Leadership Styles and Demographic Correlates among Junior Management Officers of a Higher Educational Institution in the Philippines

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the various leadership styles of junior administrative and academic officers. Leadership styles greatly influence the organizational culture within an educational institution. Leaders who prioritize collaboration, inclusivity, and supportiveness foster a positive and supportive environment where students and staff feel valued, respected, and motivated to succeed. The study examined various leadership approaches, including transformational, autocratic, transactional, democratic, strategic, and laissez-faire styles, and investigated the leadership practices of junior administrative officers. Results will guide the administration in policy making and decision-making, as well as in appointing junior administrative officers to positions that best suit their leadership styles. This study found that junior administrative and academic officers exhibit high practice in transformational, strategic, transactional, and democratic leadership styles, while demonstrating low practice in laissez-faire and autocratic leadership styles. There were no significant relationships between the different leadership styles with the profile variables except for 1) democratic leadership style and years of employment, that is, a higher extent of democratic leadership style can be described with those who have fewer years of employment and vice versa; 2) Transactional leadership style and years of employment, that is, a higher extent of transactional leadership style can be described with those with fewer years of employment and vice versa; and 3) autocratic leadership style and highest educational attainment, that is, a higher extent of autocratic leadership style can be described with those with lower educational attainment, and vice versa.

Keywords: leadership styles, junior administrative officers, junior academic officers, leadership styles in schools, leadership styles and Correlates

INTRODUCTION

In the dynamic landscape of modern organizations, effective leadership plays a pivotal role in shaping culture, driving productivity, and achieving strategic objectives. Within educational institutions like Saint Mary's University (SMU), the leadership styles adopted by junior administrative and academic officers have a significant influence on the institution's operational efficiency, employee morale, and overall organizational effectiveness. "School leadership has become a priority in education policy agendas internationally. It plays a key role in improving school outcomes by influencing the motivations and capacities of teachers, as well as the school climate and environment [1]." Effective school leadership is crucial for enhancing the efficiency and equity of education. Understanding the nuances of these leadership styles is crucial for fostering a conducive work environment and achieving sustainable success.

This study examines leadership styles among junior administrative and academic officers at SMU, conducting a comparative analysis to reveal the diverse approaches employed in leadership roles. By examining the leadership behaviors, attitudes, and practices of these officers, this research aims to provide valuable insights into their impact on organizational dynamics and effectiveness. One study [2] resonates similarly with its findings that "many schools have used various strategies that have had positive impacts on student achievement. To enhance student achievement, the schools' leadership should be trustworthy administrators who encourage collaboration and teacher leadership and employ educators who are genuinely passionate about teaching and love children."

At the heart of this inquiry lies the recognition of the multifaceted nature of leadership. Leadership is not a one-size-fits-all concept; it encompasses a spectrum of styles with distinct characteristics and implications. From

authoritative and transactional leadership to transformational and servant leadership, the range of leadership styles adopted by junior administrative and academic officers reflects their individual preferences, organizational culture, and situational demands. It was affirmed that we may not have one leadership style [3]. Each one may have their own style. In his study entitled Leadership Styles of School Heads and Their Relationship to School Performance, he wrote *that* "the best thing about leadership is that we all bring something different from each other. There are no individuals who can express leadership in the same way. Each of us can be a unique leader, so trying to put leadership into a box always fails."

By conducting a thorough comparative analysis, this study aims to delineate the strengths, weaknesses, and implications associated with different leadership styles. Data will be collected through a survey to discern patterns, trends, and correlations within the leadership landscape of SMU's junior administrative and academic officers. The significance of this research extends beyond theoretical discourse. Its findings hold practical implications for the development and enhancement of organizational practices and leadership within SMU. By examining the various leadership styles of junior administrative officers, this study aims to inform leadership training programs, succession planning initiatives, and policy formulations that nurture a pool of capable leaders equipped to steer SMU toward its strategic objectives.

It is worth noting that junior administrative or academic officers come from diverse backgrounds and contexts, making it challenging to implement a single leadership style across a school. This is best described by one study that "all school leaders are not created to be exactly alike because there is not simply one style that is best for educational leadership [4]. Various styles are appropriate in different situations or with diverse groups of people. Many different positions in education require leadership."

Ultimately, this study contributes to the broader discourse on leadership effectiveness within educational institutions, providing actionable insights for cultivating a culture of leadership excellence and driving organizational success. Through rigorous analysis and empirical evidence, it aims to shed light on the intricate interplay between leadership styles and organizational effectiveness, thereby paving the way for informed decision-making and transformative leadership practices within Saint Mary's University.

