

## The Relationship between Organizational Climate and Leadership Styles of the Managers of Physical Education Offices in Isfahan Province

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**Abstract:** The purpose of the present research is to study the relationship between organizational climate and leadership styles of the managers of physical education organizations in Isfahan Province. The research is descriptive carried out as a field study. The population of the research consists of all the physical education managers of the province including 57 managers (the sample is the same as the population). Sussman and Deep's Organizational Climate Questionnaire (OCQ) and Metzcus and Burden's Leadership Behavior Description Questionnaire (LBDQ) were used as research instruments. The results suggest that there is a significant relationship between organizational climate and leadership behavior of the managers. The correlation coefficient indicated a significant positive relationship between the autocratic leadership style and closed organizational climate and between democratic leadership style and open organizational climate at the 0.01 significance level. Further, a significant positive correlation was observed between the dimensions of organizational climate (goal, role, reward, procedures, and communication) and leadership styles of managers.

**Key words:** organizational climate, leadership behavior, managers, PE organizations

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### INTRODUCTION

The success and effectiveness of an organization considerably depends on its knowledge, organizational factors, and optimal utilization of potential organizational resources, in particular managers. Moreover, knowledge of the behavioral patterns in an organization and their relationship with different dimensions like organizational climate can play an important role in the optimal administration of organizational affairs. Behavior in an organization is not simply a function of formal expectations, personal needs, and organizational goals, but the result of a dynamic relationship between these elements. What is generally meant by leadership is influencing and motivating individuals so that they will enthusiastically attempt to achieve group objectives. Due to the broad application of leadership techniques and their tremendous effectiveness for human societies, there has been a great deal of theorization, research, and study on the subject of leadership, leaders' responsibilities, the constituents of leaders' authorities, and models for implementing leadership in the society. Basically, there are no specific, trainable, and repeatable styles of leadership and these styles can only be identified through examination of leaders' behaviors and formulation of these behaviors. Similarly, so long as the actions of a manager and leader are within organizational values and the results are favorable, there are no reasons for judging their leadership style. Thus, issues related to leadership must be dealt with in conceptual and general forms. What is certain is that one of the main duties of any manager is to create a system in which organizational responsibilities are carried out at an ideal level. For achieving such a goal, it is essential to recognize the factors that play a vital role in carrying out the tasks. Members of an organization bring with themselves a collection of unique traits, emotions, values, needs, and motives. These personal characteristics interfere with the logical and planned aspects of organizational life and lead to the emergence of a collective identity that turns the simple gathering of individuals into the distinct personality of the workplace which is referred to as organizational climate. Organizational climate is a broad term that refers to employees' perception of the general working environment in the organization and it is affected by the formal and informal organization, personality of the people, and organizational leadership. In fact, the climate of an organization can somehow be considered as its "personality"; that is, the relationship between climate and organization is like that of personality and individual (Heidarzadegan, 1996).

Organizational climate is a relatively long-lasting characteristic within organizational environment. It is influenced by organizational culture which is the invisible force behind the tangibles; it encompasses everything like air, affects everything in the organization, and is affected by everything therein. Organizational climate is an invisible phenomenon that encompasses the mental, emotional, and attitudinal state of the individual. This effect is reciprocal and organizational climate can be affected by leadership style and the attitude and behavior of managers. Thus, it can affect the destiny of the organization through its effects on different variables such as

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organizational culture, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, effectiveness, productivity, performance, creativity, and so forth. With a micro-perspective, the present research studies the relationship between leadership style and organizational climate in physical education offices in Isfahan Province and aims to find whether or not the organizational climate of these offices is affected by the studied population.

Regarding organizational climate, an attempt is made to study managers' perception of the observable, tangible aspects of the organization and in the context of leadership styles, autocratic, democratic, and combined forms will be investigated.

