

# **The Relationship Between Leadership Styles and Job Performance, The Mediating Role of Psychological Empowerment (Employees of the General Directorate of Sports and Youth in Ardabil)**

## **Abstract**

**Purpose:** The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between leadership styles and job performance with the mediating role of psychological empowerment using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM).

**Methods:** The descriptive research method was of the correlation type and the research population was all employees of the General Department of Sports and Youth in Ardabil province in 2019. The research sample included 81 employees who were selected by census sampling. Research tools included path-goal leadership questionnaires, psychological empowerment and job performance. Data analysis was done using structural equation modeling (SEM) using SPSS-24 and AMOS-24 software.

**Results:** The results showed that among the leadership styles, only the directive leadership style has a direct and significant positive relationship with the job performance of employees ( $\text{Sig}=0.003$ ,  $\beta=0.46$ ). Psychological empowerment also had a direct and significant positive relationship with the job performance of employees ( $\text{Sig}=0.038$ ,  $\beta=0.21$ ). In addition, leadership styles were not able to have an indirect effect on job performance through psychological empowerment.

**Conclusion:** In general, based on the results of this research, it can be said that due to the role of directive leadership in improving the performance and efficiency of employees and also creating a sense of empowerment in them, it is necessary.

**Key words:** directive leadership Capital, supportive leadership Capital, collaborative leadership Capital, psychological empowerment Capital, job performance Capital.

## **Introduction**

Improving job performance is one of the most important goals that managers of organizations seek, because the proper and effective performance of employees is one of the keys to the success of organizations (Khosravizadeh et al., 2019). Job performance, which is actually the amount of productivity that is obtained due to a person's employment in an organization, whether it is service, production or educational, is influenced by two factors, namely the ability of employees to perform job duties and the existence of motivation in them. In normal conditions, most employees of organizations are motivated by needs such as belonging, self-respect and realizing their abilities (Mohammadi et al., 2018).

The importance of performance evaluation is that job performance is one of the most important criterion variables in industrial and organizational psychology, and its importance for both individuals and organizations is quite clear (Zhang & Venkatesh, 2013). All major activities in this branch of psychology, such as training and job redesign, has always focused on improving performance; in other words, increasing job performance is one of the most important theoretical

and practical issues in organizational research (Ferris, 2008). Job performance of employees is considered as one of the most important indicators for measuring the overall performance of the organization.

Job performance can be defined as the overall expected value of organizations from separate behavioral events that individuals perform during a certain period of time (Motowidlo, 2003). The important idea behind this definition is that performance is a characteristic of behavior. This characteristics of behavior to which that performance refers is the expected value of the organization. According to this definition, performance structure is a variable that distinguishes between the set of behaviors performed by different people and also between the set of behaviors performed by each person at different times. This distinction is based on the extent to which the set of behaviors (together) contribute to or reduce organizational effectiveness. In other words, variability in performance is variability in organizational values expected from behavior (Motowidlo, 2003).

Research has shown that one of the important factors affecting the job performance of employees is their psychological empowerment (Rabiee et al., 2016), (Soltaninejat et al., 2018). (Kundu et al., 2019) and (Sun, 2016). Empowerment in various sciences such as sociology, psychology, management, social sciences, etc. has been considered and defined in each one of them from certain aspects (Appelbaum & Honegger, 1998). In management, industrial and organizational psychology, empowerment has been investigated from various dimensions, and psychological empowerment is one of them (Moradi et al., 2015: 73-97). Psychological empowerment is the process of increasing internal motivation towards assigned tasks in four cognitive dimensions: feeling of impact (influence; the ability to influence strategic, administrative or operational outcomes at work), feeling competent (competence; a person's belief in his ability and capacity to do things with skill and competence), the feeling of being meaningful (meaning; the value of career goals and the person's inner interest in the job) and the feeling of having the right to choose (self-determination; having the right to choose, freedom of action and independence of the individual in the work environment) (Thomas & Velthouse, 1990). Empowerment is not the distribution of a fixed amount of power. Rather, it is a process during which the relative power of each person increases through it. Empowerment is a competency-based influence that must be established. This power is much more than the power that is divided or shared. Empowerment is a power derived from the idea that it can and should be created through continuous improvement of competence and its application (Moradi et al., 2015: 73-97).

