**A Study of Job Stress, Mental health, and Organizational Structure**

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**ABSTRACT**

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the relationships between organizational structure, job stress and mental health of physical education teachers. The comparison of male and female teachers’ attitude toward job stress, mental health served as a second purpose of this study. The population in the current study consisted of physical education teachers. Three hundred teachers were selected from the population using random sampling technique and 272 questionnaires were collected at the end. The project is a field study and used a descriptive and correlation methods to analyses the data. In order to collect data (after the verification of reliability and validity), three questionnaires were used. These questionnaires not only are used to measure the major variables in the study, but also do measure their sub dimensions. In the descriptive and inferential statistical levels, Pearson correlation coefficient, multiple regression analysis, analysis of variance were applied. The results showed that there is a negative and significant relationship between job stress and mental health. In other words, the increase of job stress resulted in teachers’ mental health to go down. In addition, the results of multi-regression analysis showed that mental health and job stress can be considered valid and accurate predictors for organizational structure. No difference was observed between male and female teachers’ attitudes on work pressure resulting from the lack of facilities to hold classes actively for physical education. Both genders experienced similar rates of pressure resulting from lack of facilities to get the physical education classes ready.

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To Cite This Article: Solmaz Maleki, MA., Hossein Sepasi, Ph.D., Parivash Nourbakhs, Ph.D., The application of mycorrhiza in production improvement of crop plants. *Adv. Environ. Biol.*, 8(17), 938-943, 2014

**INTRODUCTION**

Whenever an organization is established on a firm basis and structure to do group activities and reach certain objectives, the efficiency and improvement can be attainable through the control of activities. The major objective of organizational structure is to control the processes in a way that individuals coordinate their activities according to the objectives of organization. In addition, it provides employees with sufficient amount of motivation to attain organizational objectives. Any organization has a unique structure and organizations are being differentiated from each other according to these structures. In other words, each organization needs a kind of structure that facilitates the attainment of objectives. As organizations thrive and become modified, their structure becomes more complicated and more developed. The significant characteristic of organizational structure is its dynamic nature that is favorable at times of adjusting modifications according to scientific developments [4]. Jones considers organizational structure as a process through which, organizational activities are divided, organized, and coordinated. Organizational establish structures in order to improve conditions for work operations and control the activities of members [13].

Organizational structure is a visible symbol the whole process of activities of which can be displayed as diagrams. Organizational structure defines as the framework of relations, task description, and the determination of authority among various sectors of an organization (12). According to Gholipour, the factors that determine the structure of an organization consist of decision-making processes, technology development, the growth in the number of skillful human resources, and the size of organization [8]. Alvani, believes that organizational structures should be designed in such a way as to be informed of educational issues and problems within the society and the needs and expectations of the majority of people. In addition, it should change and expand its objectives in order to provide for those needs [2].
The experts in the field of organizational behavior believe that the success of organizational structure is dependent on managers’ understanding of their employees’ affective characteristics. Some examples of these affective characteristics can be job motivation, mental health, job stress, personality traits, etc. These are such affective variables that of perceived by managers, the attainment of organizational objectives would be facilitated. Employees are not mechanical entities being used as tools in order to harvest products, but are human beings having both cognitive and affective capabilities. Managers can assign people with appropriate work skills to various tasks in addition to taking their affective characteristics into account as a way to attain organizational objectives. Unwanted modifications that occur within an organization may influence some employees’ physical or affective capabilities. In recent years, extensive studies have been conducted aiming at the investigation of emotional capabilities of employees within the majority of jobs and professions. As the goal of the current study is to investigate such capabilities within an educational setting in which the employees consist of physical education teachers, those studies are going to be mentioned that are mainly involved with the investigation of issues such teachers are faced during the process of teaching. Shortages that exist in educational organizations influence teachers’ (especially teachers of physical education) efficiency, mental health, motivation, and job stress. In teaching, mental health and stress has their specific connotations. Not only teachers face problems and issues that employees within other organizations are faced with, but also carry the burden of training the future generation according to their responsibilities. Teaching is a prophetic job and that is not applicable to the workers in other organizations[20].

The topic of job stress started with the works of Hans Slih at 1965 and its importance at educational settings was emphasized. Job stress refers to the interaction of an employee and work conditions in a way that the person is not capable of bearing pressure related to work. Studies have shown that human health can be influenced by job stress and lead to physical and mental imbalances [1]. Job stress causes dissatisfaction in teachers of elementary classes and anxiety, insomnia, and impotence in the performance of social roles in teachers of high schools [25]. Evidence shows that the type of employment is of importance in employees’ stress. For example, within jobs in which the pressure put on employees is higher than capabilities, employees experience higher rates of job stress. According to Turaenich and Spielberger, job stress can be studies from several perspectives such as task performance, participation and decision making, responsibility, workplace, support, competition, relationships, improvement, and reward [5].

