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## **THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN LEADERSHIP STYLES, JOB STRESSORS AND JOB PERFORMANCE OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION TEACHERS**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The aim of the present study was to investigate the relationships between leadership styles and job stressors with the job performance of physical education teachers in Alborz province. The study was conducted as a field cross-correlation. The initial population consisted of all physical education teachers in Alborz province (750 participants, 295 male and 455 female) and the final participants were 254 teachers who were selected on the basis of Morgan's table. For data collection, the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (Bass and Olive, 1990), the Job Stressors Questionnaire (Noorbakhsh, 2004), and the Work Performance Questionnaire (Paterson, 1963) were used. The results showed significant correlations between leadership styles, job stressors and their dimensions and the job performance of both male and female physical education teachers. It was also revealed that concerning the relationship between the dimensions of leadership styles and stressors and job performance of physical education teachers, the Laissez-faire or free-rein leadership style had the greatest coefficient. Moreover, the results indicated significant differences between male and female participants' views on their leadership styles, stressors, and job performance.

**Keywords:** *Leadership Styles, Job Stressors, Job Performance, Physical Education Teachers*

### **INTRODUCTION**

The education system is one of the greatest and most extensive systems within each community that determines the fate of the society in the long term. It is obvious that if the education system is objectively, structurally and resourcefully designed properly, it can ensure the long-term development of the community (Imani *et al.*, 2009). Teachers are relatively believed as revered individuals with leadership potential and venerable characteristics. Like a public display of drama, the combination of emotion and attention plus required understanding and affection related to teaching profession has made physical education teaching an attractive undertaking (Olayele, 2008). Teaching physical education is one of the most complicated professions in the world. On the one hand, professionals should be completely familiar with methods and techniques of sport and on the other hand, they should be aware of human body physiology and its defensive reactions in different exercise conditions. Finally, they should be well-equipped with sport psychology to guide and evolve athletes' bodies and souls.

Considering the school as a weak link system or a system of soft bureaucracy and the classroom as its technical core, the teachers' vital role in improving the academic achievement of students becomes very impressive. In the process of interaction, teachers have the greatest impact on their students; therefore, the teachers' job performance is highly affected by many structural and infrastructural factors (Ogawa, 2005). Research has shown that to achieve success, in addition to having access to adequate facilities and equipment which often leads to quantitative and qualitative developments of sport activities, a physical education teacher should employ various methods to justify his/her behaviors and application of these methods in sport are called their leadership styles (Olayele, 2008).

The importance of educational leadership and its role in the success and development of school is known by everyone. In the same way, both researchers and educational policy makers believe that leadership style is the backbone of educational development. However, in order to describe and interpret the term, they have noted that the educational leadership is different from other leadership definitions in other organizations (MacBeath, 2003). Stogdill (1974) has defined leadership as a process of penetration into

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group or individual activities in specific situations towards achieving predefined aims and objectives. Leadership is the wise use of power and power is obtained through effective leadership. A teacher is not known as a leader unless his/her team members acknowledge his authority. Chamers (1997) has defined leadership as a process in which a person is able to lead a group of people toward a common goal.

Considering the characteristics of teaching profession, it can be said that teachers have to face many frustrating situations and in these situations, leaders and other stakeholders can create additional emotions and stress (Wong and Law, 2002).

Stress is referred to as common human reactions to external or internal unexpected adverse factors. Thus, whenever external or internal balance is eliminated, stress occurs. Hans (1976) one of the pioneers of research on stress, has called stress as an uncertain body response to any kind of demand. In fact, anything that causes excessive pressure on human body and leads to physical or psychological problem can be called stressor. In today's world, other than psychological dimensions, stressors cover a wider range of individuality. As stress and mental or moral pressures have considerable impacts on individuals, economic, cultural, political and administrative pressures can have substantial social impacts (Gilbo, 2008). Those who have a job spend more than one third of their after-puberty lives in their workplaces with a variety of stressors. Now, if the job requirements are not well matched with person's skills and abilities, job stress and physical responses will appear. Therefore, job stress can be considered as one of the most prevalent kinds of daily stress (Wilson, 2004).

Rothmann (2002) defines job performance as a multidimensional construct representing the performance of employees at work, their initiatives and problem-solving strategies and their use of resources, time and energy in performing the required duties. In other words, job performance is a set of behavior patterns including knowledge, skills, managerial competence, conscience and cognitive abilities in a business environment. Job performance is actually all human behaviors that are related to his/her job or the gain or efficiency achieved by an employee in whatever job s/he has including social services, training or production. Job performance is the efficiency of an employee according to legal obligations and interpreted as the consequences of human activities regarding his/her delegated tasks. It is also indicative of the amount of effort and success of the employee in performing his/her job and the required responsibilities (Kazemi, 2008). Recognition of job stress factors and their sources is very important as they can threaten employees' mental and physical health or disrupt their social functioning which is also a serious threat to their job performance (Moorhead and Griffin, 2005). Studies (Bagherzadeh, 2004; Abulghasemi, 2004; Noorbakhsh, 2005; Karbasi, 2008) show the prevalence of job stressors in different occupations in Iran. Other studies (Ramezaninejad, 2004; Timothy and Krin, 2001; Nourbakhsh, 2004; Golabi, 2001) represent the major causes of stress among physical education teachers.

