Relationship between leadership styles and personality traits among woman physical education teachers

Maryam Eslami Farsani[1], Aida Azadi[2], Fakhroldin Asadi Farsani[3], Shahram Aroufzad[4]

[1]Department of Sport Management, Islamic Azad University, Mobarake Branch, Iran.
[2]Department of Sport Management, Islamic Azad University, Mobarake Branch, Iran.
[3]Department of Motor Behavior, Islamic Azad University, Khorasgan Branch, Iran.
[4]Isfahan Farhangian University, Iran

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ABSTRACT

Leadership is an important concept in the study of groups since it has to occur, usually in order for groups to become more effective. The leader plays an active part in development and maintenance of role structure and goal direction and influences the existence and efficiency of the group. Thus, the aim of this study was to evaluate the relationship between leadership styles and personality traits among woman physical education teachers in Isfahan city. For this purpose, we selected 185 woman physical education teachers from Isfahan city that their ages ranged from 24-37 years-old. To data collection, all subjects filled in the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire and the NEO Personality Inventory Revised (NEO-PI-R). Results showed that the positive correlation between overall leadership styles and personality traits was significant at the level of P<0.001. Furthermore, the correlation between leadership styles sub-scales such as transactional leadership, transformational leadership and passive/avoidant leadership and personality traits was significant at the level of P<0.001. Based on these results we concluded that the personality traits play an important role in influencing, persuading and mobilizing others and are argued to be important for leadership styles.

Key words: Leadership Styles, Leaders, Personality Traits, Physical Education Teachers, Woman
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INTRODUCTION

Leadership is a process by which a person influences others to accomplish an objective and directs the organization in a way that makes it more cohesive and coherent [1].

Mosadeghrad (2003) stated that leadership style is the general characterization of a leader's thinking, behavior and organizational environment. It can be viewed as a series of managerial attitudes, behaviors, characteristics and skills based on individual and organizational values, leadership interests and reliability of employees in different situations [2]. Organizational Success in achieving its goals and objectives depends on its managers and their leadership style. By using appropriate leadership styles, managers can affect employee job satisfaction, commitment and productivity [3-4]. Various leadership styles have been defined and found in research literature [5-7].

According to Burns (1978), one of the first few scholars to conceptualize leadership styles in terms of transactional and transformational characteristics, transactional leadership involves a kind of exchange process in which a leader offers subordinates benefits or incentives in exchange for their service. Such a leadership approach is based on a variety of reward mechanisms intended to stimulate subordinates to raise their work performance. In its basic

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practice, a leader guides and inspires subordinates in pursuit of established goals by clearly identifying the roles, task requirements, and effectiveness objectives. Another leadership approach is transformational leadership which deals with the leadership issue from a total different perspective or on another level of cognition [8]. A transformational leader has a profound influence on the followers and encourages them to place group benefits over individual interests [7-8]. Bass (1985, 1995) held that transactional leadership emphasizes the process in which a leader makes a commitment of reward exchange to subordinates. Therefore, the influence of transactional leadership tends to happen when a leader makes a promise to the best interests of their subordinates [9-10].

On the other hand, Personality traits are defined as consistent patterns of thoughts, feelings, or actions that distinguish people from one another [1, 11]. Also, Eslami Farsani et al. (2012) stated that 'the Big Five' is the commonly used term for the model of personality which describes the five fundamental factors of our personality. It combines the emotion, attitude and behavior of the people [11]. According to McCrae and Costa (1987), in this context there are five factor models which are extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness to experience [12]. Furthermore, Judge & Bono (2000) in their research stated that extrovert's people are social, assertive, active, brave, energetic, and adventurous. Individuals high on extroversion are dominant in their behavior and expressive when interacting with others. For example, people with social leadership skills are good at getting members of the team excited about their task, increasing energy, inspiring team spirit, and reducing conflict. Often, being a democratic type of leadership, social leaders often produce high performing teams and may be popular with their subordinates. In addition, people who are brave will not shy when they meet people. They are often full of energy and actively seek out attention from others. Extroverts are often competitive in nature and highly involved in many social circles and activities. Individuals scoring high on openness to experience are characterized by traits such as imagination, unconventionality, autonomy, creativity, and divergent thinking [13].

