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# The Leadership Styles of the Heads of Physical Education Departments

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this survey is to study the change-oriented, pragmatic, and neutered leadership styles of the heads of physical education departments in the province of Ardebil. 180 heads of sports commissions answered a multi-factor leadership questionnaire (MLQ). The multi-factor leadership questionnaire includes 41 questions covering three leadership styles of change-oriented, pragmatic, and neutered. The validity of questionnaire has been studied and verified through the corrective feedbacks by the management and programming teachers of physical education, and the stability of questionnaire was determined 86% using Cronbach's alpha. In order to analyze the data, the statistical tests of chi-square and Friedman and Bonferroni post hoc test were used at a significant level ( $P \leq 0 / 05$ ). The Results showed that there was a significant difference between the pragmatic, change-oriented, and neutered leadership styles of the heads of physical education departments. Also, there was a significant difference among the priorities of the leadership styles of heads of physical education department. And, the change-oriented leadership style was placed as the first priority, while the pragmatic and neutered styles were considered as next priorities. There are significant differences among the subscales of the change-oriented and pragmatic leadership styles of physical education administrators.

**Key Words:** change-oriented leadership style, pragmatic leadership style, physical education departments.

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## INTRODUCTION

One of the management responsibilities is to play an effective role in leading the organization. This matter has led to a lot of research in industrialized societies and resulted in useful achievements and applications. There are roughly many articles on leadership, although there is much deficiency on methods of recognizing the leadership behavior through applicable devices (1). Several studies have been conducted on the leadership style with upper management in many ways, and the results show that the leadership style can affect the decision making process and the effectiveness of the organization as a result (2). Organizations like faculty of physical education, the organization of physical education, department of physical education in the ministry of education, and sportive federations are meant to be run by managers. If people without necessary qualification and ability are chosen to manage these organizations, many problems will be imposed on them. So, the existence of efficient managers is inevitable for the sublimation of every organization such as physical education organizations (3). Nowadays, organizations need efficient managers in order to achieve the desired targets for the comprehensive development of country. The success of each organization in fulfilling the determined goals depends on how effective the actions of the manager and the leadership styles are. The appropriate behavioral patterns of the manager in each organization cause the strong spirit and motivation in the staff and increase their job satisfaction (4). Therefore, the leadership style as a facilitating and motivating factor affects the efficiency of the organization and that of the staff directly and indirectly. But, the fact that which leadership style can be effective in motivating and improving the functionality of sportive organizations is the question to which a century of research and

study in management have been trying to answer (5). In Iran, physical education organizations are of those which have a valuable role in the nation's sport and improving the functionality of these organizations leads to more progress in sport. The skilled and professional manpower is of the most important factors in the development of each organization. Since the human resources are of effective factors in the physical organization organizations like in any other one and the more the staff work with higher motivations, the better efficiency they show. The desirable leadership is a factor which can rather satisfy the staff and lead to increase their efficiency as a result. Using the professional talent and capability of manpower necessitates the appropriate atmosphere, proper motivation, and job satisfaction. Therefore, the manpower is an important factor in the success and progress of each organization and no organization can achieve all of its goals without it (6). The most recent studies regarding leadership point out to two theories of change-oriented and pragmatic. The last phase which Breyman (1992) (7) called a new perspective on leadership started its jump and movement from Burn's theory (1987) (8). The theory included two separate sorts of leadership which are pragmatic and changeable [The changeable leadership was renamed to change-oriented leadership by Bass *et al.* (1985) (9)]. According to Burn's theory, the pragmatic leadership includes an exchange relationship between the leader and the subordinate (the relationship between superior and subordinate) in which the subordinate receives rewards of vital needs (security, dependency, and cognition) in return for complying the leader's demands (8). Also, Burn explained the changeable (change-oriented) leadership in this way: a relationship in which the leader encourages his subordinate to achieve the highest level

