types of organizational trust, with coworker, supervisor and management trust being major ones. Yet, limited research has examined how organizational trust is associated with the work attitudes of correctional officers, such as job involvement, job satisfaction and organizational commitment. The current study explored how coworker, supervisor and management trust were related to the job involvement, job satisfaction and affective organizational commitment of Chinese correctional officers at two prisons in southeast China. Management trust had significant positive associations with involvement, satisfaction and commitment. The current results indicate the need to enhance management trust among the studied Chinese correctional officers to raise the three work attitudes.

Keywords: coworker trust; job involvement; job satisfaction; management trust; organizational commitment; organizational trust; supervisor trust.

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Prisons are an integral part of justice systems by providing a place to hold individuals who have violated the law of a given nation. Correctional officers are a critical resource for the operation of prisons, and the literature indicates that officers are affected by workplace factors (Griffin et al., 2014; Haynes et al., 2020; Lambert et al., 2022). Workplace factors are linked to work attitudes, which are salient for both correctional officers and their employing organizations (Haynes et al., 2020; Lambert, Keena, et al., 2021). Three attitudinal work variables are job involvement, job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Job involvement is the cognitive (i.e. psychological) identification with the job (Kanungo, 1982; Lambert et al., 2020). Job satisfaction is the affective (i.e. emotional) feeling a person has towards the job (Lambert et al., 2010; Locke, 1976). Organizational commitment refers to the bond between the person and the employing organization (Lambert, Keena, et al., 2021; Mowday et al., 1982). Job involvement, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment have been observed among correctional staff to be negatively associated with job burnout, absences and turnover (including intent), and positively related to following regulations, support for organizational change,

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support for treatment of offenders, organizational citizenship behaviors (i.e. going beyond what is expected at work) and life satisfaction (Byrd et al., 2000; Finney et al., 2013; Griffin et al., 2014; Griffin et al., 2010; Lambert, Edwards, et al., 2005; Lambert, Elechi, et al., 2019; Lambert & Hogan, 2009a; Lambert, Hogan, et al., 2005; Lambert, Keena, et al., 2019; Matz et al., 2013; Trounson & Pfeifer, 2017; Wright, 1993).

As work attitudes are linked to salient outcomes, research has been conducted on factors linked to correctional officer involvement, job satisfaction and organizational commitment, including various workplace variables (Lambert et al., 2022; Lambert, Keena, et al., 2021). This research has provided important information on how different workplace variables affect correctional staff, but there is still a need for additional studies. The correctional work environment is complex, and multiple variables have only been examined in a few studies. Organizational trust is one such workplace variable, as it has only been examined in a few published studies. Organizational trust refers to an employee's perception that the employing organization has integrity, will be honest, and will treat the trusting person in a benevolent manner (Lambert, Keena, et al., 2021; Mühl, 2014). There are different forms of workplace trust, with the three major ones being coworker trust, supervisor trust and management trust (Gilstrap & Collins, 2012; Lambert et al., 2022). While a few studies have included one or two forms of organizational trust, only two published studies could be found that included the association of the three forms of organizational trust and the three work attitudes, with one involving U.S. correctional staff and the other involving Nigerian prison staff (i.e. Lambert et al., 2022; Lambert, Keena, et al., 2021). As only two studies of correctional staff from two different nations provide limited knowledge, more studies in other nations are needed to help determine whether the association of the three forms of organizational trust with correctional officer work attitudes are general (i.e. similar across prisons in different nations) or contextual (i.e. varying across nations).

Understanding whether and how workplace factors vary in their effects on correctional officers across different cultures adds to the literature so that correctional scholars and correctional administrators can better understand what workplace changes may result in improvements for staff outcomes and what changes depend on the location of the prison. Replication research in different settings is vital. As noted by Lindsay and Ehrenberg (1993) 'replication is little discussed in the statistical literature nor practiced widely by statistically minded researchers. It is needed not merely to validate one's findings, but more importantly, to establish the increasing range of radically different conditions under which the findings hold, and the predictable exceptions' (p. 217). Further, conducting research in different nations can provide information on how the associations with variables may differ across settings. Jowell (1998) pointed out that 'the importance and utility to social science of rigorous cross-national measures is incontestable. They help to reveal not only intriguing differences between countries and cultures, but also aspects of one's own country and culture that would be difficult or impossible to detect from domestic data alone' (p. 168). The current study is among the first to our knowledge to examine the effects of organizational trust (i.e. coworker, supervisor and management trust) on job attitudes (i.e. job involvement, job satisfaction and organizational commitment) of correctional officers working at two prisons in southeast China. This study alone cannot completely answer the question of whether the relationships between organizational trust and work attitudes are general or contextual, but it can establish a more complete foundation upon which future replications across a wide array of nations and across various prisons can begin.