Research studies show that the job stress of physical education teachers in the workplace is related to their job mental pressure and health [22,26]. In addition, studies show that the mental health of physical education teachers is related to the structure of an organizational in which they are involved [5, 9, 14]. In other words, with lack of facilities and the excessive demands of principals from teachers of physical education to hold classes on this subject, their job stress goes up and their mental health is endangered. Mental health is considered as one of the most important factors in preventing negative impacts of stress. What is meant by mental health is a degree of balance that an individual establishes between his/her behaviors when faced with social problems and adjustments with the surrounding environment and shows a logical response [19]. Since the process of producing unhealthy and anxious human resources is one of the downfalls within an organization, no single phenomenon is as important as mental health for the employees of an organization [3]. Goldberg (1972) consider mental health as consisting of physical syndrome, anxiety and sleep disorders, disorder in social functions, depression, and suicide intention.

The mental health of human resources within educational institutions is one of the major conditions for the attainment of their objectives. Loo, believes that teachers’ mental health is in close relation with their efficiency and can help students’ achievement[15]. Studies show that the complexity of organizational structure in schools is related to teachers’ job stress and mental health [27, 17, 19]. As a result of insufficiencies in facilities and equipment needed for classes of physical education, students look at this subject as a sort of break or fun hour in comparison with other subjects. It seems that even principals look differently at teachers of physical education and the subject that they are teaching. Despite their interest in their job, teachers of physical education lose motivation in the job they are doing since the facilities they need in classes are not being provided to them. Lack of such equipment and facilities leads to increased rates of job stress and lowered mental health among teachers of physical education. Experts in the field of psychology consider job stress as the increase of demands that is not accessible for the person. In other words, putting demands that are not compatible with one’s capabilities leads to job stress. With lack of equipment and extra demands that principals put on teachers of physical education to hold classes, teachers’ job stress increases. Finally, it can be expected that their mental health would be threatened.

According to Iranian educational system, the education from elementary up to secondary schooling is obligatory. The system is not only responsible for the expansion of students’ cognitive skills, but also it is expected that facilities and equipment for the development of their motor skills be provided them at all level in the form of physical education courses. Programs related to physical fitness in the schools are performed by teachers who have completed their major on physical education. The majority of these teachers are not capable of performing the tasks that they have to because of schools’ organizational structure. The findings of some
studies show that teachers of physical education lose their motivation when faced with such structures. Some other conclude that teachers of physical education face more work pressure in such conditions and the possibility for them to experience job stress is higher than teachers of other subjects.

In the investigation on the literature of studies, we face few schools in which appropriate organizational structure has been provided for the presentation of physical education subject. Therefore, the current study attempts to find answer for the following questions: “Do the teachers of physical education who teach at various levels experience the above-mentioned relations in their work?”, “According to their view, is there a relation between job pressure resulting from lack of equipment on one hand and job stress and mental health on the other?”, “Is there a possibility for the reduction of job stress through the improvement of organizational structure in order to improve teachers’ mental health?”, “Can the organizational structure be predicted through the variables such as mental health and job stress?” and finally “Is there a difference between male and female teachers’ viewpoints on job stress, mental health, and organizational structure?” The findings of the study can help decision makers to provide more appropriate organizational structure for educational institutions through taking physical education teachers’ job stress and mental health into account.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The current study is an applied research that is descriptive - correlational according to the manner of data collection. The population consisted of all teachers of physical education in Hamedan. Among them, 300 male and female teachers were selected according random sampling technique as the sample under investigation. In order to test the research hypotheses, questionnaires of organizational structure, job stress and mental health were used. These instruments convert respondents’ answers to numbers based on a five-scale Likert type. The reliability and validity of these instruments have been confirmed in some other studies. In the present study, the reliability for the questionnaires of organizational structure, job stress and mental health have been determined as 0.80, 0.85, and 0.90, respectively. The result of construct validity for the questionnaires are 0.55, 0.50, and 0.40, respectively.

Results:

The findings of the study showed that there is simple correlation between job stress, mental health, and organizational structure. Table 1 shows the coefficients of correlation between these variables.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Job stress</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Organizational structure</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Mental health</td>
<td>-0.15*</td>
<td>0.13*</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Correlation is significant at 0.05

The contents of this table show that the correlation between organizational structure and mental health and between job stress and mental health is at 0.13 and -0.15 and are significant at the level of p < 0.05. In other words, the more improved organizational structure, the higher would be the rate of mental health. In addition, the more job stress, the less would be the rate of mental health.

In order to test the hypothesis that states “Can organizational structure as a dependent variable be predicted by the use of independent variables such as job stress and mental health?” multiple regression analysis was conducted. Table 2 provides this analysis according to stepwise method. Among the two variables, mental health was capable of predicting organizational structure. Regression coefficient was determined as F= 4.6 and meaningful at p <0.05.