The feeling of empowerment can have a positive effect on the performance of employees. A sense of empowerment enables employees to feel that they can perform competently in their work. This empowering experience, in turn, increases the initiation of occupational behaviors and the continuation of efforts to perform these behaviors (Conger & Kanungo, 1988). In his research, Sun (2016) investigated the relationship between psychological empowerment and job performance with the mediating role of job satisfaction. The results of his research showed that psychological empowerment and its dimensions have a positive and direct relationship with job performance. Also, psychological empowerment through job satisfaction has an indirect effect on job performance. In their study, (Soltaninejat et al., 2018) investigated the effect of psychological empowerment and organizational support on job performance. The results showed that psychological empowerment has a significant effect on organizational citizenship behavior (mediating variable) and job performance. Also, the effect of organizational support on organizational citizenship behavior (mediating variable) and job performance, and the effect of organizational citizenship behavior on job performance is significant. In their research, Rabiei

and Quds (2016) investigated the relationship between psychological empowerment and the improvement and promotion of employees' job performance. The results of their research showed that there is a positive and significant relationship between psychological empowerment and all its dimensions - sense of meaning, sense of competence, sense of autonomy, sense of effectiveness, sense of trust - with the performance of employees.

In general, the research findings confirm the existence of a positive relationship between the psychological empowerment of employees and their job performance. Considering that human resources are the most valuable factor of production, the most important capital, the main source of competitive advantage, the creator of the basic capabilities and real wealth of any organization; investing in recognizing talents, selecting and employing competent human forces at different levels of organizational jobs, performance monitoring, skill enhancement, application of effective policies and correct guidance of human resources is necessary and should be taken into serious consideration. Therefore, investigating and identifying the factors related to the empowerment of these resources that can affect the improvement of their job performance is of increasing importance. Based on the conducted studies, the direction and procedure of leaders towards their group is one of the important and vital factors for empowering their subordinates (AmirKhani & Derakhshan) and (Houghton & Yoho, 2005) and success in their performance (Sakiru et al., 2013), (Shafie et al., 2013) and (Mohammadi et al., 2018).

Leadership is the process of influencing others to achieve specific goals. The requirement of leadership is to influence the activities of an individual or a group when working or trying to achieve the organization's predetermined goal or goals (Saatchi, 2011). In the management literature, different styles of leadership are known and defined. A significant point in the study of leadership styles is that a certain style cannot be considered ideal or prescribed for all organizations. The choice or formation of the leadership style in an organization depends on the organizational maturity and the nature of the business of that organization. The leadership styles examined in the current research are derived from the path-goal approach. The underlying assumption of this approach is that if the manager can show the employee how his work and performance have a direct effect on receiving the desired rewards, this will have a positive effect on the employee's efficiency and his better performance (House, 1971). Based on this approach, it will be an effective management method that can make it easy for employees to achieve their goals, provide their satisfaction, and clearly and unambiguously explain the tasks to the employees. (House, 1971) believes that the leader's style or behavior can be related to consequences such as motivation, satisfaction, role and goal clarity, and performance by influencing the perceptions and expectations of subordinates (House, 1971). In this approach, four styles of directive, supportive, collaborative and success-oriented leadership have been introduced. These four types of leadership styles are distinguished from each other according to the amount of attention the leader pays to his subordinates and their participation in determining work goals and tasks. In the current research, only three styles of directive, supportive and participatory leadership have been considered.

The directive leader defines the expectations and determines the path to reach those expectations based on performance standards and organizational policies. The directive leadership style is suitable for leading newly hired employees or less experienced employees, as well as for situations where decisions need to be made quickly. A supportive leader always behaves with respect, which creates a friendly atmosphere in the group as well as verbal appreciations between the leader and the followers. Supportive leaders respect their followers, treat everyone equally, and care about the health and well-being of their followers. Finally, the collaborative leader

exhibits deliberative behaviors. For example, to make a decision, he also asks his followers for their opinions, even though he makes the final decision. Participatory leaders make followers participate in responsibilities by involving followers in planning, making decisions and implementing programs (Polston-Murdoch, 2013).