of capability and this encouragement is meant for achieving the classified needs like success and group goals more (8). Recognizing the change-oriented leader caused a new perspective of leading and created various theories in leading (10). James stated the change-oriented leadership as a moral method by which the followers and leaders are led to higher levels of motivation and dignity (11). The leadership theorists believe that the change-oriented leadership investigates only the effects between work and payment, which causes failure in making the work any sense and increase of worker's creativity. Fruitful leadership or more efficiency causes long-term success and functionality improvement, which is the same as change-oriented leadership (12). Tucker and Russell (2004) believe that the change-oriented leader must define the new structure and behavior in a way that the individuals accept him so that a good attitude comes out for new guidance and new behavior in the organization as a result. The change-oriented leaders are inspirational and motivate their followers, a way which is beyond rewarding the followers (13). Sashkin (1995) believes that change-oriented managers act in their organization in a way that has a deep effect in organization's function (5). The studies conducted in industry by Avolio and Bass (1988) and Bass (1998) (14, 15), in the army by Bass, Avolio, and Goodheim (1987) (16), in technology by Howell and Higgins (1990) (17), in religion by Smith, Carson, and Alexander (1984) (18) approve of Sashkin's theory (5). The executives of one hundred American top-notch companies with average size confirm Sashkin's theory. These one hundred companies are of the highest level among the companies of the same size. Their executives bear change-oriented characteristics. Hovel states that organizations of high efficiency and profitability are led by leaders who bear change-oriented characteristics. Snider

(1990) achieved a high relationship between the observed behavior of sports executives and subordinate's job satisfaction, too (19). In the researches regarding the relationship of change-oriented and pragmatic management with job satisfaction, Howell and Frost (1989), Howell and Higgins (1990) (17, 20) presented strong evidence that change-oriented managers have more satisfied subordinates than other managers. Benis (1990) also concluded that the change-oriented managers pay as good attention as the organization (21). Pedraja-Rejas *et al.* studied the effect of leadership style on the functionality of small companies in Chile in another survey in 2006. The purpose of this survey was to recognize change-oriented, pragmatic, and neutered leadership style in these companies. The statistical sample of this survey included 96 small companies in the north of Chile (22). The results showed change-oriented leadership at a moderate level, pragmatic leadership at a dominant level, and neutered leadership at the lowest level (22). Ramzaninezhad *et al.* (2012) studied the relationship between the leadership style of managers and the organizational commitment of physical education teachers in the province of Hamedan. The statistical society of this research included 110 managers and 200 physical education teachers. The results showed that there is a positive and significant relationship between all the subscales of the change-oriented and pragmatic leadership styles and the emotional, normative, and continuous commitment of the teachers. But, no significant relationship was observed between the neutered leadership style and the emotional, normative, and continuous commitment of the teachers (23). Porsoltani (2008), in comparing the change-oriented leadership style with pragmatic one of sports commission's officials in the province of Guilan, showed that there was a significant difference between the change-oriented,

pragmatic, and neutered leadership styles among the sports commissions, and the most used leadership style was the change-oriented, while the least used one was the neutered one (24). The success of the organization and fulfilling the goals depend on how the managers' actions and the effective leadership styles are. Using the appropriate leadership style seems essential for the executives of sports organizations. So, the purpose of this research is to compare the leadership style of executives of physical education departments in the province of Ardebil.

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

The method of the research, given the fact that it is trying to describe leadership styles, is of the descriptive one which has been done as a fieldwork. Also, the relationship between the variables has been studied according to research goals.

**Subjects.** It was the heads of sports commission who made comments on the heads of physical education departments. Due to the low number of population, the statistical sample has been chosen equal to the population. 173 people out of 180 ones answered the questionnaire.

**Instruments.** In order to collect data, a standard questionnaire whose reliability and validity have been evaluated in the researches inside and outside of Iran was used. The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) has been made by

Avolio and Bass (2004) (25). This questionnaire has 9 subscales of leadership style which are concluded in 41 questions. The questionnaire is of the response-closed type, and the measuring scale of the questions is Likert's scale. The questions have five choices including never, seldom, sometimes, often, and always with the scores of 0, 1, 2, 3, and 4, respectively. The reliability of the multifactor leadership questionnaire (MLQ) in the surveys conducted outside of Iran has been reported 79% to 83%. Also, experimentally studying on 30 heads of sports commissions in the province of Ardebil, the stability reliability this questionnaire has been obtained 86%.