Literature review

Job involvement

Lodahl and Kejner (1965), who are credited with coining the term job involvement, indicated that this work attitude was the psychological identification with one's work and having work motivation. Lawler and Hall (1970) proposed that the psychological connection with one's job and one's work performance are two separate but related concepts. They defined job involvement as a person's psychological identification with the job and the importance of the job to the person. Kanungo (1982), who is viewed as instrumental in the job involvement literature, defined job involvement as a cognitive and psychological identification with the job. This is the definition most commonly used in the literature (Brown & Leigh, 1996) and the one used in the current study. For example, Elloy et al. (1991) defined job involvement as a 'generalized cognitive state of psychological identification with the job' (p. 162). Basically, job involvement is psychological identification with the job (Brown & Leigh, 1996; Kanungo, 1982) and refers to how important the job is in an individual's life (Paullay et al., 1994). As noted by DeCarufel and Schaan (1990), 'an individual with a high degree of job involvement would place the job at the center of his/her life's interests. The well-known phrase "I live, eat, and breathe my job" would describe someone whose job involvement is very high' (p. 86). On the opposite continuum would be job alienation, the feeling of no cognitive connection to the job (i.e. being detached from the job; Kanungo, 1982).

Job satisfaction

Locke (1976) defined job satisfaction as 'a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experiences' (p. 1300). Muchinsky (1987) viewed job satisfaction as an affective response resulting from the extent to which a person derives pleasure from his or her job. According to Spector (1997), job satisfaction is 'the extent to which people like or dislike their jobs' (p. 2). Simply, job satisfaction is a positive affective (i.e. emotional) work attitude that relates to workers' perceptions that the job meets their wants and needs (Lambert et al., 2022). Job satisfaction refers to employees' perceptions of overall satisfaction from the job rather than from specific facets of the job (Camp, 1994; Lambert, Keena, et al., 2021). The current study used a measure of global job satisfaction.

Organizational commitment

The bond between the officer and the employing correctional facility is referred to as organizational commitment (Lambert & Hogan, 2009b; Mowday et al., 1982). There are different types of organizational commitment based on how the bond is formed, with continuance commitment and affective commitment being two major types (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Lambert, Keena, et al., 2021). The bonds for continuance commitment form because of investments an officer makes in the organization, such as pay, benefits, retirement, non-transferable job skills, promotions and social relationships (Lambert et al., 2022; Meyer & Allen, 1997). An officer bonds to the organization and puts forth effort for the organization to protect the investments (Lambert, Keena, et al., 2017). Becker (1960) referred to these investments as sunken costs that bind a person to an organization, and the potential loss of the investments make it too costly to leave the organization or to let the organization fail.

Alternatively, affective commitment is psychological attachment to the organization (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Mowday et al., 1982). This type of commitment is based on the reciprocity principle, and the attachment occurs because of positive treatment by the organization (Lambert et al., 2017; Meyer & Allen, 1997). This type of commitment is voluntary and includes identification with the organization, internalization of organizational goals, acceptance of organizational core values and

willingness to put forth effort to help the organization be successful (Lambert, Keena, et al., 2021; Meyer & Allen, 1984; Mowday et al., 1982).

Mowday et al. (1982) indicated that the different types of organizational commitment can be placed on a behavioral–attitudinal continuum, with continuance commitment on the behavioral end and affective commitment on the attitudinal end. As noted by Allen and Meyer (1990), 'employees with strong affective commitment remain because they want to and those with strong continuance commitment because they need to' (p. 3). Continuance commitment represents reciprocity by necessity, and affective commitment represents reciprocity by desire (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Lambert, Leone, et al., 2021).

There is evidence that some staff members with high continuance commitment may feel trapped in the job, resulting in negative effects on officers and the correctional organization, such as job stress and job burnout (Lambert et al., 2015; Lambert et al., 2013). Conversely, affective commitment has been linked with a wide array of positive outcomes, and it is the most common form of organizational commitment studied among correctional staff (Lambert, Keena, et al., 2021; Lambert, Leone, et al., 2021). A measure of affective commitment was used in the current study.

Trust

Trust is essential to establishing meaningful social interactions (Blau, 1964; Cropanzano & Rupp, 2003). Gambetta (2000) asserted that trust is a 'particular expectation we have with regard to the likely behavior of others' (p. 218). Organizational trust implies that individuals working together toward the goal of the organization trust one another (Mayer et al., 1995; Wong & Cummings, 2009; Zhang et al., 2008). Organizational trust is essential to maintaining the organization's long-term stability as much as the well-being of all its members (Cook & Wall, 1980, p. 39). Conversely, lack of trust within the organization tends to negatively impact work relationships and work efforts (Harvey et al., 2003). Organizational trust presents several essential characteristics. Trust is multidimensional and situational and is also an individual trait. Trust is *multidimensional*, as it involves relationships across groups within the same hierarchy (or among peers – *lateral trust*) and across different hierarchies (trust in supervisor or management – *vertical trust*; McCauley & Kuhnert, 1992; Robertson et al., 2013; Tan & Tan, 2000). According to Khany and Tazik (2016), trust in coworkers is the extent to which one believes their peers will be honest, look out for each other and keep their word. Further, supervisor trust is the extent to which employees see their supervisors as honest, able to keep their word and do their best to protect the welfare of all employees (Lambert, Hogan, et al., 2008). Trust is *situational*, in that cooperation and collaboration may be necessary to carry out the mission of the organization (Sitkin & Roth, 1993). According to Gambetta (2000), one's willingness to work together often depends on the circumstances. An employee's willingness to trust others within the organization may depend on the situation, the history of the organization or the context in which employees must carry out their tasks. Trust is an *individual trait*, in that, for trust to exist, the individual must have faith in others. Rousseau et al. (1998) defined trust as 'a psychological state comprising the intentions or behaviors of another' (p. 395). Rotter (1967) considered trust to be 'an expectancy held by an individual or a group that the word, promise, verbal or written statement of another individual or group can be relied upon' (p. 651). In other words, trust can be seen as the trait that lies with the trustor, but trustworthiness is the trait of an individual that may be trusted. Trustworthiness can be established when actions and behaviors confirm that the individual can be trusted. Within organizations, actions must be congruent with words (Mayer et al., 1995).