Many studies have sought to investigate the role of leadership styles on employees' job performance. For example, (Somech & Wenderow, 2006) showed in their research that when the attitudes governing a group emphasize the knowledge, ability and expertise of the members, directive leadership has a positive relationship with the performance of the members of that group. But, in those groups where the participation of members in group decisions and discussions was a priority, participative leadership was able to predict employee performance much better than directive leadership (Somech & Wenderow, 2006). Hwang et al.'s research (2015) also examined the relationship between leadership styles and employee performance. The results of their research indicated that in groups that emphasize participation, equality and attention to members, supportive and participatory leadership were able to predict the performance of employees well. In contrast, in groups where individual achievement is a recognized criterion, the directive leadership style was dominant (Hwang et al., 2015).

The important point in the path-goal approach is that the assumed relationship between behavior and leadership style with consequences such as employee performance is not a direct relationship. Through influencing the perceptions and expectations of subordinates, leadership has an indirect relationship with their job attitudes and behaviors. The feeling of empowerment, efficiency and competence is one of the perceptions and expectations that employees can have of themselves according to the type of their interactions and communications with others, especially their leaders (Bandura, 1977).

Based on the existing literature, There is a significant relationship Between Leadership Styles and Job Performance, The Mediating Role of Psychological Empowerment. Subhash et al, (2019) In a research titled "Empowering leadership and job performance: mediating role of psychological empowerment" achieved this result that empowering leadership behaviors have positive influence on psychological empowerment and job performance of subordinates. Further, bootstrap analysis revealed that the individual dimensions of psychological empowerment serially mediate the effects of empowering leadership behaviors on subordinates' job performance.

According to Cotton's research (1993), collaborative leaders, by involving people in decisions, increase their sense of influence and meaning, and these perceptions can affect their continuous effort and perseverance (Cotton, 1993). (Khalid et al., 2012) also showed in their research that leaders seeking advice from their followers (participatory leadership) and leaders giving advice to their followers (supportive leadership) have a positive relationship with employees' sense of efficiency and competence as well as their performance in the group (Khalid et al., 2012). (Tuuli & Rowlinson, 2010) considered span of control as a mediator of the relationship between leaders' behavioral styles and their followers' performance. Their results showed that those styles which limit the scope of employees' control are less related to the followers' performance than those which give employees more authority (Tuuli & Rowlinson, 2010). In sum, although the mediating role of control area, sense of meaning and efficacy, as well as sense of efficiency have been investigated in the relationship between directive, supportive and collaborative leadership styles with employees' performance. However, the current research has sought to examine these concepts in the form of the concept of psychological empowerment. Therefore, the purpose of

the present study is to investigate the role of indirect effects of directive, supportive and collaborative leadership styles on the job performance of employees through psychological empowerment. The proposed model of the current research is shown in Figure 1.