**Statistical Analysis.** Data analysis was conducted at two descriptive and inferential statistic levels using SPSS. Kolmogorov - Smirnov (K-S) were used for checking the normality of the data. Given the type of data distribution, parametric and non-parametric statistical tests and repeated measures of Friedman have been used to test research's hypotheses.

### RESULTS

The results of Kolmogorov-Smirnov test showed that the variables of change-oriented and neutered leadership styles hadn't normal distribution [ $(z = 1.43, p = 0.033)$  and  $(z = 1.97, p = 0.001)$ , respectively], but Pragmatic style had a normal distribution (Table 1).

Table1. The results of Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for normality of distribution

Leadership styles	z	sig
Change-oriented	1.43	0.033*
Pragmatic	0.92	0.363
Neutered	1.97	0.001*

\*: Data distribution isn't normal.

It is observed that there was a significant difference among the priorities of leadership styles of heads of physical education

departments, and change-oriented leadership style ( $3.914 \pm 0.617$ ) was at the first priority, while leadership styles of pragmatic ( $3.471 \pm$

0.607) and neutered ( $2.094 \pm 1.057$ ) were at the next priorities (Table 2).

Table 2. The results of Friedman test

Leadership style	Average rating	SD	M	Chi square	Degree of freedom	sig
Change-oriented	2.57	0.617	3.914	142.61	2	0.001*
Pragmatic	2.12	0.607	3.471			
Neutered	1.31	1.057	2.094			

\*: significant at  $p < 0.01$

The results show that the subscale of inspiration ( $4.162 \pm 0.838$ ) is at the first priority, spiritual impact ( $4.043 \pm 0.679$ ) at the second one, individual consideration ( $3.936 \pm 0.846$ ) at the third one, attitude ( $3.918 \pm 0.841$ ) at the fourth one, and charisma ( $3.692 \pm 0.647$ ) at the fifth one (Table 3).

Table 3. priorities of dimensions of change-oriented leadership styles of the executives

change-oriented leadership style's dimensions	Average rating	SD	M	Chi square	Degree of freedom	sig
Charisma	2.29	0.647	3.692	73.794	4	0.001*
Spiritual impact	3.21	0.679	4.043			
Inspiration	3.64	0.838	4.162			
Attitude	2.86	0.841	3.918			
Individual consideration	3.0	0.846	3.963			

\*: significant at  $p < 0.01$

It is observed that there was a significance difference among the priorities of dimensions of pragmatic leadership styles of executives. And, the dimensions of management based on active exception ( $3.719 \pm 0.860$ ) were at the first priority, while conditional reward ( $3.494 \pm 1.066$ ) and management based on inactive exception ( $3.203 \pm 0.867$ ) were at the next priorities (Table 4).

Table4. The results of Bonferroni post hoc test on the dimensions of pragmatic leadership styles of executives

Compared dimensions	Average discrepancy	Sig
Conditional reward of management based on active exception	-0.225	0.049*
Conditional reward of management based on inactive exception	0.291	0.009**
Management based on active exception with management based on inactive exception	0.516	0.001**

\*: significant at  $p < 0.05$ .

\*: significant at  $p < 0.01$ .