Schools must act like business organizations today. How businesses are run is similar to the school setting. School leaders can learn from management and leadership experts in the business world [5]. "School systems face unprecedented local, state, and federal accountability for school performance and student achievement. School systems and schools have begun to function like business organizations with management complexities and the requirement of bottom-line results. School leadership is a critical component of good performance and student achievement. There is concern over whether or not school leaders have the proper management skills, leadership styles, and approaches necessary to ensure the effective operational performance of schools. Schools have become like business organizations and may benefit from leadership styles proven to enhance performance in business organizations and school settings. Education leaders may benefit from training and development in transformational leadership styles proven to enhance performance in business organizations and educational settings [5]."

But what are the different leadership styles? Let us begin with transformational leadership.

Transformational leadership inspires and motivates followers to achieve extraordinary outcomes [6]. The following characterizes this leadership:

Transformational leadership is characterized by a strong emphasis on vision, inspiration, and positive change within an organization. Transformational leaders articulate a compelling vision of the future that resonates with their followers, inspiring and motivating them by clearly depicting what can be achieved. They often possess charisma and charm, exuding confidence, optimism, and enthusiasm that foster trust, commitment, and loyalty among those they lead. In addition, transformational leaders demonstrate individualized consideration by paying close attention to the needs, concerns, and potential of each follower, offering tailored support, encouragement, and mentorship. They also promote intellectual stimulation by challenging existing practices, encouraging creativity, and fostering critical thinking in an environment where new ideas are welcomed and explored. Through empowerment and development, these leaders delegate responsibilities and provide opportunities for growth, enabling followers to take initiative and ownership of their work. Moreover, transformational leaders serve as

role models by embodying integrity, authenticity, and ethical principles in their actions, setting standards for others to emulate. Ultimately, they act as catalysts for transformational change, driving organizational innovation and adaptability by embracing change as an opportunity for growth and inspiring others to pursue ambitious goals.

Transformational leadership emphasizes the importance of vision, inspiration, empowerment, and ethical behavior in driving organizational success and fostering individual and collective growth [7] & [30].

Autocratic leadership, in contrast to transformational leadership, is characterized by a centralized decision-making process where the leader holds significant power and authority [8].

Here are the main ideas associated with autocratic leadership:

Autocratic leadership is characterized by centralized authority and strict control over decision-making processes. Autocratic leaders make decisions independently, exercising full control with little or no input from their followers, and expect their directives to be followed without question. This leadership style is supported by a clearly defined hierarchy in which roles and responsibilities are explicitly outlined, and instructions flow in a top-down manner from the leader to subordinates. Participation from followers is limited, as they are primarily expected to carry out assigned tasks and implement decisions, with limited opportunities for feedback or involvement. Autocratic leaders also maintain authoritarian control by strictly enforcing rules and procedures, often relying on rewards and punishments to ensure discipline and compliance. While this approach can lead to efficiency and rapid decision-making, particularly in situations requiring immediate action, it may also result in resentment and dissatisfaction among followers due to the limited autonomy and involvement it affords. Over time, such conditions can negatively affect morale and motivation and may restrict innovation and creativity, as followers may feel discouraged from sharing ideas or challenging established practices.

Autocratic leadership emphasizes control, efficiency, and hierarchical structure but can stifle creativity, innovation, and employee morale if not managed effectively [9].

Transactional leadership is another style of leadership that focuses on exchanges between leaders and followers [10]. Here are the main ideas associated with transactional leadership:

Transactional leadership is grounded in a system of structured exchanges between leaders and followers, emphasizing performance, compliance, and short-term outcomes. Transactional leaders motivate their followers through contingent rewards and punishments by clearly defining expectations and performance goals, rewarding those who meet standards while imposing consequences on those who fail to do so. They closely monitor performance through management by exception, intervening when deviations from established norms occur. This is achieved either actively, by continuously supervising and correcting issues, or passively, by stepping in only when significant problems arise. This leadership style is supported by clear organizational structures, procedures, and detailed guidelines that promote order, consistency, and efficiency. Within transactional leadership, leaders may adopt directive approaches that involve close supervision, motivate through rewards such as incentives and promotions, or enforce discipline through corrective actions and punishment. At its core, transactional leadership is based on an exchange relationship in which followers fulfill assigned responsibilities in return for rewards, recognition, or other benefits. This approach tends to focus on short-term goals and immediate results rather than long-term vision or transformational change. As a result, transactional leadership is particularly effective in stable and predictable environments where tasks are routine and clearly defined, allowing organizations to operate efficiently and maintain control.

Transactional leadership emphasizes the exchange of rewards and punishments to motivate followers and achieve established goals within a structured and controlled environment [11].