Studies have also been conducted out of Iran on the relationship between the stressors and job performance of both teachers and other organizations' employees. In a study, Larchik and Chan (2004) assessed teachers' performance and their private lives' stressors of 400 public school teachers in southwestern United States and factors such as retirement, money management, and planning were identified as private lives' stressors which led to a declining trend in the amount of time that teachers were volunteer to work as an advocate for extracurricular activities. Somech (2006) examined the effect of leadership style and team process on performance and innovation of heterogeneous teams. He also indicated the effects of leadership style -authoritarian and democratic- on performance and innovation of performance. Motowidlo *et al.*, (1986) in a study titled "occupational stress: causes and consequences for job performance", examined the relationships between work conditions, individuals' profiles, and stressors and job performance in two groups of 104 and 171 respondents of nurses and found the fear of negative evaluation as the most important stressful factor affecting nurses' job performance. In other study (Wilson and Pritchard, 2004), identified 57 stressors of athletes and non-athletes university students. Gilboa (2008) examined the roles of stressors, strain on charismatic leadership, and organizational citizenship behavior in job performance of nurses of 18 wards of 3 German hospitals and found stressors as an objective influential factor on their job performance. Iranian investigations were also conducted through the last few years which focused more on the identification of stressors; however few

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of them investigated the relationships between the stressors and job performance or leadership styles. Narimani *et al.*, (2005) examined the relationships between personality traits, stress and its coping strategies and nurses' job performance and indicated that there was a significant relationship between coping with stress strategies and job performance. Yasini *et al.*, (2012) examined the role of managers' transactional leadership style on job performance of secondary school teachers. The results showed that transactional leadership style had a significant relationship with job performance of teachers.

Accordingly, the study of stress and its causes is necessary for two reasons: first, ignoring the stressors can cause several damages to the human resources of an organization and second, if stress is not recognized properly and not guided with foresight and leadership strategies, it can reduce job performance of the employees (Ashrafi and Kazempour, 2011).

Regarding the importance of human resources in all organizations, evaluation of the employees' job performance and affecting factors has a key role in identifying challenges and promoting the organizational overall efficiency. Therefore, identification of stressors and their relationship with leadership styles is a way to maximize the efficiency of resources, reduce the threatening aspects of stress and finally take advantage of them.

Identification of stressors helps teachers acquire deep knowledge about them and understand their effects on their job performance.

Hence, due to the recent years' changes in the level of education and physical education classes' leadership styles, stressors can affect teachers' performance more severely and make the results of the present study more productive.

The other reason behind the present study was that such a study has not been conducted in the target population. On the other hand, a review of past research suggested that the relationships between stressors, job performance and leadership styles are not clear and require further investigations. So, the main demand of this study was to make the relationships between stressors, job performance and leadership styles of physical education teachers more clear.

It is believed that all teachers in general and physical education teachers in particular need to become familiar with stressors and their relationships with job performance and leadership styles.

Given the above-mentioned points, this study aimed to investigate the relationships between stressors, job performance and leadership styles of physical education teachers in Alborz province.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

### ***Methodology***

The study was conducted as a field cross-correlation using questionnaires.

The initial population consisted of all physical education teachers in Alborz province (750 participants, 295 male and 455 female) and the final participants were 254 teachers who were selected on the basis of Morgan's table.

For data collection, the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (Bass and Olive, 1990), the Stressors Questionnaire (Nourbakhsh, 1999), and the Work Performance Questionnaire (Paterson, 1963) were used. Validity of the questioners was confirmed by a number of experts in the field of sport management and their reliability was calculated using Cronbach alpha coefficient.

Accordingly, reliability coefficients of leadership styles variable was 0.86, dimensions of transformational leadership style, transactional leadership style, and laissez-faire leadership style were 0.83, 0.73, and 0.7 respectively, stressors was 0.94, dimensions of mismanagement and lack of facilities were 0.91 and 0.84 respectively, and job performance variable was 0.77.