By taking the regression coefficient of mental health and the constant value (22.13), regression equation for all teachers studied here can be presented below:

\[ y' = 22.13 + 0.13 \text{ (mental health)} \]

In addition to testing job stress alone, its dimensions were used to predict organizational structure, as well. Table 3 shows the results of this regression analysis. The results point that none of the dimensions in job stress can be used as significant predictors for organizational structure.
A similar hypothesis in that which one of the dimensions in mental health can predict organizational structure was tested. Table 4 provides the results of this test. Among dimensions of mental health, disorders in social functions was able to be a significant predictor for organizational structure. The regression equation given that $F= 7.3$ and the constant value equaling 22.1 can be presented as below:

$$\text{social functions disorder} = (22.1 + 0.16 \cdot y)$$

Table 4 provides the results of multiple regression analysis (stepwise method).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent variable</th>
<th>Independent variable</th>
<th>$R$</th>
<th>$R^2$</th>
<th>$F$, $P$</th>
<th>$\beta$, $t$, $P$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organizational structure</td>
<td>Dimensions of job stress</td>
<td>0.23</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>1.8, 0.06</td>
<td>0.16, 2.7, 0.007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational structure</td>
<td>Social function disorder</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>7.3, 0.007</td>
<td>0.16, 2.7, 0.007</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The last hypothesis that was tested was the comparison between female and male teachers’ viewpoints on job stress, organizational structure, and mental health. The test over this hypothesis by the application of multivariate variance analysis (MANOVA) showed that there is no significant differences between female and male teachers in their viewpoints towards research variables (Wilks’ Lambda= 0.97, $F (3, 268) = 2.2$, $P= 0.08$).

Discussion and Conclusion:

The main goal of the current study was to investigate the viewpoints of physical education teachers with regard to the relation of structural organization in their workplace with job stress and mental health. The comparison of male and female teachers’ viewpoints on mental pressure that is felt in the workplace constituted another goal for the study. Theoreticians in the field of organizational behavior believe that the organizational structure should be in such a way as to adjust itself with rapid and growing needs of the environment. This structure should be provided with flexible rules and regulations together with benefitting from decentralization. Organizations should be informed of what happens within and the essences of such a thing [2]. The organizational structure of education offices should be designed in a way that the regulations, hierarchy of authorities, and other factors related to the structure of one organization do not disturb teachers’(especially physical education teachers) mental health. It can be concluded that mental health and organizational structure are related to each other. This is in consistence with the findings of Mahdavi et al. and Fouladvand [16, 7]. On the other hand, structures in which more decision-making power is handed over to employees cause less stress.

Having educational responsibility towards students and holding classes for physical education outdoors with little equipment are causes for stress that teachers of physical education are faced with at work hours [1]. In addition, transferring students from one school to the next to participate in physical education classes as a result of shortage in facilities, holding competitions, and selecting and sending out sport teams in a limited time are among the task that organizations assign directly to teachers of physical education. It is obvious that not being able to perform them on due time would lead to mental pressure. Teachers who suffer from permanent stress would be deprived of mental health and it is possible that he/she face problems in making decisions within an educational setting [21]. It seems that all teachers (especially teachers of physical education) need a healthy and joyful spirit in order to perform their tasks in the best way possible. The findings in the current study are in line with Paula et al., Chester and Todd and Glisson in which it has been shown that a dynamic organizational structure is in relation with the stabilization and maintenance of mental health among various work groups. Furthermore, they have shown that organizational with a coherent structure increase employees’ mental health and reduce their stress and mental pressure resulting from work [14, 5, 9].

Participants in the current study showed that there is a relation between organizational structure on one hand and mental health and job stress on the other. While in some studies [16] no relation is found between organizational structure and some mental variables such as job stress, it seems that they have been conducted within organizations with a high degree of organizational coherence. An interesting point that can be drawn from the findings in the current study is the lack of difference between viewpoints of male and female teachers with regard to job stress, organizational structure, and mental health. This finding refers to the point that in an organization where work pressure is higher than an individual’s capability, both genders would experience the reduction of mental health and increase in job stress in a similar way. Godini et al and Soleimani et al. point to a similar finding in their studies[10, 23].

Finally, what can be conclude of the findings and suggested is that organizational structure has a major influence on the individual behavior of employees. It seems essential that the status and role of physical...
education subject in the improvement of fitness and well-being of students be taken into consideration in the organizational structure of schools. If that is fulfilled, teachers of physical education would be equipped with appropriate conditions and facilities in this subject. In this way, there is a possibility for the reduction of job stress among teachers and the chance of improvement in their mental health.

The limitation in the current study is that only questionnaires have been used as instruments of data collection. In case it was possible to use other instruments of data collection such as interviews with teachers and principals, the research study would have been a much informative one. It is hoped that other researchers do understand the value of knowledge that is provided by these sorts of studies and lay grounds to improve teachers’ mental health and reduce their job stress through the modification of organizational structure and provision of appropriate facilities in order to hold classes for physical education.

REFERENCES