Democratic leadership, also known as participative leadership, is characterized by the involvement of team members or followers in the decision-making process [12]. Here are the main ideas associated with democratic leadership:

Democratic leadership is characterized by inclusivity, collaboration, and shared responsibility in the decision-making process. Democratic leaders actively encourage participation and value the opinions, ideas, and

perspectives of their team members, integrating these inputs into organizational decisions. They foster a collaborative and inclusive environment marked by open communication, transparency, and mutual respect, where individuals feel empowered to express their views and contribute meaningfully. Leadership responsibilities are often shared among team members based on their expertise, skills, and interests, promoting teamwork, cooperation, and collective ownership of goals and outcomes. Democratic leaders also emphasize consensus-building by facilitating discussions, encouraging open dialogue, and seeking common ground to ensure that decisions reflect a group consensus. This leadership style fosters innovation and creativity by leveraging diverse perspectives and collective intelligence to generate effective solutions. Through empowerment and shared accountability, democratic leaders motivate team members to take initiative and responsibility for their work. As a result, democratic leadership is associated with higher levels of job satisfaction, engagement, and commitment, as individuals who feel valued and included are more likely to be motivated and satisfied in their roles.

Democratic leadership emphasizes collaboration, inclusivity, and empowerment, fostering a positive work environment where individuals feel valued, motivated, and engaged. This leadership style is particularly effective in situations that require innovation, adaptability, and consensus-building [13].

Laissez-faire leadership, also known as hands-off leadership, is characterized by minimal interference from the leader in the day-to-day operations of the team or organization [14]. Here are the main ideas associated with laissez-faire leadership:

Laissez-faire leadership is characterized by minimal direction and a high level of autonomy granted to team members. Leaders who adopt this style provide limited guidance or oversight, allowing individuals to work independently without close supervision or micromanagement. Team members are given substantial freedom to make decisions, set their own goals, and manage priorities and deadlines, with the leader intervening only when necessary or upon request. This leadership approach is often most effective when leaders work with highly skilled and competent individuals, as it relies heavily on the expertise and judgment of the team. Laissez-faire leaders maintain a hands-off approach by delegating authority and decision-making responsibilities while offering resources, support, and encouragement when needed. Such an environment can foster innovation and creativity by allowing individuals to freely explore new ideas and unconventional approaches. However, the lack of structure and clear direction may also lead to disorganization, confusion, or coordination challenges, particularly if team members require guidance or if tasks are complex and interdependent.

Laissez-faire leadership is characterized by a hands-off approach where leaders provide minimal direction or interference, allowing team members to work autonomously and independently [15]. This leadership style can be effective when team members are highly skilled, self-motivated, and capable of managing their work effectively. However, it may not be suitable in environments that require close supervision, direction, or coordination.

Strategic leadership focuses on the ability of leaders to effectively formulate and execute strategies to guide their organizations toward achieving long-term goals and competitive advantage [16]. Here are the main points or ideas associated with strategic leadership:

Strategic leaders develop a clear and compelling vision for the organization's future. They articulate a strategic direction, defining where the organization is headed and how it will achieve its goals. They are also engaged in strategic thinking, which involves analyzing complex situations, identifying opportunities and threats, and formulating strategies to achieve desired outcomes. They consider long-term implications and anticipate changes in the business environment. Strategic leaders establish clear objectives and goals that align with the organization's vision and strategy. They establish measurable targets to track progress and ensure accountability. Moreover, strategic leaders make decisions that have a significant impact on the organization's direction and performance. They weigh alternatives, assess risks, prioritize actions to maximize value, and mitigate potential challenges. Strategic leaders ensure alignment and integration across different functions and levels of the organization. They align strategies, goals, and resources to foster coherence and synergy in pursuing common objectives. Strategic leaders navigate organizational change effectively by anticipating resistance, communicating vision and rationale, and engaging stakeholders in the change process. They foster a culture of agility and adaptability, enabling a responsive approach to evolving market dynamics. Strategic leaders focus on building organizational capabilities that support strategy execution. They invest in talent development, technology, processes, and infrastructure to strengthen the organization's competitive position and enable future growth.

Strategic leaders assess and manage the risks associated with implementing their strategies. They identify potential threats and uncertainties, develop contingency plans, and monitor performance to ensure resilience and agility in the face of challenges. Strategic leaders engage with internal and external stakeholders to build relationships, gain insights, and mobilize support for strategic initiatives. They communicate transparently and build trust to foster collaboration and alignment. Strategic leaders embrace continuous learning and adaptation. They encourage experimentation, feedback, and reflection to drive continuous innovation and improvement.