In correctional settings, trust in both coworkers and supervisors is essential for the functioning of the organization. Similarly, correctional staff must trust that management has the best interest for all staff and clients working or living within the organization. Kane and colleagues (1983) examined management trust in a sample of federal correctional employees in New York and observed that management trust was positively associated with organizational commitment. In the Midwest, a study by Lambert and Hogan (2009b) found that trust in management among correctional staff was positively associated with job satisfaction and affective organizational commitment. Also in the Midwest, a study conducted inside a private prison found that both supervisor and management trust were positively associated with job satisfaction and commitment toward the employing organization (Lambert, Hogan, et al., 2008). Lambert, Keena, Haynes, et al. (2021) found that trust positively contributed to job satisfaction but did not influence their involvement with their job or their commitment toward the organization. In a recent study of prison staff in Nigeria, Lambert et al. (2022) found that supervisor, management, and coworker trust were positively associated with job satisfaction; however, only management trust had a significant positive association with job involvement. In addition, both supervisor trust and management trust were positively associated with organizational commitment. Conversely, coworker trust was not significantly associated with organizational commitment. Moreover, trust in coworkers and supervisors can be an important buffer to protect employees from stress (Haynes et al., 2020).

The limited research available on organizational trust in corrections has mostly focused on the United States. The ubiquitousness of prisons suggests that conducting research in other countries is necessary to explore how culture shapes organizational trust within institutions of corrections. The present study aims to fill a gap in correctional research and examines organizational trust in a sample of prison staff in China.

Current study and hypotheses

Working in corrections requires controlling and directing individuals incarcerated against their will. Prison coworkers assist and help deal with disruptive and even violent incarcerated individuals. This is sometimes referred to as 'having a person's back' (Lambert, Keena, et al., 2021). Further, trust with coworkers can improve how groups function and provide a buffer for work demands and strains (Haynes et al., 2020; McAllister, 1995). In addition, coworker trust can increase success at the job (Lambert et al., 2022; Robertson et al., 2013), which can lead to more job involvement and job satisfaction. In addition, more coworker trust is associated with other positive effects such as viewing the organization in a more favorable light and being more willing to voluntarily bond with the organization (Lambert, Keena, et al., 2021). As such, coworker trust was hypothesized to have significant positive effects with Chinese correctional officer job involvement (*Hypothesis 1*), job satisfaction (*Hypothesis 2*) and organizational commitment (*Hypothesis 3*).

Supervisors are critical for effective work. Effective supervision provides direction, guidance, structure and support for officers (Lambert et al., 2010; Lambert, Keena, et al., 2021). Good supervisors allow officers to enjoy their jobs more and to be more productive and efficient at work (Fard & Karimi, 2015; Lambert, Hogan, et al., 2008). Supervisor trust often results from viewing the supervisor as being good (Flaherty & Pappas, 2000; Lambert et al., 2022). Supervisor trust should be linked with higher job involvement and satisfaction (Goris et al., 2003; Lambert, Keena, et al., 2021). In addition, good supervisors who are trusted increase the level of affective commitment with the organization (Lambert, Keena, et al., 2021; Lambert et al.,

2022). Supervisor trust was postulated to have a positive association with Chinese correctional officer job involvement (*Hypothesis 4*), job satisfaction (*Hypothesis 5*) and organizational commitment (*Hypothesis 6*).

Management oversees the operation of a correctional facility and is important for controlling, directing and supporting staff to meet organizational goals and objectives (Lambert, Leone, et al., 2021). Quality management allows officers to be productive and makes the workplace more pleasant (Lambert & Hogan, 2009b; Lambert et al., 2020; Lambert, Keena, et al., 2021). Management trust generally results because of positive actions by administrators (Lambert, Keena, et al., 2021). Management trust should result in greater job involvement because of increased success and enjoyment in the work environment (Colquitt et al., 2007; Lambert et al., 2020). Increased work productivity and success affect overall job satisfaction, as well as job enjoyment (Dirks & Ferrin, 2001; Lambert et al., 2022). As management represents the organization, the organization is likely to be repaid with a stronger affective bond (Colquitt et al., 2007; Coyle-Shapiro et al., 2002; Lambert, Leone, et al., 2021). Management trust was therefore predicted to have a positive relationship with Chinese correctional officer job involvement (*Hypothesis 7*), job satisfaction (*Hypothesis 8*) and affective organizational commitment (*Hypothesis 9*).