## DISCUSSION

The results of the research showed that there was a significant difference in the change-oriented, pragmatic, and neutered leadership styles among the executives of physical education departments, and the most used leadership style was the change-oriented one, while the least used style was

the neutered one. The meta-analysis study showed that there was a significant relationship between leaders' efficacy and the change-related leadership style (26). The results of the present research are consistent with most of conducted researches. These researches show that the change-oriented leadership style can have an important effect

due to paying attention to emotions and stimulating innate motivations of individuals as well as paying attention to beliefs and values of people in human management and especially in sports management. Sports officials who follow this style are known as successful leaders, having extraordinary impacts on their followers. Pruijn and Boucher (1995) studied Netherland's national sports organizations and found no major impact between the relationship of change-oriented and pragmatic leadership in the organization (27). It seems that one of the reasons for the inconsistency of this research with the one by Pedraja-Rejas *et al.* (2006) is the difference in the statistical population used in this research, because this research studied the comments of sports commissions' officials on the heads of physical education departments, but in the research by Pedraja-Rejas *et al.* (2006), the comments of executives of commercial companies were studied (22). Perhaps, it can be said that the inconsistency of the results of this research with the one by Pruijn and Boucher (1995) is because of cultural and organizational differences in sports organizations. Also, the results of the research showed that the executives of physical education departments used the change-oriented leadership style as the first priority, while they used pragmatic and neutered styles as next priorities (27). Porsoltani (2008), in comparing the change-oriented and pragmatic leadership styles of sports commissions' officials in the province of Guilan, showed that there was a significant difference among the change-oriented, pragmatic, and neutered leadership styles in sports commissions (24), given the

fact that the most used style was change-oriented one, while the least used one was neutered one. The results showed that the heads of physical education departments use the subscale of inspiration, spiritual impact, individual consideration, attitude, and charisma, respectively. The results of the present study showed that the executives of physical education departments use the management based on active exception more in pragmatic leadership style, while the conditional reward and the management based on inactive exception are placed in the next priorities, a fact which is consistent with the results of the research by Porsoltani (2008) (24).

### CONCLUSION

The results of the research show that there is a significant relationship among the change-oriented, pragmatic, and neutered leadership styles in the executives of physical education departments, and the most used leadership style has been the change-oriented one, while the least used one has been the neutered one, given the fact that the results of the present study are consistent with most of the researches conducted. This research shows that the change-oriented leadership style can have an important effect due to paying attention to emotions and stimulating innate motivations of individuals as well as paying attention to beliefs and values of people in human management and especially in sports management. Sports officials who follow this style are known as successful leaders, having extraordinary impact on their followers.

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## تازه‌های علوم کاربردی ورزش

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## سبک‌های رهبری رؤسای ادارات تربیت بدنی

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## چکیده

هدف از این مطالعه بررسی سبک‌های رهبری تحول‌گرا، عمل‌گرا و بی‌خاصیت رؤسای ادارات ورزش و جوانان استان اردبیل می‌باشد. تعداد ۱۸۰ نفر از رؤسای هیئت‌های ورزشی پرسشنامه چند عاملی رهبری (MLQ) را پاسخ دادند. پرسشنامه چند عاملی رهبری شامل ۴۱ سؤال است که ۳ سبک رهبری تحول‌گرا، عمل‌گرا و بی‌خاصیت را شامل می‌شود. روایی پرسشنامه با بهره‌گیری از نظرات اصلاحی اساتید مدیریت و برنامه‌ریزی رشته تربیت بدنی بررسی و تایید گردید و پایایی پرسشنامه با استفاده از آزمون آلفای کرونباخ ۰/۸۶٪ تعیین گردید. نتایج نشان داد که تفاوت معنی‌داری بین سبک‌های رهبری تحول‌گرا، عمل‌گرا و بی‌خاصیت مسئولین ادارات تربیت‌بدنی وجود دارد. همچنین بین اولویت سبک‌های رهبری رؤسای ادارات تربیت بدنی تفاوت معنی‌داری وجود دارد و سبک رهبری تحول‌گرا در اولویت اول و سبک‌های رهبری عمل‌گرا و بی‌خاصیت در اولویت‌های بعدی بودند. بین اولویت خرده مقیاس‌های سبک رهبری تحول‌گرا و عمل‌گرای مدیران تربیت‌بدنی، تفاوت معنی‌داری وجود دارد.

**واژگان کلیدی:** سبک رهبری تحول‌گرا، سبک رهبری عمل‌گرا، ادارات تربیت بدنی.

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