Strategic leadership involves envisioning the future, making informed decisions, aligning resources, and mobilizing people to execute strategies effectively in pursuit of organizational success and a sustainable competitive advantage [17].

This study aimed to surface the different leadership styles of Saint Mary's University's junior administrative and academic officers. And specifically wants to answer the following questions:

What is the profile of junior administrative and academic officers of Saint Mary's University in terms of

a.   Sex
b.   Civil Status
c.   Age
d.   Years of Employment
e.   Highest Educational Attainment

2.   What among the leadership styles do junior administrative and academic officers of Saint Mary's University practice?

a.   transformational,
b.   autocratic,
c.   transactional,
d.   democratic,
e.   strategic, and
f.   laissez-faire

3.   Is there a significant relationship between their leadership styles and their profile?

4.   What implications could be derived for university policymakers, appointing authorities, and administrators in general?

METHODOLOGY

The study employed a quantitative research design with a descriptive approach, aiming to systematically gather information to describe a phenomenon, situation, or population. Descriptive research is a method used to determine the characteristics of a population or particular phenomenon [18]. More specifically, it helps answer the what, when, where, and how questions regarding research problems rather than the why. Using descriptive research, one can identify patterns in a group's characteristics to establish everything needed to understand why something has happened, apart from the specific event itself. This research design was employed in this study to examine and identify the leadership styles of junior administrative and academic officers at Saint Mary's University.

The study was conducted at Saint Mary's University, Bayombong, Nueva Vizcaya. Saint Mary's University is a catholic higher educational institution founded by the CICM Missionaries on December 8, 1928. It has become one of the formative universities in the region and the country. The study involved 47 junior administrative and academic officers from Saint Mary's University, who were surveyed using a questionnaire. The junior administrative and academic officers include department heads, Office Heads, Directors, and coordinators appointed by the university president to head, direct, or coordinate the functions of their respective offices or departments.

The researcher communicated with the Director of the Human Resources and Development Office (HRDO) at SMU regarding the research proposal and obtained permission to distribute the research proposal questionnaire

to the university's junior administrative and academic officers. The same was approved for conduct. The University Research Ethics Office (UREO) also gave its approval for the study. The researcher then transformed the survey questionnaire into its Google form for faster distribution and retrieval of their responses. A list of the respondent officers was obtained, and the Google form was electronically sent to all of them. Once the responses were available, the researcher submitted the data to the university statistician for analysis.

Data gathered in the research were analyzed using the following statistical tools:

1. Frequency and Percentage. It was used to describe the demographic profile of the respondents.
2. Mean and Standard Deviation. They were used to describe the respondents' level of agreement with the indicators given on the different leadership styles.
3. Pearson's r. It was employed to determine the relationship between their leadership styles, age, and years of employment.
4. Point-biserial correlation (type of Pearson's r). It was employed to determine the relationship between their leadership styles and their sex and civil status profiles.
5. Spearman's rho (p). It was employed to determine the relationship between their leadership styles and their educational attainment profile.

The researcher was aware that ethical issues were imperative during the research. The researcher guaranteed accountability and responsibility for the following ethical considerations to the research participants: confidentiality and data protection, conflict of interest, risk/benefit ratio, informed consent, and terms of reference. There were no vulnerable participants in this study, and no conflict of interest was involved.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section presents the profile of the participants, the leadership styles they practice, and the significant relationship between the considered leadership styles and the participants' profile variables. It also presents the recommendations based on the study's results.

Table 1 Profile of Respondents

Profile	Groups	f (n=47)	%	Mean (SD)
Sex	Male	14	29.8	
	Female	33	70.2	
Civil Status	Single	14	29.8	
	Married	33	70.2	
Age	26-37	9	19.1	44.70 (9.23)
	38-49	21	44.7	
	50-63	17	36.2	
Years of Employment	5-17	21	44.7	20.06 (9.14)
	18- 30	20	42.6	
	31-43	6	12.8	
Highest Educational Attainment	Bachelor's Degree	10	21.3	
	Masteral Degree	26	55.3	
	Doctoral Degree	11	23.4	