Method

Participants

Human subject approval was obtained. Access to Chinese prisons is limited; however, permission to survey officers at two prisons in southeast China was obtained. The two prisons were considered typical in China, and both had similar inmate populations, including custody levels of highly intensive/maximum (严管), intensive/medium (普管) and general (宽管). Chinese prisons aim for inmates to be near to family and, as such, purposely house different security levels of incarcerated individuals in separate units in the same prison. The degree of staff supervision of inmates and the available programs and work for inmates vary among the different custody levels. Workloads differ between custody units, with more direct supervision required for highly intensive/maximum custody inmates. Assignments based on custody level change over time, so assignments to a particular custody unit are not permanent. In addition, staff usually do not object to being moved to different custody units, including high security, as the rotation is seen as confidence in their ability to supervise a wide array of offenders.

The survey was first written in English, then translated to Chinese, and then translated back to English by separate bilingual individuals. No major issues were noted. A pilot test of the survey was conducted for issues. After pilot testing, the revised survey was administered to all available officers. The staff at each prison were provided with a survey packet. This packet included material that explained the study, that it was voluntary, that all responses would be anonymous, and how to return the survey. Informed consent was obtained from all participants. Approximately 73% of the prison officers from the two prisons completed and returned the survey (i.e. 322 usable surveys were returned). For the first prison, which employed 280 staff, 205 completed surveys were returned, with a response rate of approximately 73%. For the second prison, which employed 160 staff, 117 completed surveys were returned, a response rate that was also 73%.

Tenure in the current position ranged from 0.5 to 36 years, with a median value of 6 years. In terms of gender, 54% of the participants were women, and 46% were men. About 37% of participants indicated that they had earned a bachelor's degree or higher. Approximately 64% of the participants worked at the first prison, and 36% worked at the second prison. The participants' ages ranged from 24 to 58 years, with a median age of 45. Based on

human resource information, the participants were similar to the overall prison officers in terms of gender, age, tenure and educational level.

Variables

Dependent variables

The three work attitudes of job involvement, job satisfaction and organizational commitment were the dependent variables. The items for these concepts are presented in the Appendix, and the items were answered using a 6-point Likert scale of *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (6). An additive index of job involvement was formed by summing three items from Kanungo (1982), and this index had a Cronbach's alpha of .74. Using three items from Brayfield and Rothe (1951), a job satisfaction index was created that had a Cronbach's alpha of .92. The affective form of organizational commitment was measured with five items from Mowday et al. (1982) and had a Cronbach's alpha of .85. Factor analysis indicated that the items loaded as predicted with factor loadings above .40, indicating unidimensionality (Gorsuch, 1983).

Independent variables

Coworker trust, supervisor trust and management trust were the independent variables of interest in the current study. The trust items are based on Hoy and Tschannen-Moran (2003) and Lambert et al. (2012). The trust items are presented in the Appendix and were answered using a 6-point Likert scale ranging from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (6). Coworker trust, supervisor trust and management trust were measured by two items each; summed indexes had Cronbach's alpha values of .93, .94 and .88, respectively. Factor analysis indicated that the items loaded as predicted with factor loadings above .50, indicating unidimensionality (Gorsuch, 1983). Finally, measures for the personal characteristics of tenure in the position, gender, educational level, prison assignment and age were included as control variables. See Table 1 for how these variables were measured.

Results

The descriptive statistics for the variables are reported in Table 1. The mean and median

Table 1. Descriptive statistics for study variables.

Variable	Description	Min	Max	*Mdn*	*M*	*SD*
Tenure	Tenure in years in current position	0.4	36	6	6.56	5.38
Gender	54% female (coded 0) 46% male (coded 1)	0	1	0	0.46	0.50
Educ level	63% less than Bachelor (coded 0) 37% Bachelor or higher (coded 1)	0	1	0	0.37	0.48
Prison	64% from Prison 1 (coded 1) 36% from Prison 2 (coded 0)	0	1	1	0.64	0.48
Age	Age in continuous years	24	58	45	43.94	6.82
Coworker tr	2-item additive index, $\alpha = .93$	4	12	10	8.92	1.84
Supervisor tr	2-item additive index, $\alpha = .94$	2	12	9	8.61	2.12
Management tr	2-item additive index, $\alpha = .88$	2	12	8	7.59	2.17
Job involvement	3-item additive index, $\alpha = .74$	3	18	12	11.31	3.04
Job satisfaction	3-item additive index, $\alpha = .92$	3	18	11	10.75	3.59
Org commit	5-item additive index, $\alpha = .85$	5	30	18	18.13	5.07

Note: Min = minimum value; Max = maximum value; *Mdn* = median value; *M* = mean value; *SD* = standard deviation value; Educ level = educational level; Coworker tr = coworker trust; Supervisor tr = supervisor trust; Management tr = management trust; Org commit = organizational commitment; and α = Cronbach's alpha value, a measure of internal reliability. The number of participants was 322.

values for the non-dichotomous variables were very close to one another, suggesting that they were normally distributed. For the index variables, the Cronbach's alpha values, a measure of internal reliability, were .74 or higher. The factor analysis results indicated unidimensionality of the measures (Gorsuch, 1983).