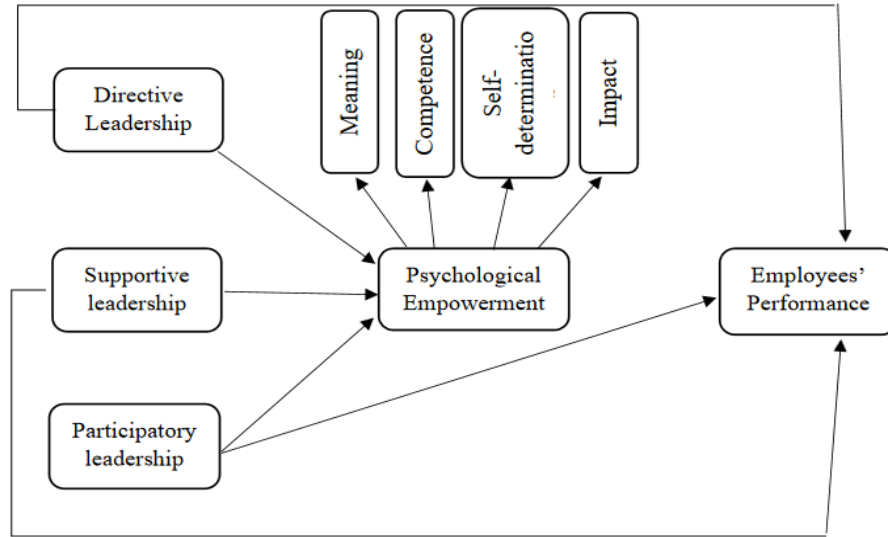


Figure 1. The proposed model of the current research

## Method

The method of the present research is descriptive of the correlation design type. The current research population includes all the employees of the General Department of Sports and Youth of Ardabil province in 2015. They were 115 people in total. Due to the limited size of the community, all members of the community were selected as the statistical sample of the research, and as a result, the sampling method was the census method. Research data were obtained through self-report questionnaires. Out of 115 distributed questionnaires, 81 questionnaires were returned (70.4% return rate). The collected data were analyzed with statistical indicators and methods such as mean, standard deviation and Pearson Correlation Coefficient using SPSS 24 software and structural equation modeling using AMOS-24 software. The indirect effects of relationships were also tested with the bootstrap method. The measurement tools used in this research are as follows.

**Path-Goal Leadership Questionnaire:** The Path-Goal Leadership Questionnaire of Indvik (1988) is a 20-item scale for investigating leadership behaviors. This questionnaire examines the four styles of directive leadership (5 items), supportive (5 items), collaborative (5 items) and success-oriented (5 items). Items are answered on a 7-point Likert scale from 1 (never) to 7 (always). In the current research, only the articles of 3 styles of direction, support and participation have been used. Also, the reliability coefficients of directive, supportive and cooperative styles were calculated using Cronbach's alpha method as 0.60, 0.42 and 0.74, respectively.

Psychological Empowerment Questionnaire: In this research, Spreitzer (1995) questionnaire was used to measure psychological empowerment. This questionnaire includes 12 items and four subscales of meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact, and 3 items are considered for each subscale. Each item has a 5-point response from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). In the current study, the reliability coefficient of the questionnaire was obtained using Cronbach's alpha method of 0.89.

Job Performance Questionnaire: Patterson's job performance questionnaire (1992) includes 10 questions and each question has a 5-point answer range from 1 (very low) to 5 (very high). The reliability coefficient of this questionnaire in this study was calculated by Cronbach's alpha method, 0.88.

### Findings

In the study of the demographic information of the research subjects, out of the 81 studied subjects, 52 were men (64.2%), 28 were women (34.6%), and 1 was not declared (1.2%). The educational qualifications of the subjects were high school diploma (5%), associate degree (13.6%), bachelor's degree (48.1%), master's degree (25.9%) and undeclared (7.4%). The average and standard deviation of the age of the research sample were 38.15 and 7.04, respectively, and in relation to work experience, it was 12.54 and 7.27 years. In Table 1, the mean, standard deviation and correlation matrix related to the research variables are shown.

Table 1. Descriptive findings and correlation matrix of the variables of the present study

| <b>variables</b>          | <b>1</b> | <b>2</b> | <b>3</b> | <b>4</b> | <b>5</b> | <b>Mean</b> | <b>SD</b> |
|---------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|-------------|-----------|
| Directive Leadership      | 1        |          |          |          |          | 24/98       | 4/71      |
| Supportive Leadership     | 0/65**   | 1        |          |          |          | 23/38       | 4/47      |
| Collaborative Leadership  | 0/76**   | 0/57**   | 1        |          |          | 23/98       | 5/30      |
| Psychological Empowerment | 0/36**   | 0/20     | 0/38**   | 1        |          | 45/35       | 8/33      |
| Job Performance           | 0/56**   | 0/36**   | 0/47**   | 0/40**   | 1        | 41/57       | 5/62      |

