The Effect of Leadership Styles on Students Commitment in Lebanese Higher Educational Institutions.

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The Effect of Leadership Styles on Students Commitment in Lebanese Higher Educational Institutions. (PhD Dissertation pilot test)

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Abstract

The higher educational institutions are in constant need of attracting and retaining the best students, to have a successful future. There are many different leadership styles that schools use when managing their institution, but there is no single answer as to which one is the most effective. What has been found though, is that if an institution does not properly engage its students or know how to motivate them with clear goals and incentives for success then they will eventually leave. Leadership styles and student's commitment are key foundations of success for most of the higher educational institutions, and if they are delicate or unstable in any case, the institution will be affected negatively and diverge from their vision. Many studies have found a stronger link between leadership styles and student commitment or engagement linked to the institution due to the leader's approach (instructor, advisor, staff…) is considered to provide direction for all students, in addition to executing strategies and motivating students to be inspired and achieve higher results and satisfaction, so that students continue to be loyal to the institution's leader and, if effective, the leader look forward to achieve organizational objectives. What is the relationship between leadership styles and student commitment in Lebanese universities? What leadership style is majorly adopted in the higher educational institutions in Lebanon? What Leadership style is more effective in preserving student retention? What is the correlation between leadership styles and higher educational institutions? These research questions will be followed by hypothesis assuming the answers. Retaining students during the current economic situation is an enormous challenge for any higher educational institution in Lebanon. Finding the most efficient Leadership Style to retain students is the originality of this research. This research in progress is an attempt to study the effect of Leadership Styles on Students Commitment in Lebanese Higher Educational institutions.

Data will be collected through a questionnaire based on the multifactor leadership questionnaire (MLQ), 114 fully filled surveys are collected for the pilot test this study is a work in progress from the PhD dissertation.

Keywords: Leadership Style, Higher Educational, Lebanon, Student Retention, Student Commitment

1- Introduction:

The collective quest in which the great majority of educational systems are engaged in today is based on the principle that future developments will require a profound questioning of the conception of teaching-learning relationship (García-Martínez, Díaz-Delgado, & Ubago-Jiménez, 2018). A total revision of the organizational work at all levels in higher educational institutions is demanded (Bergmann, Geissler, Hundt, & Grave, 2018). In this process, the main objectives and strategies implemented to achieve the optimal organizational performance will vary. University academics and staff are being pressured to provide fairness of treatment; by pushing against school failure, the appropriate customization and flexibility of offered courses, collective accountability, and the professionalism of all stakeholders (Ross, 2021).

Previous research has documented the acceptance and integration of leadership styles into the behaviors of academic professionals, despite uncertain hesitations that continue in the educational world around this concept (Abramovich & Miedijensky, 2019).

At the same time, there is a certain consensus that the nature of the leadership style exercised by school faculty members and staff contributes to academic success, provided that it takes into account the essential role of the professional competence of teachers and the quality of their teaching (Kenneth Leithwood, 2004). Many authors such as, El Turk and Cherney (2016), Supovitz, Sirinides, and May (2009), emphasized that the integrity of educational leadership has an influence on student retention. The meta-analysis published by Scheerens and Blömeke (2016) is also part of this perspective.

The aim of this study is to assess the impact of the higher educational institutions approach on the students' commitment in the Lebanese universities.

Specific objectives are:

1.   Evaluate whether there is a significant relationship between leadership style and student commitment.

2.   Learn the best leadership style for students' retention to the Lebanese higher education institutions.

3.   To compare leadership styles in different private universities

The following research questions were developed

1-   What is the relationship between leadership styles and student commitment in Lebanese universities?

2-   Which leadership style is majorly adopted in the higher educational institutions in Lebanon?

3-   Which leadership style is more effective in preserving student retention?

2- Literature Review

Leadership refers to the ability to lead and influence others, to lead them to meet goals with a common purpose of an organization and to generate results that contribute to the improvement of the quality of life of the leaders and therefore their followers (Eddy & VanDerLinden, 2006).

To be a leader is to have ascendancy in a human group and power of convocation, the leader is born when he always has that characteristic of making himself heard and correctly

led a group of people. On the other hand, there are others that little by little develop this quality through the embodiments of life (Agarwal & Bhal, 2019). Leadership is considered very difficult to define (Block, 2021).

The leader can coordinate, motivate, and lead a group until it reaches its objectives. The qualities most leaders possess are being innovative, creative, and visionary, and in that they differ from the qualities of the director or administrator, that usually make them more efficient, like being rational, practical, and analytical (Robinson, A. Lloyd, & J. Rowe, 2008; Roha Mohamed Jais, Yahaya, & K Ghani, 2020).