The correlations are reported in Table 2. Tenure in the position, gender, educational level and age had nonsignificant correlations with job involvement. The prison variable had a significant correlation, with officers at the first prison reporting lower involvement than officers at the second prison. All three organizational trust variables had significant positive correlations, with management trust having the largest sized correlation.

Tenure, educational level, prison assignment and age had non-significant correlations with job satisfaction. Gender had a significant negative correlation, which means male officers on average reported lower job satisfaction than female officers. Coworker trust, supervisor trust and management trust had significant positive correlations, meaning that increases in any of these types of trust were associated with greater satisfaction from the job.

Tenure, educational level and prison had nonsignificant correlations with organizational commitment. Gender had a significant negative correlation, which means male officers reported lower commitment than their female counterparts. Age had a positive correlation, which indicates that older officers reported a greater affective bond with the correctional organization. The three trust indexes had significant positive correlations with commitment, with management trust having the largest sized correlation.

Ordinary least squares (OLS) regression equations were computed with the three work attitudes as the dependent variables and personal characteristics and three trust indexes as the independent variables. The results are reported in Table 3. Multicollinearity (i.e. when two or more variables share too large an overlap in variance) is seen as a problem when variance inflation factor scores (VIF) exceed 5 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). Based on the VIF scores reported in Table 3, multicollinearity was not a problem. In addition, the issues of outliers, influential cases, normality, linearity and homoscedasticity of residuals, and independence of errors in the regression analysis were tested and were not a problem (Berry, 1993; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013).

The R^2 value for the job involvement equations was .19, which means that the

Table 2. Correlations of study variables.

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Tenure	1.00										
2. Gender	.10	1.00									
3. Educ level	−.09	−.12*	1.00								
4. Prison	−.01	.57**	−.10	1.00							
5. Age	.38**	.12*	−.35**	.18**	1.00						
6. Coworker tr	−.02	−.08	.07	−.07	−.05	1.00					
7. Supervisor tr	−.03	−.16**	.09	−.19**	−.08	.63**	1.00				
8. Management tr	−.01	−.10	.02	−.14*	−.05	.53**	.58**	1.00			
9. Job involvement	.01	−.07	.02	−.12*	.10	.25**	.26**	.40**	1.00		
10. Job satisfaction	.03	−.16**	−.01	−.05	.11	.25**	.27**	.44**	.51**	1.00	
11. Org commit	.06	−.12*	−.02	−.08	.12*	.24**	.28**	.50**	.48**	.82**	1.00

Note: Educ level = educational level; Coworker tr = coworker trust; Supervisor tr = supervisor trust; Management tr = management trust; Org commit = organizational commitment. Please see Table 1 for how the variables were measured and their descriptive statistics.
$^{*}p \leq .05$. $^{**}p \leq .01$.

Table 3. OLS regression results for organizational trust variables with the work attitudes of Chinese prison officers.

	Job involvement			Job satisfaction			Organizational commitment			
Variable	*B*	*SE*	*β*	*B*	*SE*	*β*	*B*	*SE*	*β*	VIF
Tenure	−0.03	.03	−.05	0.01	.04	.01	0.02	.05	.02	1.20
Gender	0.16	.38	.03	−1.34	.44	−.19**	−0.99	.60	−.10	1.52
Educational level	0.32	.34	.05	0.09	.40	.01	0.14	.54	.01	1.16
Prison	0.67	.40	.11	−0.72	.46	−.10	−0.13	.63	−.01	1.58
Age	0.08	.03	.17**	0.07	.03	.13*	0.11	.04	.15**	1.37
Coworker trust	0.09	.13	.06	0.04	.14	.02	−0.10	.20	−.04	2.26
Supervisor trust	0.00	.12	.00	0.00	.13	.00	0.00	.18	.00	2.50
Management trust	0.51	.09	.36**	0.72	.10	.43**	1.23	.14	.52**	1.57
F(*df*)	8.87 (8, 313)**			12.24 (8, 313)**			15.75 (8, 313)**			
R^2	.19			.24			.29			

Note: OLS = ordinary least squares; VIF = variance inflation factor score. See Table 1 for more information on the variables and their descriptive statistics.
$^{*}p \leq .05$. $^{**}p \leq .01$.

independent variables as a group explained approximately 19% of the observed variable of this dependent variable. For the control of personal characteristics, only age had a significant association. Increases in age were associated with increases in job involvement. Among the trust variables, only management trust had a significant association. Based on the standardized regression coefficients (which can be ranked in order of effect based on the absolute values), management trust had twice the size effect than age did.

The independent variables accounted for about 24% of the observed variance in the job satisfaction measure (R^2 = .24). Gender and age had significant associations. Male officers reported lower job satisfaction in general than their female counterparts. Increases in age were associated with higher satisfaction from the job. Management trust was the only trust measure to have a significant association in the regression analysis, and this association was positive, indicating that greater trust in management was linked to higher job satisfaction. Based on the standardized regression coefficients, management trust had the largest sized association with job satisfaction, more than twice that of either gender or age.

For organizational commitment, about 29% of the variance was explained by the independent variables. Among the control variables, only age had a significant association, with increases in age being related to higher commitment. While coworker and supervisor trust had nonsignificant relationships, management trust had a significant association, with increases in this type of trust being linked to a greater affective bond with the correctional organization. Management trust had the largest sized effect, more than three times that of age.