In order to evaluate the proposed model, structural equation modeling method, AMOS-24 software was used. Before testing the model, to ensure that the data of this research estimate the underlying assumptions of structural equation modeling, they were examined. For this purpose, four assumptions of structural equations including missing data, investigation of outlier data, normality, and multiple collinearities were investigated, and the results indicated that the desired assumptions were true. The fit of the proposed model based on goodness of fit indices including Chi Square ( $2\chi$ ),  $df/2\chi$  ratio, Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI), Goodness of Fit Index (GFI), Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI),

Comparative Fit Index (CFI) and Incremental Fit Index (IFI) are reported in Table 2. The higher the value of Chi Square is greater than zero, the lower the fit of the model. A significant Chi-Square indicates a significant difference between the assumed and observed covariances. Nevertheless, because the Chi-Square formula includes the sample size, its value is inflated in the case of large samples and usually becomes statistically significant. Also, in indices such as AGFI, GFI, TLI, CFI and IFI, a fit of 0.9 or higher is acceptable. Another appropriate index is the Root Mean Squared Error of Approximation (RMSEA) index, based on which a value of less than 0.08 is acceptable, and 0.05 or less is considered for very good models (28). The results of examining the proposed model in Table 2 show that all the fit indices, except the RMSEA index, have sufficient desirability. Despite this, a better fit was obtained in the final model by connecting predictor variables (directive leadership, supportive leadership, and collaborative leadership) to each other.

Table 2. Fit indices of the proposed and final model

| Fit Indices        | $\chi^2$ | df | $\chi^2/df$ | AGFI | GFI  | TLI  | CFI  | IFI  | RMSEA |
|--------------------|----------|----|-------------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|
| Suggested Template | 27/72    | 14 | 1/98        | 0/82 | 0/93 | 0/91 | 0/95 | 0/96 | 0/11  |
| Final Template     | 14/48    | 13 | 1/11        | 0/89 | 0/96 | 0/99 | 0/99 | 0/99 | 0/04  |

The path coefficients of the final model of the current research can be seen in Figure 2. Also, the path coefficients and their significance levels in the final model are shown in Table 3.