Table 1 above shows the demographic profiles of the study's respondents. It was observed that more females than males participated in the study as junior administrative and academic officers, comprising 29.8% and 70.2% of the total number of study participants, respectively. A similar result was observed in the civil status of the study participants, where there were more married than unmarried officers, comprising 29.8% and 70.2%, respectively, of the total number of study participants. With respect to age, the age Mean is 44, which is within the age range of 38-49, comprising 44.7% of all the study's respondents. It could be observed that the youngest appointed junior administrative or academic officer is 26 years old, and the oldest is 63 years old, which implies that the youngest junior administrative or academic officer was already five years in service, assuming that he or she was employed in the university right after graduation at the age of twenty and that the eldest junior administrative or academic officer was rehired after retirement if he or she was a continuing employee of the university. It is also worth noting

that 36% of the participants fall within the 50-63 age range, indicating that several are approaching retirement age. Incidentally, in terms of years of service, the shortest number of years of service is 5, and the longest is forty-three. It could also be seen that 44.7%, the largest percentage, have served the university for 5 to 17 years. This suggests that nearly all junior administrative and academic officers are loyal to the university, as evidenced by their years of service. In terms of educational attainment, the majority of the study's junior and academic officers are Master' Degree holders, comprising 53.5% of the total number of participants. However, it can still be observed that Bachelor's Degree holders comprise 21.3%. This means that these junior administrative and academic officers still need to pursue higher education studies, unless a license to the profession is sufficient and not a requirement for their appointive positions.

In summary, the junior administrative and academic officers who participated in the study were predominantly female, married, with an average age of 44, and had been with the university for at least 20 years. They held a Master's degree as their educational qualification.

Table 2 Leadership styles as practiced by junior administrative and academic officers

Leadership Style	Statements	Mean	SD
Transformational	I go beyond self-interest for the good of the organization	4.30	0.88
	I consider the moral and ethical consequences of my decisions	4.74	0.44
	I help others to develop their strengths	4.36	0.53
	I inspire with a compelling vision for the future	4.23	0.73
	TOTAL Mean and Standard Deviation (SD)	**4.41**	**0.43**
Democratic	The best decision will be the one with the largest consensus	4.11	0.67
	I welcome others to constantly challenge my ideas and strategies	4.32	0.56
	I try to delegate as many tasks as possible in their complete entirety	2.96	0.95
	I value input from team members in setting vision and goals	4.77	0.43
	TOTAL Mean and Standard Deviation (SD)	**4.04**	**0.41**
Autocratic	I make decisions without consulting others due to time pressures upon the task at hand	2.47	0.83
	I rarely back down when I am truly passionate about something	4.00	0.78
	I need to push half of the people into completing work to a higher standard	3.53	0.80
	I try to dictate goals and objectives	2.81	1.14
	TOTAL Mean and Standard Deviation (SD)	**3.20**	**0.56**
Transactional	I make clear what one can expect to receive when performance goals are achieved	4.23	0.63
	I provide recognition/rewards when others reach their goals	4.19	0.61
	I keep track of all mistakes	3.40	0.90
	I focus on achieving established goals or objectives.	4.40	0.58
	TOTAL Mean and Standard Deviation (SD)	**4.06**	**0.42**
Laissez-faire	I avoid making decisions	2.13	0.97
	Whatever others want to do is ok with me	2.89	0.76
	I ask no more of others than what is absolutely essential	3.51	0.91
	I usually do not emphasize a specific vision or goals	2.40	0.88
	TOTAL Mean and Standard Deviation (SD)	**2.73**	**0.55**
Strategic	I tend to overcome barriers to reach our organizational goals	4.09	0.58
	I'm good at finding practical solutions to problems	3.94	0.44
	I have a clear focus on what we need to do as an organization	4.45	0.58
	I see vision or goals as a source of inspiration and motivation for all stakeholders.	4.64	0.53
	TOTAL Mean and Standard Deviation (SD)	**4.28**	**0.37**

Legend: 1-1.49 = Seldom Practiced (Low Practice), 1.50-2.49 = Sometimes Practiced (Low Practice), 2.5-3.49 = Sometimes Practiced (Moderate Practice), 3.50-4.49 = Often Practiced (High Practice), 4.5-5.0 = Always Practiced (High Practice).

The table above presents the leadership styles and practices of Saint Mary's University's junior administrative and academic officers. Among the different leadership styles considered in the study, it can be seen that the transformational leadership style has the highest Mean of 4.41 with a Standard Deviation of 0.43. This would mean that transformational leadership is mostly practiced among Saint Mary's University's junior administrative and academic officers. But it must also be noted that other leadership styles, like strategic, transactional, and democratic leadership styles, are often practiced based on the total Mean with a qualitative description of high practice. This may mean that among the junior administrative and academic officers at St. Mary's University, these leadership styles are highly practiced. On the other hand, the laissez-faire and the autocratic leadership styles got the lowest Mean of 2.73 and 3.20, respectively. The two Means fall under the range of sometimes practice, with a qualitative description of moderate practice. It is worth noting that these two leadership styles represent the two extreme leadership styles. The former represents a more carefree leadership style, while the latter represents a stricter one. This may mean that junior administrative and academic officers sometimes adopt carefree or very strict leadership styles.