Discussion and conclusion

The current study indicates that management trust is a salient predictor of the work attitudes of the studied Chinese correctional officers. Coworker and supervisor trust, however, had nonsignificant associations in the regression analyses with job involvement, job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Management represents the entire organization. Eisenberger et al. (1986) indicated that employees 'personify the organization, viewing actions by agents of the organization as actions of the organization itself' (p. 504). If management is not trusted, an officer cannot transfer to a new

work detail or assignment to escape management. The choices are either to stay and continue to work for management that is not trusted or to leave the prison. If an officer does not trust coworkers or a supervisor, an option is to transfer to a new work team or different post in the prison to work with other coworkers and to have a new supervisor. Management is important not only to the operation of a prison but also, the current results indicate, for work attitudes of officers.

The lack of significant associations for coworker trust or supervisor trust with job involvement, job satisfaction and organization commitment was somewhat of a surprise and differs from the limited past studies. Among Nigerian correctional officers, management trust was a significant positive predictor of all three work attitudes. Supervisor trust had a significant positive association with satisfaction and commitment but not with involvement. Coworker trust only had a significant relationship with job satisfaction (Lambert et al., 2022). Among correctional staff in the U.S. South, management trust had a strong positive connection to the three work attitudes. Supervisor trust only had a significant relationship with commitment. Coworker trust was only a significant predictor of job satisfaction (Lambert, Keena, et al., 2021). In a study of Midwestern U.S. correctional staff, both management and supervisor trust had significant positive relationships with job satisfaction and organizational commitment. It is important to note, however, that this study did not include a measure of coworker trust and did not test job involvement (Lambert, Hogan, et al., 2008). In another study of Midwestern U.S. correctional staff, Lambert et al. (2020) found that management trust but not supervisor trust was a significant predictor of job involvement. This study did not, however, include a measure of coworker trust. Hence, the limited past research and the current study support two conclusions. First, management trust consistently has a positive relationship with all three work attitudes among correctional officers in different areas. In other words, the evidence so far indicates that the association for management trust with work attitudes is general across different correctional facilities. Second, the connection of coworker and supervisor trust with involvement, satisfaction and commitment is contextual, varying across different prisons and nations.

There are four potential reasons why coworker and supervisor trust did not have significant associations with any of the three work attitudes in the multivariate analysis in the current study. The first explanation is that coworker and supervisor trust do not play a role in shaping the job involvement, job satisfaction or organizational commitment of Chinese correctional officers. If so, the reason may be because China is a Confucianism-based collective culture, where hierarchy-based interpersonal relationships (关系 *guanxi* in modern Chinese) are important in governing people's interaction and behavior (Jiang et al., 2010; Lambert et al., 2018). Management represents the highest level of authority within the prison, where the officer, fellow officers, supervisors and management work towards the collective good of the prison (Lambert et al., 2018). In this type of culture, management is the ultimate aspect of the workplace, and, as such, the level of trust in management plays a greater role with the three work attitudes. The second explanation is that these two forms of trust are actually linked to job involvement, job satisfaction and organizational commitment but were not found in the current study due to random chance. This is why replication studies are critical.

A third explanation is that neither coworker nor supervisor has a direct effect on any of the work attitudes once management trust is taken into account. This does not mean that coworker or supervisor trust has no indirect effects on involvement, satisfaction or commitment. As shown in Table 2, both coworker and supervisor trust had significant moderate-sized correlations with the three work attitudes (Cohen, 1988). Further, both coworker and

management trust had large-sized correlations with management trust. Coworker and supervisor trust could be partially responsible for management trust among the studied Chinese correctional officers. Officers may attribute the level of trust with coworkers and supervisors to management for hiring and retaining them (and for supervisors promoting them) at the correctional institution. Future research should explore whether coworker and supervisor trust influence the level of management trust of correctional officers. Additionally, future research needs to explore how the three forms of workplace trust are linked to one another and how they specifically influence the work attitudes of correctional officers. In addition, research among correctional officers at prisons in other nations will add to the literature to help answer the question of whether the effects of coworker trust, supervisor trust and management trust are general in their association, not only with the three work attitudes but with other outcomes, such as work performance, job stress, job burnout and turnover intent/turnover, or whether the effects of the different forms of organizational trust are contextual and how they vary across different prisons and across different nations.

A fourth explanation is that supervisor trust and/or coworker trust are more related to job stress and job burnout for the studied correctional officers than they are for the work attitudes of job involvement, job satisfaction and organizational commitment.[1] Coworker trust and/or supervisor trust may result in Chinese prison officers feeling safer at work, thus lowering negative outcomes of job stress and job burnout. Limited research involving staff from prisons in Nigeria and the United States appears to support this contention. In a study of Nigerian prison officers, coworker trust was reported to have a significant negative relationship job stress (Elechi et al., 2023). In a study involving staff at a U.S. prison, both coworker and supervisor trust were reported to be inversely linked to job stress (Haynes et al., 2020). Another study among U.S. prison staff, supervisor and management trust (the study did not include coworker trust) were both observed to be associated with lower job stress (Lambert, Jiang, et al., 2008). Among U.S. correctional officers, supervisor trust (the only type of trust included) had a significant negative relationship with job stress (Lambert et al., 2010). Among U.S. staff at a juvenile correctional facility, supervisor trust (the only form of trust measured) had a negative relationship with job stress (Liou, 1995).