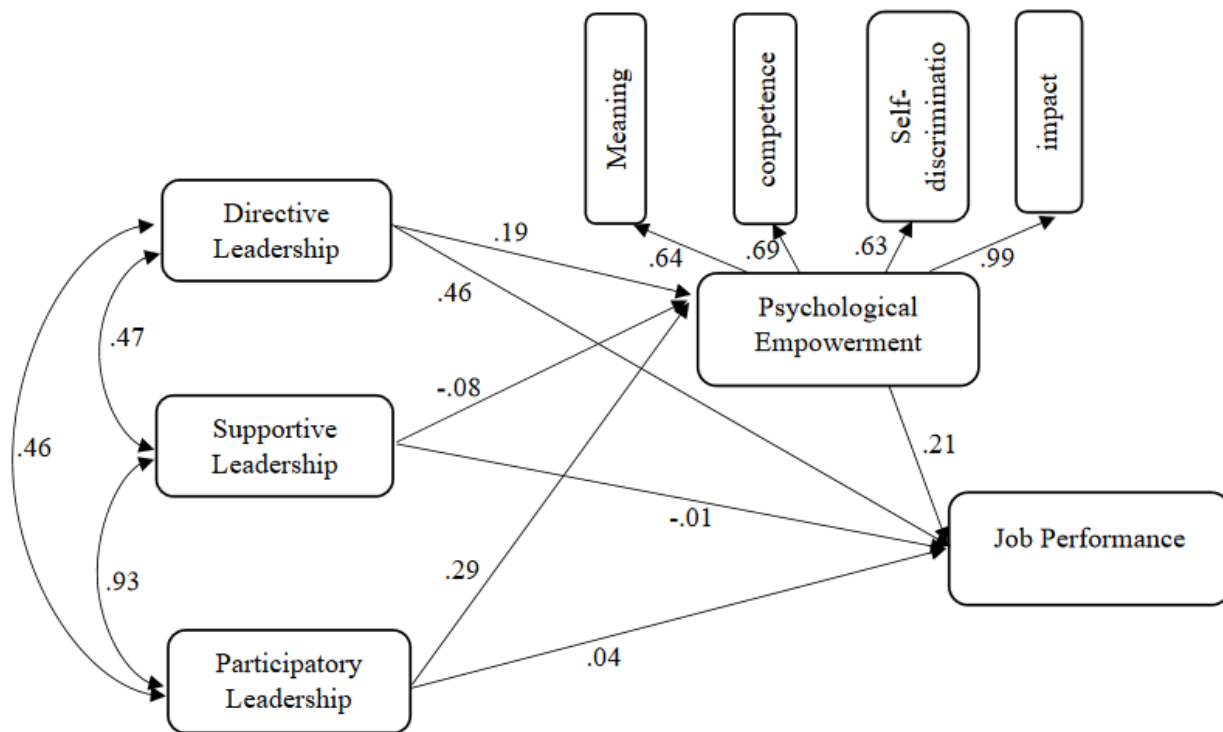


Figure 2. The final model of the current research based on the modeling of structural equations and path coefficients for each path

Table 3. Standard coefficients and significance levels of paths of the current research model

| <b>Parameters</b><br><b>Path</b>                      | <b>Beta Value</b><br><b>(<math>\beta</math>)</b> | <b>Critical Value</b><br><b>(CR)</b> | <b>The</b><br><b>Significance</b><br><b>Level</b><br><b>(Sig)</b> |
|-------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Directive leadership to psychological empowerment     | 0/19                                             | 1/10                                 | 0/273                                                             |
| Supportive leadership to psychological empowerment    | -0/08                                            | -0/57                                | 0/572                                                             |
| Collaborative leadership to psychological empowerment | 0/29                                             | 1/72                                 | 0/085                                                             |
| Directive leadership to job performance               | 0/46                                             | 3/01                                 | 0/003                                                             |
| Supportive leadership to job performance              | -0/01                                            | -0/10                                | 0/923                                                             |
| Collaborative leadership to job performance           | 0/04                                             | 0/29                                 | 0/775                                                             |
| Psychological empowerment to job performance          | 0/21                                             | 2/07                                 | 0/038                                                             |

**\* Critical value (CR) above positive or negative 1.96 is significant**

The results of Table 3 show the path coefficients and their significance. Based on the results of this table, only the direct paths of directive leadership to job performance (Sig=0.003,  $\beta$ =0.46) and psychological empowerment to job performance (Sig=0.038,  $\beta$ =0.21) were significant. An underlying assumption of the proposed model of the present study was the existence of mediating paths, and these relationships were investigated using the bootstrap method. Bootstrap results for the intermediate paths of the proposed model are shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Bootstrap results for indirect paths in the present study

| <b>Path</b>                                                                     | <b>Boot Value</b> | <b>The Significance Level</b> | <b>Lower Limit</b> | <b>Upper Limit</b> |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Directive leadership<br>Psychological →<br>Empowerment →<br>Job performance     | 0/04              | 0/200                         | -0/012             | 0/161              |
| Supportive<br>leadership →<br>Psychological<br>Empowerment →<br>Job Performance | -0/02             | 0/439                         | -0/096             | 0/026              |
| Collaborative<br>leadership →<br>Psychological<br>Empowerment →                 | 0/06              | 0/074                         | 0/004              | 0/176              |

The confidence level for the indirect paths is at the 95% confidence interval and the bootstrap resampling number is 2000. Considering that for all indirect paths, the significance level is greater than 0.05, so these mediating relationships are not significant.

#### Side Findings

Due to the non-significance of the direct hypotheses of the research, the researchers considered it probable that this lack of significance may be due to the difference between the averages of leadership styles. Therefore, in order to investigate this assumption, analysis of variance with repeated measures and Bonferroni post hoc test were used. The results are shown in Tables 5 and 6.