The manager of any organization is considered as a strategic factor that leads the organization toward its predetermined goals as one of their duties. Nowadays, the leadership style of managers and organizational climate are of the topics that have attracted the attention of managers and practitioners of organizations. The mismatch between leadership style and organizational climate will lead to waste of energy and talents of the employees; production factors and human resources fail instead of working in concert to actualize the organizational objectives and they will waste human and physical assets. Despite the keen interest of Iranian people in sports and physical activities and the expectation of people in Isfahan of the teams in the province to succeed in achieving national and international titles, this issue is not welcomed by the sport organizations and practitioners of the province. Thus, it is imperative to carry out a research on the organizational climate of physical education offices and to measure how much it is influenced by the leadership styles of managers. Hopefully, studying organizational climate of the physical education offices of the province and its relationship with the leadership styles of managers will prepare the grounds for improvement and change in organizational climate and creation of a desired climate that corresponds to the leadership style of managers so as to witness a desirable climate in physical education offices. Scholars in humanities have regarded organizational climate from different aspects. Evans (1996) says that organizational climate refers to the general identity of the organization. It is consensual and originates from individuals' feelings and perceptions of their working environment (Evans, 1996).

In definition of organizational climate, Halpin and Craft (1970) state that organizational climate is the internal characteristics of an organization distinguishes it from another and affects the behavior of its members. This organizational climate is measured through employees' perceptions and descriptions of the internal characteristics of the organization (Goodarzi, 2002).

McKenzie (1983) reviewed the literature on organizational climate and claimed that the climate of an organization can generally be considered as a source for the efficiency of its employees (Goodarzi, 2002). Sussman and Deep (1989) introduced goal, role, reward, procedures, and communication as the dimensions of organizational climate (Sussman, 1989).

Sifting through the Internet, theses, and research studies showed that little research has been carried out in line with the topic of the present research and no similar study was found in the domestic sport and non-sport organizations. Nevertheless, a few studies that were carried out in domestic and foreign educational and administrative centers which correspond to the subject of the present research will be mentioned.

Aslankhani (1996) studied leadership styles, organizational climate, and their relationship with job satisfaction and showed that organizational climate and leadership style are two of the key organizational variables that affect the productivity of the employees (Aslankhani, 1996).

Heidarzadegan (1996) reported that there is a positive correlation between organizational climate and performance and that there is a significant difference between open and closed climate in mean performance scores (Heidarzadegan, 1996).

Rajabpour (1998) studied the relationship between organizational climate and job stress and came to the conclusion that the difference between the mean levels of stress was significant with respect to the type of organizational climate where high schools with a closed climate reported a higher level of stress in comparison with those with closed climate (Rajabpour, 1998).

Talebpour (2001) studied the job attitudes of managers, employees, and the academic members of the physical education colleges of the country and their relationship with organizational climate and concluded that there is a significant linear relationship between job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and job involvement and organization climate of the studied sample. Further, he reported that there is a significant difference between physical education colleges in organizational climate (Talebpour, 2001).

Pritchard *et al.* (1973) studied the effects of organizational climate on managerial job performance and reported that organizational climate is influenced both by the overall organization and the subunits within the organization and that climate was fairly strongly related to subunit performance and to individual job satisfaction (Pritchard, 1973).

Glisson *et al.* (1999) studied the effects of organizational climate and interorganizational coordination on the quality and outcomes of children's service systems and reported that organizational climate is the primary predictor of positive service outcomes and a significant predictor of service quality. In contrast, interorganizational coordination had a negative effect on service quality and no effect on outcomes.

Thus, they concluded that efforts to improve public service systems should focus on creating positive organizational climates rather than on increasing interorganizational services coordination (Glisson,1999).

Kangis *et al.* (2000)studied organizational climate and corporate performance and stated that interest in organizational climate and its link with corporate performance is gaining momentum. The results of this research showed a consistent association between climate and performance. In general, companies performing above average showed higher values on climate dimensions than those performing below average (Kangis, 2000).

Koene *et al.* (2002)examined the effect of leadership on organizational climate and financial performance. They studied the effect of different leadership styles on the climate of 50 supermarket stores in the Netherlands and reported a significant positive relationship between different styles of leadership and organizational climate. They also found that transformational leadership has a potential effect on organizational climate (Koene,2002).

Davidson (2003) examined organizational climate and organizational culture within a hotel industry framework.it was reported that there is a causal link between good organizational climate and the level of service quality in a hotel (Davidson, 2003).