Further, supervisor and management trust were found to be to be inversely related to feeling at risk of being hurt at work among U.S. prison officers (Lambert, Hogan, et al., 2017). Finally, Lambert et al. (2012) reported that supervisor trust was negatively related to the three burnout dimensions of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and a feeling of ineffectiveness at work among U.S. prison staff, but management trust only had a significant negative association with emotional burnout and depersonalization burnout, with a no significant connection with a feeling of ineffectiveness at work. Research is needed to explore how coworker, supervisor and management trust are related to job stress and job burnout among correctional officers in China. This research will provide a broader picture of how different forms of organizational trust affect Chinese prison officers.

The results of the current study indicate the need to improve management trust to raise the level of job involvement, job satisfaction and organizational commitment of the studied Chinese correctional officers. Management trust occurs because of the actions of administrators over time. Officers need to be asked why they trust or do not trust supervisors and/or management. This input needs to be provided without fear of retaliation. Trust occurs for a person (i.e. trustor) because of their perceptions of the entity to be trusted (trustee; Lambert, Keena, et al., 2021). For an officer to

[1]This possible explanation was raised by a reviewer. We thank the reviewer for this point.

trust management, management needs to be seen as trustworthy (Kramer, 1999; Lambert et al., 2022). Improving management trust is the responsibility of prison administrators. Trust is based on past interactions and the maintenance of promises (Mayer et al., 1995). Management needs to ensure that promises are kept and, if not, explain why a promise could not be kept (Lambert, Hogan, et al., 2008; Zhang et al., 2008). Management trust is enhanced when administrators are consistent in their actions and act with integrity (Haynes et al., 2020; Mayer et al., 1995). Engaging in organizational justice is a salient way for administrators to increase their perception of acting with integrity (Colquitt et al., 2007; Lambert, Keena, et al., 2021). Organizational fairness deals with the perceptions of employees that the organization treats its members in a just and fair manner (Greenberg, 1990; Lambert, Keena, et al., 2019; Lambert, Leone, et al., 2021; May et al., 2020). Distributive and procedural justice are two major dimensions of organizational justice (Greenberg, 1990; May et al., 2020). Distributive justice deals with the views of officers about salient outcomes, such as pay, benefits, promotions, evaluations, assignments and discipline, being offered in a fair manner based on the inputs of officers (Greenberg, 1990; Lambert, Keena, et al., 2019). Procedural justice deals with the views of officers that the processes and procedures used to reach distributive justice outcomes are fair and transparent (Lambert et al., 2018). In other words, procedural justice deals with the views that the means are fair and distributive justice deals with the perceptions that the outcomes are fair. Both are important and can raise the perception of officers that management is trustworthy (Lambert et al., 2022). There can be no favoritism in the prison. Creating an ethical climate should aid in increasing officer trust in supervisors and management (Mulki et al., 2006).

Management trust can also be raised by being competent, approachable and caring for the welfare of not only the organization but also the officers (Lambert, Keena, et al., 2021; Mishra, 1996; Sonnenburg, 1994; Tan & Tan, 2000). The level of management trust can be increased by not only understanding how the management position is to be done in a productive manner but also knowing how other positions are to be done so as to offer direction and guidance (Colquitt et al., 2007; Lambert et al., 2022). Being approachable, considerate and helping officers is likely to enhance trust in administrators and the prison organization (Lambert, Jiang, et al., 2008; Mayer et al., 1995). Administrators need to lead by example. Their daily behaviors matter (Lambert, Keena, et al., 2021; Skarlicki & Latham, 1996). Benevolence for officers goes a long way toward engendering trust (Lambert, Keena, et al., 2021). Even though there will be disagreements between officers and management, administrators need to act in a professional manner and treat officers with respect. Even though there is a disagreement and officers may be told to do something that they may initially disagree with, there needs to be dialogue about why a decision has been made and why an order has been given if an officer or officers disagree with such (Lambert, Jiang, et al., 2008; Schoorman et al., 2007). Managers need to be made aware of the importance of management trust, trained on how to build it and rewarded for engaging in such efforts (Colquitt et al., 2007; Lambert et al., 2022; Schoorman et al., 2007). While it takes time and effort, management trust can be increased, and the current results indicate that raising management trust should enhance the job involvement, job satisfaction and affective organizational commitment of correctional officers, not only for the studied Chinese officers but for officers in other prisons based on past research.

Of the personal characteristics, only two had significant associations in the regression analyses. Gender had a significant relationship with job satisfaction, with female officers reporting greater satisfaction. It could be that female officers feel job satisfaction because

they work in prisons that previously had been a male-dominated occupation. As with the United States, the increase of female officers to Chinese prisons is recent, occurring over the past several decades. Age was a significant positive predictor for all three work attitudes. It could be that as a person ages, they have found a job that meets their needs and gives them satisfaction, which results in repayment to the organization with higher commitment and with greater connection to the job. It could also be a cohort effect, with older workers coming from a different generation, which expected greater involvement, satisfaction and commitment for employees. It is also important to note that management trust was a far stronger predictor of the three work attitudes than either age or gender. Management trust is an area correctional administrators can improve.