**Table 5. The results of Mauchly's sphericity test in order to check the equality of covariance in the variable of leadership styles**

| Within Subjects Effect | Mauchly's Test | Chi-Square | df | Sig.  | Epsilon            |             |             |
|------------------------|----------------|------------|----|-------|--------------------|-------------|-------------|
|                        |                |            |    |       | Greenhouse-Geisser | Huynh-Feldt | Lower-bound |
| Leadership Styles      | 0.896          | 8/651      | 2  | 0.013 | 0/906              | 0/906       | 0/906       |

Sphericity test was used to check the assumption of homogeneity of variance and covariance; Based on the results of Table 5, Mauchly's test rejected the assumption of sphericity ( $P < 0.013$ ). Considering that Mauchly's test has become significant, the significance level of Greenhouse Geisser's test should be used to test the difference between the averages of leadership styles.

**Table 6. The results of the within-subject effects test of variable scores of leadership styles**

| Sources of changes | Test               | $\chi^2$ | df     | Mean square | F    | Sig.  |
|--------------------|--------------------|----------|--------|-------------|------|-------|
| Leadership Styles  | Greenhouse-Geisser | 105/24   | 2      | 52/62       | 6/57 | 0/003 |
| Error              | Greenhouse-Geisser | 1282/00  | 144/96 | 8/84        |      |       |

Table 6 shows the results of the intra-group effects test. As indicated in the table above, the main effect of leadership styles is significant ( $P < 0.003$ ,  $F = 6.57$ ). In other words, there is a significant difference between the average leadership styles (directive, supportive, collaborative). Due to the significance of the intra-group effects test, in order to make pairwise comparisons between the three leadership styles, Bonferroni post hoc test was used. The results are shown in Table 7.

**Table 7. Bonferroni post hoc test results for three leadership styles**

| Leadership Styles (I)    | Leadership Styles (J)    | Mean Difference (I-J) | Std. Error | Sig.  | Lower Limit | Higher Limit |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|------------|-------|-------------|--------------|
| Directive Leadership     | Supportive Leadership    | 1/60*                 | 0/43       | 0/001 | 0/56        | 2.63         |
|                          | Collaborative Leadership | 1/00*                 | 0/39       | 0/037 | 0.04        | 1.96         |
| Supportive Leadership    | Directive Leadership     | -1/60*                | 0/43       | 0/001 | -2.63       | -0.56        |
|                          | Collaborative Leadership | -0/59                 | 0/51       | 0/743 | -1.84       | 0.65         |
| Collaborative Leadership | Directive Leadership     | -1/00*                | 0/39       | 0/037 | -1.96       | -0.04        |
|                          | Supportive Leadership    | -0/59.                | 0.51       | 0/743 | -0.65       | 1.84         |

The results of Table 8 show that the difference between the mean of directive leadership and supportive leadership ( $P < 0.001$ ) as well as directive leadership and collaborative leadership ( $P < 0.037$ ) is significant. In other words, the average of directive leadership is significantly higher than the average of supportive and collaborative leadership styles.

## Discussion

The results of the present research showed that directive, supportive, and collaborative leadership styles do not have a significant relationship with psychological empowerment. This finding is not in line with the research findings of (Subhash & et al., 2019, Ochoa Pacheco & et al., 2023), who showed that directive and supportive leadership have a significant relationship with the psychological empowerment of employees. Also, this finding is inconsistent with the research results of (Liu & et al., 2022), which showed that collaborative leadership and psychological empowerment have a significant relationship with each other. The results of this research showed that only directive leadership style has a significant relationship with employees' job performance. This finding is in line with the research results of (Somech & Wenderow, 2006), who showed that the directive and collaborative leadership style of managers have a significant relationship with the performance of employees (Somech & Wenderow, 2006). In addition, the results showed that there is a significant relationship between psychological empowerment and job performance of employees. This finding is also in line with the findings of Indradevi (2011) and Chiang and Hsieh (2012), who stated that psychological empowerment has a significant direct relationship with the job performance of employees (Indradevi R, 2011: 19-33) and (Chiang & Hsieh, 2012). In relation to the indirect assumptions, the results of this research showed that none of the three styles of directive, supportive and collaborative leadership through psychological empowerment have an indirect relationship with the job performance of employees.