McCrae and Costa (1987, 1992) argued that agreeableness is the individual who are altruistic, warm, generous, trusting, and cooperative. For example, an agreeable person is concerned with other interests. In addition, agreeableness can be a prerequisite to be able to understand subordinates' perspective and infuse their work with meaning. People who score high on the agreeableness scale show great compassion, cooperativeness, and empathy for all the members of society. They value being congenial with others and will go to great lengths to secure and maintain their relationships. Agreeable people have an optimistic view on human nature and believe that people in general are honest and cooperative [12]. This altruistic view on life leads to them being involved in many social causes. Conscientiousness person encompasses dependability, responsibility, dutifulness, deliberation, achievement orientation, and a concern for following established rules [12-13]. This kind of person is very responsible with work and will be very careful to make a decision. This leads to conscientious people who are very organized, academically prepared and successful in a variety of situations [1].

Also, McCrae and Costa (1987, 1992), neuroticism can be defined as the tendency to be anxious, defensive, insecure, and emotional. This means that neuroticism is associated with lack of self confidence. When the people lack confidence, they will always feel anxious, have a defensive attitude and feel insecure. For example, when the leaders ask him to make a decision, he will refuse to make a decision because he feels that the idea that he will express is irrelevant and he will also feel that the people will laugh at his idea. They are often easily disturbed or stressed by a variety of common situations leading them to express a negative emotion. This often leads to them experiencing normal interactions as threatening and trivial problems as impossibly difficult [12].

In the context of leadership style, extroverts' personality is important for transformational leadership. Bass (1985) stated that such characteristics play an important role in influencing, persuading and mobilizing others and are argued to be important for transformational leaders. With the charisma that the leaders have, leaders can convince people about the vision that he have and inspire or persuade the followers to look at the vision [10]. The suggestion fully supports Bono and Judge (2000) who found extraversion to be the strongest and most consistent personality correlate of transformational leadership [13]. Thus, based on these evidences that presented, the aim of this study was to evaluate the relationship between leadership styles and personality traits among woman physical education teachers in Isfahan city.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study was the correlation study decision. Participants were included 185 woman physical education teachers from Isfahan city and their ages ranged from 24-37 years-old.

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Instruments
To data collection, all subjects filled in the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire and the NEO Personality Inventory Revised (NEO-PI-R). Furthermore, to be more comprehensive, this study was using full-range of leadership styles evolved by Bass and Avolio (2004) that consist of transactional leadership, transformational leadership and passive/avoidant leadership [14]. The NEO Personality Inventory Revised (NEO-PI-R) was used to measure the personality of teacher physical education. This questionnaire divided to five sub-scales included neuroticism, openness to experience, extraversion, agreeableness, and conscientiousness.

Also, questionnaire reliability with Cronbach's alpha for Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire and the NEO Personality Inventory Revised (NEO-PI-R) were obtained 0.87 and 0.94, respectively. The collected data was analyzed by descriptive (mean and standard deviation) and inferential (Pearson's correlation test and Cronbach's alpha) statistical tests at the $P<0.05$ significant level with SPSS Version 15.

RESULTS

Table 1 shows the mean (M) and standard deviations (SD) of leadership styles sub-scales and personality traits sub-scales among physical education organization employees.

Table1. Means and Standard Deviations variables used in this research

Variables	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)
Overall leadership styles	**91.5**	**2.5**
transactional leadership	**39.7**	**2.3**
transformational leadership	**35.5**	**2.5**
passive/avoidant leadership	**15.6**	**1.4**
Neuroticism	**14.5**	**1.5**
openness to experience	**14.1**	**1.7**
Extraversion	**17.4**	**1.6**
Agreeableness	**13.45**	**2.55**
Conscientiousness	**14.67**	**1.3**

In addition, the matrix correlation among all variables that used in this research presented in table 2. Based on these results the positive correlation between overall leadership styles and personality traits was significant at the level of $P<0.001$. Furthermore, the correlation between leadership styles sub-scales such as transactional leadership, transformational leadership and passive/avoidant leadership and personality traits was significant at the level of $P<0.001$. Based on the results that presented in table 2, the correlation between transactional leadership and transformational leadership with openness to experience, extraversion, agreeableness, and conscientiousness was positive and correlation between avoidant leadership and neuroticism was negative.