From the above, it can be deduced that faculty or administrative members sometimes care more about their motivation than by pedagogical processes, leaving aside other skills, which serve to solve problems or situations that arise in the educational field.

Therefore, can promote greater interaction between the advisors and students to foster a harmonious organizational climate.

It should be noted that the leader must be that person who, due to his/her personal qualities, is able to motivate people to achieve a goal, persuade them to voluntarily and cheerfully accomplish a determined activity that seeks the common welfare. In this sense, the leader must have the skills required to exercise good leadership (Petersen, 2020).

Regarding leadership theories, it can be said that they have been upraised using various approaches as they have evolved throughout history.

(Bryman, 2007; Cochran, 2020) found three main approaches to reach a leader status, briefly explained below.

Starting with the personal approach (early 20s of the 20th century): (Bryman, 2007; Cochran, 2020), affirmed that the oldest explanations about leadership were related to the personal characteristics of those who possessed the quality of the leadership. In this sense, hypotheses were emerging about the specific features in the personality of the leader, based on the assumption that the leader has a great capacity for influence because he/she possesses a set of innate qualities superior to those of the rest of the individuals.

Adserias, Charleston, and Jackson (2016) explained that at the beginning of the 20th century it was believed that leaders had distinctive features, so over the following 40 years a search for the best combination of traits was in process.

Adserias et al. (2016) agreed that this search has resulted in many characteristics and there was little agreement on which traits and abilities characterized successful leaders. Other authors discussed that there is no ideal personality profile for a leader, which has not been determined or tested with sufficient reliability in the relationships between finding certain traits and the effectiveness or success of leadership styles, which has not been distinguished with sufficient validity, some leaders if compared styles didn't have clear and distinguished personality traits. So little by little this approach was abandoned towards proposals related to situational or functionalist theories.

According to Bass and Stogdill (1990), leadership or management styles are the alternative ways in which leaders structure their interactive behavior to carry out their roles as leaders. In this regard, Yammarino and Bass (1990) affirm that the leadership style refers to the forms of structure of the conduct or behaviors issued by the leader; this author emphasizes that leadership style should not be confused with specific leadership behavior, since behavior is only one element, concrete and specific characteristics define the style.

(Suharyanto & Lestari, 2020; Suyudi et al.), indicate that, since 1940, authors as Lewin, Lippit, and White and their Iowa University collaborators, being the pioneers in this research field, identified in their research, authoritarian, democratic and laissez-faire leadership styles. Referring to these studies, (Sabaryanto) reaffirmed that the creation of a proper environment for the leader in charge of directing the group, can affect his decisions and the adaptation of a specific style.

Leaders could act according to all three styles: in the autocratic style; imposing authority, the democratic style seeking the active participation of all members of the group, and laissez-faire; letting everyone do what they want.

In this regard, Dulewicz and Higgs (2005) explain more explicitly each of these styles.

Authoritarian leadership: the leader bases his leadership on authoritarianism; he takes his decisions and members have to execute. The future of the group is uncertain, since only the leader decides, and it is never clear what to do next. Employees or subordinates in this case do not usually participate in immediate work unless taught how to do it, as well as any other command, or organization task.

Moving into democratic leadership, the leader identifies with the group and with its expertise. Everything is planned and in a matter of discussion in the group, something that the leader encourages and favors. In case of any confrontation in the group, the leader leaves a certain perspective for the future. The leader in case of doubt usually proposes possible alternatives to help them see clearly. During his duties he acts as "a member of the group" as organizing takes time and energies.

Laissez-faire leadership: The leader does not exercise any leadership. Gives total freedom for personal decision with hardly any intervention from the leader, who only acts in cases extremes if the leader "is available", he would give information, materials, or his opinion "if necessary" but does not intervene on his own initiative. The future is uncertain. The leader too often adopts the behavior of the one who works as "an alternative".

2.1 Educational Leadership:

Educational organizations are the spaces where the teaching-learning process takes place, in addition to developing the students' cognitive abilities, they potentiate comprehensive training, where ethics and the cultural and spiritual component exist in a harmonious relationship. Given this complexity, the leadership through which educational organizations are created must transcend from a traditional cut to a renewing leadership.

Regarding leadership in the educational field, the historical journey shows a process that was built in three stages, which are described below: (Larson, Izenstark, Rodriguez, & Perry, 2016).

Extending from the 1950s to the 1970s: educational leadership was linked to knowledge about management theory, from the behavioral sciences and from a positivist vision, seeking to understand the leadership from a natural science perspective.