Among the leadership styles, it is worth noting that transformational, strategic, transactional, and democratic approaches are highly practiced by the university's junior administrative and academic officers. This could be explained by the fact that the university has a well-established vision and mission statement, as well as a quality management policy, which aims to transform the university's primary clients. To borrow the statement of the former Dean of the College of Engineering, now the School of Engineering, Architecture and Information Technology (SEAIT), who said, "Lend me your son, and I will return them as an Engineer" and with the university's graduation slogan "sent to build a better world" are manifestations of the transformative goals of the university not only with its primary clients but also of the community. With a clear vision and mission and an established quality management policy, junior administrative and academic officers must have imbued those visions and missions and serve as role models for their subordinates. Similarly, the high prevalence of strategic leadership style may be attributed to the role of junior administrative and academic officers as planners and implementers of strategic activities to achieve their office or department's objectives or goals. The same holds true with transactional and democratic leadership styles. The university's junior administrative and academic officers must also deal with their subordinates, inspiring or rewarding them for their accomplishments and giving corrective actions when necessary. While a clear symbiotic relationship between a leader and subordinates/followers is fundamental in transactional leadership styles, democratic leadership advocates for participative leadership, characterized by the involvement of team members or followers in the decision-making process. It allows the participation of others, which primarily emphasizes innovation and inclusivity. This kind of leadership allows the ideas of others to be heard for a more collaborative work environment. And this is precisely what Saint Mary's University workplace is all about.

Among Saint Mary's University's junior administrative and academic officers, the laissez-faire and autocratic leadership styles got the lowest Mean scores of 2.73 and 3.2, respectively. These results show that these leadership styles are practiced to a low extent. It would also imply that, as much as possible, these officers, on the one hand, avoid laissez-faire leadership styles characterized by a hands-off approach, minimal guidance, a high degree of autonomy, and limited intervention, where leaders provide minimal direction or interference, allowing team members to work autonomously and independently. However, as mentioned, this leadership style can be effective when team members are highly skilled, self-motivated, and capable of managing their work effectively. However, it may not be suitable in environments that require close supervision, direction, or coordination, like at Saint Mary's University. Saint Mary's University has to work to improve its competitive advantage and a carefree leadership style may not be effective to accomplish the same. On the other hand, they also try to avoid an autocratic leadership style characterized by a centralized decision-making process where the leader holds significant power and authority. This leadership style emphasizes control, efficiency, and hierarchical structure but can stifle creativity, innovation, and employee morale if not managed effectively. And this is precisely why this type of leadership may not be attractive to the university's junior administrative and academic officers. While it has its own advantages, it may hinder the university from pursuing its core values of innovation and communion, where members of the institution are encouraged to contribute innovative ideas and work collaboratively to achieve its goals.

The results present the types of leadership styles that are attractive to Saint Mary's University's junior administrative and academic officers: transformative, strategic, transactional, and democratic leadership styles. While they are not inclined to adapt the laissez-faire and autocratic leadership styles. These results demonstrate

that it is essential to recognize that in managing an organization, a combination of different leadership styles can be adopted to address the needs of the organization and its customers. This conclusion was drawn from a study on Hewlett-Packard (HP), which utilizes transactional leadership styles to ensure tasks are completed effectively and achieve the organization's goals. It was concluded that "transactional change has its benefits in organizations. However, modern companies and large corporations need transformational leaders to cope well with the emerging business challenges and globalization [11]." Among the leadership styles, the transformational leadership style is the most commonly practiced by junior administrative and academic officers, which can be attributed to the administration's efforts to empower junior officers in realizing the university's vision and mission. And this is affirmed by one study [19], stating that in "transformational leadership, the employees are encouraged and motivated to perform better and work according to the company's vision and have better productivity than the competitors."

Moreover, the university's junior officers are also highly inclined to practice transactional leadership. This could be because transactional leadership typically focuses on establishing a relationship between the leader and the follower. This explains that leaders use "leadership styles to improve their organization's effectiveness and increase their revenues. Leadership styles are developed and implemented for two significant reasons: to enhance employees' performance or to bring about organizational change. The leadership styles can be identified as helping the manager form a bond with the employees [10]." Junior officers also demonstrated a high level of practice in strategic and democratic leadership styles; this can be explained by the reality that university administration typically seeks input from employees for major decisions. They usually want junior officers to be strategically and democratically part of decision-making. This is supported by another study [12] that involved leaders in Manipur, India, which concluded that "the sampled top executives of organizations in Manipur are highly democratic in their leadership practices. In other words, they delegate authority to followers when making decisions. They incorporated the ideas and feedback from followers into their upcoming plans and strategies. They motivate their followers through participation in organizational activities. They also worked with the followers and mediated for them."