Table 2. Matrix correlation between leadership styles and personality traits

Variables	Overall leadership styles	transactional leadership	transformational leadership	passive/avoidant leadership
openness to experience	0.82**	0.69**	0.68**	-0.61**
Extraversion	0.72**	0.86**	0.79**	-0.70**
agreeableness	0.68**	0.81**	0.87**	-0.68**
conscientiousness	0.64**	0.77**	0.79**	-0.69**
neuroticism,	-0.88**	-0.79**	-0.66**	-0.64**

** Significant at the level of P<0.001

CONCLUSION

Results showed that the significant and meaningful correlations between leadership styles sub-scales and personality traits (see table 2). Thus, the strength of the correlations obtained in the present research suggests that the personality traits have a significant role in overall leadership styles and its sub-scales. These results were consistence with previous research results that doing in this field.

Also, the result shows that agreeableness, conscientiousness and openness to experience had a significant positive correlation with transformational leadership. Agreeableness is a key behavior of transformational leadership. One of

the elements that transformational leaders must have is individualized considerations. This kind of leader will encourage the followers to express new idea and trust the follower to make a decision. Judge and Bono (2000) found that openness to experience was associated with transformational leadership, because they are creative, individuals high in openness to experience are likely to score high in intellectual stimulation [15].

Many studies which are conducted on personality and its correlation with leadership styles show the interaction between personality and behavior [16]. Costa and McCrae (1988) stated that the extraversion is related to social leadership [17]. In addition, Judge & Bono (2000) in their study found that the extraversion and agreeableness are predictors of transformational leadership [13]. Some researches prove that high agreeableness trait shows several leadership behaviors because they are interested for their own and other's growth and development needs [9-10]. Judge and Bono (2000) linked openness to experience with transformational leadership. Those who score high in openness to experience are intellectual [13]. After going through literature it is proved that there is no such research about teacher's personality traits and influence on their leadership styles. There are many researches which show co-relational analysis of personality traits and leadership styles of managers. Much work is done on head teacher's leadership styles, women leadership, teacher's leadership and student learning [18-19].

Generally, when the leader is creative, he/she can transform people and organization to drive to the vision that he inspire. He/she will encourage followers to express the idea on how to solve the problem that organization face. Accordingly, Ployhart et al. (2001) found that openness to experience explained variance in transformational leadership, but only in more challenging conditions. According to Judge and Bono (2000) who found that openness to experience was associated with transformational leadership, because they are creative, individuals high in openness to experience are likely to score high in intellectual stimulation [13].

The findings of the present study largely supported the conceptualization of leadership styles in terms of the full range model of leadership. The leadership styles practiced was associated with personality traits and behaviors relevant to the descriptions of these styles [20]. In summary, the managers who used a transformational style indicated personality traits associated with this type of leadership. Average to high scores in terms of strategic thinking, a conceptual and innovative approach, and critical evaluation of information were coupled with moral concerns, a sense of responsibility, and perseverance. These managers also showed at least reasonable resilience as well as ambition and motivation. Regarding the interpersonal aspect of leadership, this group indicated assertiveness and a need to influence others while also allowing participation by associates and involving others in decision making. These managers were characterized by a need for affiliation, responsiveness in interaction, trust in and tolerance towards others as well as being reasonably caring. The manifestation of these traits, however, was influenced by their use of transactional leadership. They seemed more task oriented than people oriented, and their need for structure probably also affected the inspirational aspect of leadership. One of the managers in this group did not in all aspects fit the above profile and his personality characteristics corresponded to some extent with that of the second group. Although the people who rated him observed much of his behavior as transformational, this was not always supported in terms of the expected personality traits. For fear of over interpretation only a tentative explanation is provided, namely, that his lower post level implied raters at a lower post level who might have evaluated leadership behavior differently.

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