While adding to the literature, the current study had limitations. It was a single study. Studies at other Chinese prisons and correctional facilities in other nations are needed. So far there are too few studies to adequately answer the question whether and how culture might affect the association between different forms of organizational trust and work attitudes among correctional staff. The current study was exploratory and had limited space for the number of survey questions. Future research should measure coworker trust, supervisor trust, management trust, job involvement and job satisfaction with more items. A major shortcoming of the current study was that it used a cross-sectional research design. The causal order could not be empirically established. Longitudinal research is needed to demonstrate the causal process of types of organizational trust with work attitudes. Another limitation is that two prisons held convicted offenders who were considered highly intensive/maximum, intensive/medium or general custody, but the survey included no measure of to which current custody level the responding staff was assigned. It is possible that working with different levels of inmates based on custody level may influence work attitudes. As there was no measure in the study to control for work assignment, this could not be tested. Future studies should include a measure of the custody level of the inmates typically worked with in an assignment so as to test whether this may influence work attitudes. Future research also needs to explore the association of types of organizational trust with other outcomes, such as job stress, job burnout, work performance, work deviance/misconduct, turnover intent/turnover, absenteeism, organizational citizenship behaviors (i.e. going beyond what is expected at work) and life satisfaction. While there were recommendations of how to enhance officer views of management trust, research is needed to examine whether these efforts are effective and whether there are other workplace factors linked to organizational trust views. For example, research may wish to explore how efforts in terms of distributive justice (fairness in salient employee outcomes, such as evaluations, assignments and promotions) and procedural justice (fairness in the processes and procedures in reaching distributive justice outcomes) are connected to the level of management trust. It remains unclear whether allowing input into organizational matters or providing salient communication on organizational matters is linked to higher management trust. It is clear that much more research involving organizational trust among correctional officers is needed.

In conclusion, the current study examined how the three types of organizational trust of worker, supervisor and management trust were related to the three work attitudes of job involvement, job satisfaction and affective organizational commitment among officers at two prisons in southeast China. In multivariate analyses, only management trust had a significant positive association with the three work attitudes. Coworker and supervisor trust had nonsignificant associations with job involvement, job satisfaction and organizational commitment. The current results differ from more limited past research involving either U.S. or Nigerian correctional staff. The scant research suggests that the association of the types of

organizational trust with work attitudes may vary across cultures and nations, with management trust being important but the effects of coworker and supervisor trust varying. As there have been only a handful of studies, it cannot be definitely concluded that the association of organizational trust types varies in their relationship with correctional officer involvement, satisfaction and commitment across cultures and nations. More research involving correctional staff across different nations is needed, and these new studies will aid in answering the question of whether the effects of coworker, supervisor and management trust are general across nations or contextual, varying across nations and areas. The results of the current study suggest that correctional administrators and scholars need to be aware of organizational trust and work to improve it, especially management trust. We hope the current study will raise interest in organizational trust involving correctional officers and will spark new research in this area. Regardless of nation, correctional officers are an important and valuable resource holding a demanding and often trying occupation that warrants research in order to improve their work experiences.

Ethical standards

Declaration of conflicts of interest

Eric G. Lambert has declared no conflicts of interest

Jianhong Liu has declared no conflicts of interest

Monica Solinas-Saunders has declared no conflicts of interest

Jennifer Wareham has declared no conflicts of interest

Shanhe Jiang has declared no conflicts of interest

Jinwu Zhang has declared no conflicts of interest

Ethical approval

Studies were carried out with human participants (including in vivo or active human participants and inactive human participants through file records, archival information or other documentation relating to humans).

All procedures performed in studies involving human participants were in accordance with the ethical standards of the institutional and/or national research committee (Research Ethics Committee of Macau Society of Criminology) and with the 1964 Helsinki declaration and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards.

Informed consent

Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study

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Appendix

Survey Items

The following items were answered using a 6-point Likert scale of strongly disagree (coded 1), disagree (coded 2), somewhat disagree (coded 3), somewhat agree (coded 4), agree (coded 5) and strongly agree (coded 6).

Job Involvement: (1) I live, eat, and breathe my job (i.e. my job is very important to me); (2) The major satisfaction in my life comes from my job; and (3) The most important things that happen to me in my life usually occur at my job.

Job Satisfaction: (1) Most days I am happy about my job; (2) I find real satisfaction in my job; and (3) I feel satisfied with my job.

Organizational Commitment: (1) I am proud to tell people that I work for the [name

of the prison system – not provided here at the request of the prison system]; (2) I find that my values and the [name of the prison system] values are very similar; (3) I really care about the fate of the [name of the prison system]; (4) The [name of the prison system] really inspires the best in me in the way of job performance; and (5) I tell my friends that this is a great organization to work for.

Coworker Trust: (1) I trust my coworkers; and (2) Overall, my coworkers are trustworthy.

Supervisor Trust: (1) My supervisor is an honest person; and (2) I have a trusting relationship with my supervisor.

Management Trust: (1) When management says something, you can believe it is true; and (2) I have trust in management.