Moor *et al.* (2007) studied leadership, working environment, and workplace bullying and mentioned the significant difference between leadership and workplace aspects including organizational climate (moor,2007).

**Methodology:**

The present research is descriptive-correlational carried out as a field study. The population of the research consists of all the physical education managers of Isfahan Province, that is, all the people with organizational expertise within physical education offices or the managers of those offices. The sample of the research is equal to the population ( $N = 57$ ). It must be noted that the total number of samples in the present research is 48 due to the fact that some questionnaires were not returned and some others were excluded due to having problems. Sussman and Deep’s Organizational Climate Questionnaire (OCQ) and Metzcus and Burden’s Leadership Behavior Description Questionnaire (LBDQ) were used for data collection with the former measuring the dimensions of goal, role, reward, procedures, and communication and the latter measuring the dimensions of autocratic (task-oriented) and democratic (people-oriented) leadership and a combination of these styles. The validity and reliability of these questionnaires have been confirmed by many researchers and experts. However, their validity and reliability were examined for greater confidence in obtaining better results. Besides taking into consideration the views of experts and university professors regarding the content validity of the questionnaires, a sample of 15 physical education experts of the Education Organization of Isfahan Province outside the research sample underwent a pilot study so as to remove any possible ambiguity in the words or questions. They were asked to give their opinions and suggestions regarding the questions and terms and to mention any instances of ambiguity in a special section at the end of the questionnaire. The internal consistency of these questionnaires was calculated as  $\alpha = 0.81$  for LBDQ and  $\alpha = 0.86$  for OCQ. The information was collected through mails and personal attendance of the researcher in the offices of interest. Then, the raw data from the collected questionnaires were entered in tables and were analyzed by SPSS software. Descriptive statistics were used for summarizing and categorizing the raw data, calculating mean, data frequency, and standard deviation, and drawing diagrams. Chi-squaretest was applied to measure the effect of leadership style on organizational climate. Further, Spearman correlation coefficient was used to examine the relationship between organizational climate (and its dimensions) and leadership styles.

**Results:**

Chi-square test was applied to measure the effect of leadership style on organizational climate. Considering the data in table 1, the results indicated a significant difference at the 0.01 level.

**Table 1:** The results of chi-square test for the variables of organizational climate and leadership styles.

Variables	Indices	Total	Significance Level	Chi-Square Value
Organizational Climate		48	$P = 0.000$	$\chi^2 = 17.935^{**}$
Leadership Styles				

Notes: \*\* Significant at the 0.01 level

There was a significant positive relationship between organizational climate and autocratic leadership (table 2). This relationship was calculated to be  $r = 0.839$  which is significant at  $\alpha = 0.01$  level.

**Table 2:** The relationship between closed organizational climate and autocratic leadership.

Variables	Indices	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum	Spearman Correlation
Closed Organizational Climate		49.22	6.73	18	77	$r = 0.724^{**}$
Autocratic Leadership		35.98	9.64	19	44	$P = 0.001$

Notes: \*\* Significant at the 0.01 level ( $N = 48$ )

Further, the results suggested a significant positive correlation between democratic leadership and open organizational climate at the 0.01 significance level.

**Table 3:** The relationship between open organizational climate and democratic leadership.

Variables	Indices	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum	Spearman Correlation
Open Organizational Climate		53.92	5.36	21	79	$r = 0.839^{**}$
Democratic Leadership		41.27	7.28	23	43	$P = 0.001$

Notes: \*\* Significant at the 0.01 level ( $N = 48$ )

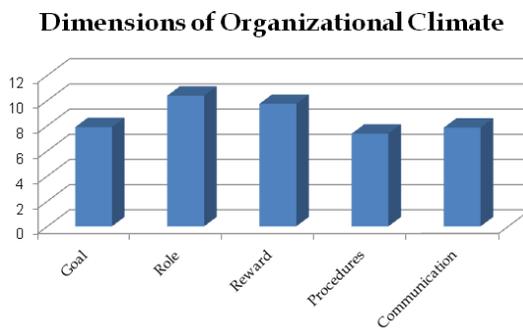
Moreover, the results of the research show that there is a significant positive relationship between each of the dimensions of organizational climate (goal, role, reward, procedures, and communication) and leadership styles of managers, but these correlations differ in terms of value. The detailed descriptions can be seen in table 4.