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**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**Results**

**Table 1: The results of Pearson correlation of all physical education teachers**

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Job performance	1							
Leadership style	-0.14*	1						
Transformational style	0.03	0.87**	1					
Transactional style	-0.1	0.79**	0.45**	1				
Free-laissez style	-0.5**	0.62**	0.28**	0.49**	1			
stressors	-0.26**	0.22**	0.13*	0.19**	0.26**	1		
Mismanagement	-0.3**	0.21**	0.1	0.19**	0.29**	0.96**	1	
Lack of facilities	-0.13*	0.14*	0.1	0.12	0.14*	0.9**	0.74**	1

\*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

Table 1 shows the results of Pearson correlations to investigate the relationships between variables of leadership styles and stressors plus their dimensions and job performance of all physical education teachers. According to this table, correlation coefficients of job performance with leadership styles and free-laissez leadership style were -0.14 and -0.5 respectively. Correlation coefficient of stressors variable with job performance was -0.26 and with mismanagement and lack of facilities were -0.3 and -0.13 respectively. Correlation coefficient of stressors variable with leadership style was 0.22 which was significant at the 0.01 level. Correlation coefficients of stressors with transformational style, transactional style and free-laissez style were 0.13, 0.19 and 0.26 respectively. Correlation coefficients of mismanagement and lack of facilities were 0.21 and 0.14 respectively.

**Table 2: The results of stepwise regression analysis of stressors with job performance of all physical education teachers**

Criterion variable	Predictor variable	R	R <sup>2</sup>	F	Regression coefficient β of stressors
Job performance	stressors	0.26	0.07	19.03 0.000	B -.26 T -4.3 0.000

As it shown in table 2, the multiple correlation coefficients of stressors with job performance of all physical education teachers was 0.26 and the coefficient of determination was equal to 0.07; therefore, the stressors variable could predict %7 of physical education teachers' job performance.

The results of stepwise regression analysis shows that in linear combination of stressors and leadership styles with job performance of all physical education teachers, the stressors variable entered into the regression model while it had the greatest simple correlation coefficient with job performance variable. The regression coefficient for stressors was  $\beta = -0.26$  and the test statistics' value of regression

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coefficient's significance was  $t = -4.3$  which was significant at the 0.000 level ( $0.000 < 0.05$ ). In this model the fixed value of 3.1 was obtained. Accordingly, considering the regression coefficient of stressors and the fixed value, regression equation for all physical education teachers can be obtained as follows:  
 $y' = 3.1 - 0.18(\text{stressors})$

**Table 3: The results of stepwise multivariate regression analysis of all physical education teachers**

Criterion variable	Predictor variable	R	R <sup>2</sup>	F	Regression coefficient $\beta$			
					Free-laissez style	Transformational style	mismangement	Transactional style
Job performance	Free-laissez style	0.49	0.024	74.3 0.000	B - 0.49 T -8.6 0.000			
	Transformational style	0.52	0.027	44.1 0.000	B- 0.53 t-9.3 0.000	B-0.19 t-3.3 0.001		
	mismangement	0.55	0.030	33.8 0.000	B- 0.48 t-8.2 0.000	B-0.19 t-3.4 0.001	B-0.18 t-3.4 0.001	
	Transactional style	0.56	0.031	26.39 0.000	B- 0.54 t-8.5 0.000	B-0.14 t-2.4 0.02	B-0.18 t-3.3 0.001	B-0.15 t-2.2 0.02

As shown in table 3, the multiple correlation coefficient of free-laissez style with job performance of all physical education teachers ( $R = 0.49$ ) and the determination coefficient ( $R^2 = \%24$ ) which measures the percentage of criterion variable's variance explained by predictor variables are shown. Thus, the free-laissez leadership style could predict %24 of all physical education teachers' job performance. Moreover, the regression equation ( $F = 74.3$  and the significant level of 0.000 ( $< 0.05$ )) was significant.

Regarding the transformational leadership style, the multiple correlation coefficient of free-laissez and transformational styles with job performance of all physical education teachers increased ( $R = 0.52$ ) and the determination coefficient was %27. Therefore, the free-laissez and transformational leadership styles could predict %27 of all physical education teachers' job performance. Additionally, the regression equation ( $F = 44.1$  and the significance level of 0.000 ( $< 0.05$ )) was significant.

Concerning the mismanagement variable, the multiple correlation coefficient of free-laissez and transformational leadership styles, and mismanagement with all physical education teachers' job performance increased ( $R = 0.55$ ) and the determination coefficient was %30. Accordingly, dimensions of free-laissez and transformational leadership styles and mismanagement could predict %30 of all physical education teachers' job performance. Also, the regression equation ( $F = 33.8$  and the significance level of 0.000 ( $< 0.05$ )) was significant.

Relating to the transactional leadership style, the multiple correlation coefficient of free-laissez and transformational leadership styles, mismanagement and transactional style with all physical education teachers' job performance increased ( $R = 0.56$ ) and the determination coefficient was %31. So, free-laissez and transformational leadership styles, mismanagement and transactional leadership style could predict %31 of all physical education teachers' job performance. The regression equation ( $F = 26.9$  and the significance level of 0.000 ( $< 0.05$ )) was also significant.