Based on the path-goal theory, there are different leadership behavioral styles and each style can affect job and organizational outcomes in certain situations and conditions (House, 1971). The main focus of path-goal theory is on motivating employees to increase their efforts and perseverance. Based on this theory, leadership behavior can affect the performance and

effectiveness of employees through some mediating variables. Also, in this theory, it is emphasized that any leadership style can be suitable for a specific situation and it is in that situation that it can have a favorable effect on organizational outcomes. For example, in situations where the structures and tasks are not clear and people are working in a vague and uncertain situation, it is necessary for leaders to specify the tasks and responsibilities, give directions to the employees and specify for them what is expected of them. In such a situation, employees are able to use their abilities effectively, they feel that the situation is under control, and as a result, they can influence their work outcomes. In such a situation, it can be expected that the efficiency and performance of employees is also at a favorable level (Polston-Murdoch, 2013). When working conditions are such that employees do not have confidence in their abilities or do not have the necessary motivation to perform their work duties, supportive leadership can be fruitful. In such a situation, the leader plays the role of a supporter who helps the employees to adapt to the situation and master it. Supportive leaders help employees to trust their abilities and competencies and use them effectively (Polston-Murdoch, 2013). On the contrary, in situations where employees have confidence in their abilities and feel that they can perform their duties effectively with less supervision, collaborative leadership can be the answer. In such a situation, leaders involve employees in making work decisions and increase their scope of authority and control. This makes employees feel that they have the necessary competence and are able to influence their work outcomes. This feeling of efficiency and empowerment can positively affect their performance (Polston-Murdoch, 2013). In the secondary findings section, the researchers concluded that the average of the directive leadership style is significantly higher than the other two styles. In other words, the dominant style in the studied sample was directive leadership style. Therefore, only the relationship between directive leadership and job performance was significant.

In general, based on the results of this research, it can be said that due to the role of directive leadership in improving the performance and efficiency of employees and also creating a sense of empowerment in them, it is necessary to adopt an appropriate leadership style according to each situation in order to be able to improve and promote the positive and expected outcomes of the top managers in the organization. Therefore, it is suggested that officials and top managers of any organization use the appropriate leadership styles by identifying the existing positions in the organization. Also, the results showed that psychological empowerment has a significant relationship with the job performance of employees. Therefore, it is suggested that the organization designs, compiles and implements training programs and courses to empower its employees.

It is recommended that future researchers conduct the study on a wider population and also use mixed methods to collect data.

The current research also has some limitations like any other research. It is necessary to pay attention to variables such as demographic variables such as age, work experience, education and gender that may moderate the relationships in this model. The use of self-assessment questionnaires as a tool for data collection and sample selection only among the employees of a company is another limitation of this research, which can limit the generalization of the results obtained in this research. Based on this, it is suggested that in future researches, sampling from a wider society and research data be collected using various methods.

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## **Abstract**

Purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between leadership styles and job performance with the mediating role of psychological empowerment using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). The research method was descriptive-correlational and the research population was all the staff of Ardebil province's Sport and Youth Office in 2019. The sample consisted of 81 employees who were

selected by census sampling method. Research tools included Path-Goal Leadership (Indvik, 1988), Psychological Empowerment (Spritser, 1995), and Job Performance (Paterson, 1992) questionnaires. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was performed using SPSS-24 and AMOS-24 software. The results showed that among leadership styles, only directive leadership style had a direct and significant positive relationship with employees' job performance ( $\beta = 0.46$ , Sig = 0.003). Also, psychological empowerment had a direct and significant positive relationship with job performance ( $\beta = 0.21$ , Sig = 0.038). In addition, leadership styles were not able to have an indirect effect on job performance through psychological empowerment.

**Keywords:** Directive Leadership, Supportive Leadership, Participative Leadership, Psychological Empowerment, Job Performance.