**Table 4:** The relationship between five dimensions of organizational climate and leadership style.

Variables	Indices	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum	Spearman Correlation
Combined Leadership		37.63	9.28	25	41	$r = 0.338^{**}$
Goal		7.88	4.66	6	16	
Combined Leadership		37.63	9.28	25	41	$r = 0.619^*$
Role		10.38	4.04	6	19	
Combined Leadership		37.63	9.28	25	41	$r = 0.727^{**}$
Reward		9.73	2.32	5	18	
Combined Leadership		37.63	9.28	25	41	$r = 0.706^{**}$
Procedures		7.36	4.08	4	17	
Combined Leadership		37.63	9.28	25	41	$r = 0.501^*$
Communication		7.84	2.36	5	16	

Notes: \* Significant at the 0.05 level; \*\* Significant at the 0.01 level

Figure 1 shows the mean score of the five dimensions of organizational climate in the physical education offices of Isfahan Province.



**Fig. 1:** The mean scores of the dimensions of organizational climate.

**Discussion and Conclusion:**

Using Pearson correlation coefficient, the results of the present research showed that there is a significant relationship between organizational climate and leadership styles of the managers of physical education offices. The results suggested that there is a significant positive relationship between closed autocratic leadership and organizational climate  $\alpha = 0.01$  level ( $r = 0.724$ ). In other words, it can be mentioned that autocratic style of leadership leads to a significant increase in closed organizational climate in the studied offices and this issue must be taken into consideration by the management. Moreover, a significant positive relationship was observed between democratic leadership and open organizational climate. These results are consistent with the findings of the mentioned research studies. Considering the results of Rajabpour (1998) who reported that organizations with a closed climate have a higher level of stress than those with an open climate, it is suggested that democratic (people-oriented) leadership be used in order to promote the conditions of organizational climate. The research evidence indicates that there are significant positive relationships between the dimensions of organizational climate (goal, role, reward, procedures, and communication) and the general leadership of physical education managers (table 4). The results presented in figure 1 indicate that the studied population has a moderately desirable organizational climate. It must also be added that the results obtained from the means of each individual dimension show that in the studied population, role clarity and congruence obtained the highest

value with a mean of 10.38, while procedures congruence obtained the lowest value with a mean of 7.36. Considering the results of Kangis *et al.* (2000) who reported that companies performing above average showed higher values on climate dimensions than those performing below average, it seems necessary to pay special attention to the dimensions of organizational climate in order to promote the performance of the physical education offices and to regard these dimensions as the criteria for future planning. These results also suggest the importance of the dimensions of organizational climate in choosing a leadership style that is appropriate for the offices of the studies population and they must be taken into consideration by the organization and the management. The results reveal that managers have little agreement and satisfaction regarding the current procedures of their organizations and the role of these procedures in achieving organizational goals. Considering these results, it seems imperative to hold coordination meetings among the physical education offices of the province so as to resolve any uncertainties. Regarding the relationship between the dimensions of organizational climate and the general leadership style, the results of the present research suggest that satisfaction with rewards has the highest correlation with the general leadership style. All these dimensions must be taken into account and improved in order to promote the physical education offices to a desirable leadership style with their current condition. An issue that was confirmed in the present research was the influence of leadership style of the physical education managers on organizational climate. Organizational climate and leadership style are both important and effective organizational variables and must receive special attention from the management of the organization. Moreover, this research showed that organizational climate of the studied population is at an average level. Thus, it is recommended that the administrative officials and organizational managers pay attention to all the dimensions of organizational climate and try to improve all of these factors so as to make organizational climate more desirable and witness the positive effects of this process on the performance of the manpower and the organization. The style of leadership plays a fundamental and effective role in achieving the above goals. Making use of training classes and workshops in the area of management, especially organizational behavior and management of human resources, can be effective in this regard. The managers of physical education offices of Isfahan Province can treat their employees with honesty, inform them about the issues and problems, cooperate with them in planning, and revive in them the sense of responsibility. This will lead to a climate of trust and empathy and will result in the all-embracing development of sport in the province.

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