In the case of laissez-faire and autocratic leadership styles, junior officers of the university have low practice. This could be explained by the university being an educational institution, and these leadership styles may not be well-suited among its officers. Compared to transformational and transactional leadership styles, the laissez-faire leadership style often appears underappreciated. This is because the leadership style is often associated with destructiveness and eagerness to avoid responsibility [20]; [15]. A study on Norwegian employees confirmed that a leader who practices the style tends to lead a team with a higher rate of bullying, conflicts, and a high degree of stress among the employees [15]. In the autocratic leadership style, a low practice may be attributed to the implications of this leadership style for managing an organization. As defined by several studies, it is a "style of management in which the central authority is strong, decisions are taken without questioning, and subordinates are motivated by threats, punishments, and awards [21]." Another referred to autocratic leaders as authoritarian leaders [22]. Such leaders believe in power centralization. Hence, they make decisions single-handedly, devise plans independently, and instruct their subordinates not only what to do but also how to do it [23]. As described by some scholars, autocratic leaders do not trust their subordinates and believe that only rewards can motivate them in reciprocation of their attitudes; thus, subordinates have no loyalty to them and are always waiting for the moment when such leaders fail and are removed from their posts [24]. In a later study, when managers are provided with clear guidance, the democratic leadership style is more effective than the autocratic one in achieving optimal performance from juniors in today's environment [13].

Table 3 The relationship of the participants' profile with the leadership styles

Leadership Styles		Sex	Civil Status	Age	Years of Employment	Highest Educational Attainment
Transformational	Correlation coefficient	.134	.107	-.041	-.109	-.058
	p-value	.371	.476	.786	.464	.697
	QD	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns
Democratic	Correlation coefficient	.147	.060	-.259	-.381**	-.244
	p-value	.325	.688	.079	.008	.099

	QD	ns	ns	ns	Moderately Low Negative Correlation	ns
Autocratic	Correlation coefficient	-.182	-.119	-.149	-.190	-.315*
	p-value	.221	.425	.318	.200	.031
	QD	ns	ns	ns	ns	Moderate Negative Relationship
Transactional	Correlation coefficient	.063	-.075	-.195	-.381**	-.073
	p-value	.673	.614	.188	.008	.627
	QD	ns	ns	ns	Moderately Low Negative Correlation	ns
Laissez-faire	Correlation coefficient	-.212	-.041	-.041	-.138	-.150
	p-value	.152	.786	.786	.356	.315
	QD	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns
Strategic	Correlation coefficient	.173	.047	-.170	-.272	-.027
	p-value	.245	.754	.254	.065	.854
	QD	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns

Legend

Pearson r	Qualitative Description	Spearman ρ	Qualitative Description
+0.80 – +0.99	Very High Correlation	≥ 0.70	Very Strong Relationship
+0.60 – +0.79	Moderately High Correlation	±0.40 – +0.69	Strong Relationship
+0.40 – +0.59	High Correlation	±0.30 – +0.39	Moderate Relationship
+0.20 – +0.39	Moderately Low Correlation	±0.20 – +0.29	Weak Relationship
+0.01 – +0.19	Very Low Correlation	±0.01 – +0.19	Very weak Relationship
		0 – +0.009	No Relationship

ns-not significant; **significant at α=0.01; *significant at α=0.05

The table above shows the significant relationship between the considered leadership styles and the participants' profile variables. It is notable that with respect to sex, civil status, and age profiles, there were no significant relationships, as shown by Pearson's r correlation coefficient, which is more than .01, and the P value, which is more than .05. For the years of employment and educational attainment, it can be seen that there is no significant relationship between transformational, laissez-faire and strategic leadership styles with the different profile variables as shown by their Pearson's r correlation coefficient, which is more than .01, and the P value, which is more than .05.