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The results of stepwise regression analysis showed that in the linear combination of leadership styles and job performance with all physical education teachers' job performance, the free-laissez style had the greatest simple correlation with job performance and entered the regression model at the first step. The regression coefficient of free-laissez style ( $B=-0.49$ ,  $t=-0.8.6$  and the significance level of  $0.000<0.05$ ) was significant. At the second step, the transformational leadership style showed the greatest partial correlation with job performance. Moreover, the regression coefficients of free-laissez style ( $B=-0.53$ ,  $t=-9.3$  and the significance level of  $0.000<0.05$ ) and transformational style ( $B=-0.19$ ,  $t=-3.3$  and significance level of  $0.001<0.05$ ) were significant. At the third step, the regression coefficients of free-laissez style ( $B=-0.48$ ,  $t=-8.2$  and the significance level of  $0.000<0.05$ ), transformational style ( $B=-0.19$ ,  $t=-3.4$  and the significance level of  $0.001<0.05$ ), and mismanagement ( $B=-0.18$ ,  $t=-3.4$  and the significance level of  $0.001<0.05$ ) were significant. Finally, at the fourth step, the regression coefficients of free-laissez style ( $B=-0.54$ ,  $t=-8.5$  and the significance level of  $0.000<0.05$ ), transformational style ( $B=-0.14$ ,  $t=-2.4$  and the significance level of  $0.02<0.05$ ), mismanagement ( $B=-0.18$ ,  $t=-3.3$  and the significance level of  $0.001<0.05$ ), and transactional style ( $B=-0.15$ ,  $t=-2.2$  and the significance level of  $0.02<0.05$ ) were significant. In this equation, the fixed value of 2.52 was obtained. Therefore, considering the regression coefficients of free-laissez, transformational, and transactional leadership styles in addition to mismanagement and fixed value of 2.54, the regression equation for all physical education teachers will be as follows:

$$y' = -0.54 (\text{free-laissez style}) + 0.14 (\text{transformational style}) - 0.18 (\text{mismanagement}) + 0.15 (\text{transactional style}) + 2.52$$

## Discussion and Conclusion

The findings of the present study indicated that there were simple correlations between leadership styles, stressors, and overall job performance of all physical education teachers in Alborz province. In this study, the free-laissez style was recognized as the most effective leadership style among the three analyzed styles of free-laissez, transformational, and transitional. This suggests the importance of its application in the field of education in general and physical education teaching in particular. Regarding lack of facilities and mismanagement which are dimensions of stressors, mismanagement could predict %30 of teachers' job performance that shows the importance of paying more attention to factors leading to mismanagement in educational fields. In a study, Gilboa and Shirom (2008) comprehensively reviewed the relationship between stressors and employees' job performance and found a strong significant relationship between them. In another study (Gilboa *et al.*, 2008), an inverse relationship between job stress and job performance was specified i.e. increasing job stress led to decreasing quality of job performance.

The results of the current study indicated that the stressors variable could predict %7 of physical education teachers' job performance. In linear combination of stressors and leadership styles with job performance of all physical education teachers, the stressors variable showed the biggest simple correlation which was consistent with another study entitled "the relationship between mental health and job performance based on teachers' personality traits" conducted by Tabe *et al.*, (2010) in which the stepwise regression analysis showed that among the personality traits of extraversion, neuroticism, and conscientiousness, mental health, extraversion and neuroticism could predict job performance. The other finding of the present study was that of analysis of variance (ANOVA) in which significant differences were observed between male and female physical education teachers' views concerning leadership styles, stressors and job performance. In a study regarding the job stress and its impacts on job performance, Gilboa *et al.*, (2008) found that male officers had been affected by stressors more than female officers, which was consistent with the present study findings. Considering factors such as age and gender and the fact that human behaviors in dealing with stressors and different situations depend on individual characteristics, findings of the mentioned study could be factual because these factors can either weaken or strengthen the stress level in different conditions. Therefore, these factors should be taken into account when researching on stress and strategies to deal with it. There are several influential factors on a manager or a teacher's leadership style. Some of these factors are personal and some are situation-specific. A leader needs to be flexible without being unstable and rigorous without being dictator.

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Probably the physical education teachers' position in educational fields is the reason behind the selection of the free-laissez leadership style as the most effective one. Besides, a leader of free-laissez style let the team be free and gives them space to operate freely, whereas a democrat leader follows team decision making procedure, but s/he is strict in case of motivating or punishing the team members. Therefore, this distinction can further explain why the free-laissez leadership style is the most effective style of leadership. Accordingly, based on the findings of the present study, it is recommended that the education authorities, specially the physical education ones provide favorable conditions to reduce stressors and increase job performance and motivation of teachers.

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