However, there are three notable results. First, a significant relationship exists between democratic leadership style and years of employment (r = -0.381; p < 0.01). Specifically, a moderately low negative correlation. This implies that a greater extent of democratic leadership style can be observed among those with fewer years of employment, and vice versa. It is also worth noting that as junior administrative and academic officers have more years of employment at the university, they tend to adopt less democratic leadership styles. However, a moderately low level of correlation indicates that the evidence supporting this is weak. Second, a significant relationship exists between the transactional leadership style and years of employment (r = -0.381; p < 0.01). Specifically, a moderately low negative correlation. This implies that a greater extent of transactional leadership style can be described with those with fewer years of employment, and vice versa. Furthermore, it can be observed that as junior administrative and academic officers have more years of employment at the university, they tend to practice less transactional leadership styles. However, a moderately low level of correlation indicates that the

evidence supporting this is weak. And thirdly, there is a significant relationship between autocratic leadership style and highest educational attainment (rho = -0.315; $p < 0.05$). Specifically, a moderate negative relationship. This implies that a greater extent of autocratic leadership style can be observed in those with lower educational attainment, and vice versa. Furthermore, it can be observed that junior administrative and academic officers with higher educational attainment tend to practice less autocratic leadership styles. However, a moderate level of relationship is stronger than a weak correlation but not as strong as a high correlation.

Based on this correlation, it is crucial that junior managers pursue training or further studies to enhance their management skills. One study emphasized that effective career development and training are crucial for leaders and managers to fulfill their roles successfully and develop the competencies necessary for high-quality performance. They further claimed that "career development needs to be viewed as a critical element by organizations to capacitate employees and contribute to organizational success [25]."

Recommendations to university policymakers, appointing authorities, and administrators

Leadership holds significant value in managing organizations today, playing a crucial role in navigating the complexities of the modern business environment. Today's leadership is about managing tasks and processes, as well as inspiring and guiding people towards a common goal. The value of leadership lies in its ability to create a vision, drive change, engage employees, and build a resilient and adaptable organization. As organizations face increasingly complex challenges, leadership becomes more critical in ensuring sustainable success. Previous studies have indicated that the most significant factor in shaping employee behaviors is the leadership style, which can lead to either a positive attitude or disappointment [26]. Leadership is also a critical factor in any organization, acting as the main driving force for subordinates to perform in the right direction and achieve desired objectives [13].

Leadership is a highly discussed topic in the current competitive environment, where organizations are increasingly competing due to the influx of new entrants [26]. Therefore, most organizations have incorporated leadership styles within their companies to enable employees to follow them, thereby improving productivity and working toward a common goal in achieving their mission. A study explains that leaders utilize leadership styles to enhance their organization's effectiveness and increase revenues. Leadership styles are developed and implemented for two significant reasons: to enhance employees' performance or to bring about organizational change [10].

With the above review of the works of literature and the results of this study, it is recommended that the university administration check if the leadership styles practiced by junior administrative and academic officers of the university are aligned with the kind of leadership the administration would like to improve on employees' performance, achieve its goals, or institute organizational change. This would be very important for the junior officers to also check with their own leadership styles. In this way, there could be coordination or synchronization of leadership styles among the university officers. There may be something about transformational, strategic, transactional, and democratic leadership styles that encourages university junior officers to practice them.

Effective leaders in educational organizations possess strong interpersonal and communication skills that enable them to navigate conflicts, address challenges, and facilitate problem-solving. Their leadership style influences how conflicts are managed and resolved, ultimately shaping the school's overall climate. Effective leadership is essential for creating a positive and inclusive learning environment where students thrive, teachers excel, and the entire school community is empowered to reach its full potential. The above supports the study results, which generally show that junior management personnel benefit significantly from structured training and development programs that enhance their leadership competencies, interpersonal skills, and management styles, thereby preparing them for higher levels of responsibility and improving organizational outcomes. "Junior-level managers should be exposed to professional development opportunities to help prepare them for higher-level jobs. New supervisor or manager training is a requirement within the first months of an individual assuming a management role," and a study on management development programs found that structured development (e.g., mentoring) significantly influences the adoption and effectiveness of different management styles among junior executives and young managers [25]; [27]; [28].

CONCLUSION

The study participants are predominantly female, married, with an average age of 44, and have been in service for at least 20 years, holding a master's degree. Junior administrative and academic officers highly practice transformational, strategic, transactional, and democratic, while they have a low practice of laissez-faire and autocratic leadership styles.

There were no significant relationships of the different leadership styles with the profile variables except for 1) democratic leadership style and years of employment, that is, a higher extent of democratic leadership style can be described with those who have fewer years of employment and vice versa; 2) Transactional leadership style and years of employment, that is, a higher extent of transactional leadership style can be described with those with fewer years of employment and vice versa; and 3) autocratic leadership style and highest educational attainment, that is, a higher extent of autocratic leadership style can be described with those with lower educational attainment, and vice versa.

It is recommended that the university administration verify whether the leadership styles employed by junior administrative and academic officers align with the type of leadership the administration aims to implement to enhance employee performance, achieve its goals, or effect organizational change. It is also very important for junior officers to consider their own leadership styles for better coordination and synchronization, thereby enhancing employees' performance and facilitating organizational change.

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