Currently, it is evident that the development of school leadership is one of several indirect factors affecting learning. Leadership is taking positions more decentralized, the need to study leadership is becoming essential for many reasons such as the exercise of power or the gender of the leader which can be aspects that affects leadership styles.

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD, 2017) conducted a study on school leadership in various European countries, Australia, New Zealand, in the first decade of the 21st century, the main findings were that the OECD research can

"Improve school leadership" by identifying four areas of action, if used together, can help improve school leadership practice.

These areas are emphasized in the need to redefine the responsibilities of school leadership, focusing on functions that they can implement to improve school results.

Also, the requirement to distribute school leadership, in engaging and recognizing broader participation in leadership teams is necessary. Likewise, it is important to develop skills for effective school leadership throughout different stages of the practice.

Similarly, school leadership can be made a more attractive profession by securing salaries and prospects for appropriate career. Regarding the first point made by the OECD, it is evident that in many European countries exist a necessity for managerial leadership roles to be better defined as they have focused on the importance of the administrative functions. They also found out that they are not the key to the improvement and achievement of results of the centers.

Adserias et al. (2016) in a research review on educational leadership, concludes that there is a need to closely integrate leadership research and research on effective teaching and learning; in order overcome the current mismatch between theory on leadership practices and action to follow.

Alonderiene and Majauskaite (2016) in their research, sought to establish the existence of a relationship between the administration leadership style and teacher performance; the results showed a relationship between the administration leadership styles and teacher performance; showing that authoritarian leadership styles predict poor teacher performance.

From this study, the instrument used in this research was taken to assess the leadership style of the teaching directors of the District Educational Institution Concentration (Dopson et al., 2018), in his research on leadership style in educational institutions he concludes that the director as a leader is characterized by presenting behaviors that facilitate respect for each of their followers, as well as the motivation and skills for the thought. In this way, the relationship between the type of leadership exercised by the director is positive, since the practices that characterize this type of leadership go hand in hand with the human rights, therefore guaranteeing respect for them and an institutional climate based on democracy.

Sierra Villamil (2016) in the study developed in the city of Bogotá emphasizes the importance of educational leadership based on some key elements that affect the behavior of a leader, from a sustainable perspective, because education acquires a formative and ethical sense. Ethical considerations can lead to them becoming people with specific characteristics affecting the sense of education, when it is oriented to the educational community, such as students, teachers, parents, and people who manage the educational process. This item produces a reflection of the importance of educational leadership based on elements that are key in the behavior of the leader and what are the implications it has with the quality of the education and the competencies that an educational leader should have.

2.2 Educational management

According to Oxford Learners Dictionaries, the word management is defined as action and effects of managing; to try to understand the different meanings of the term "management", it is convenient to clarify its etymological meaning to understand the genealogy of this word (OxfordLearnersDictionaries, 2021). The word management comes from the Latin "gestus", whose meaning would be a gesture, movement. This concept is derived from the word "gerere", which has several meanings, among them to lead an action or group, carry out a task, load a thing and execute action (OxfordLearnersDictionaries, 2021).

Management has to do directly with the processes that must be carried out around a specific function, which allows carrying out activities aimed at producing or earning some profit in the short, medium, or long term. According to (Kim, 2019), management allows to orient the planning, the organization and use of resources, and the effort in order to achieve a goal proposed, that is why time, organization and evaluation must be taken into account for all the proposed plans.

Therefore, management should be considered as the human action that allows the individuals to achieve their objectives through the execution of different activities (Kim, 2019). On organizational management, García-Alcaraz et al. (2019) argued that various activities can be developed to achieve organizational goals and objectives. This is done based on the strategic objectives (vision) and / or tactical objectives (mission) or seeking to fulfill the purposes.

Educational management according to (UNICEF, 2021), represents a new form of management to fulfill its purposes and develop its capabilities.

To articulate its internal processes, in addition to the above, the ministry of Education of and Higher education (MEHE) indicates that adequate management strengthens institutional autonomy within the framework of public policies, calls for active participation and awareness of the academic community, and gives legitimacy to institutional governance (UNICEF, 2021).

2.2.1 Educational Management Models

In every social sphere, there have been models that support human activity, and this have evolved according to the need that arises at the time, however, each of them, although it presents alternative solutions so well it is true that they present deficiencies. Ololube, Agbor, and Agabi (2017) indicates that each model is generalized and allows finding solutions to educational institutions according to context.

Harashchenko et al. (2019) points out that there are different educational models, these are: normative, prospective, strategic, situational strategic, total quality, reengineering, and communicational. Ololube et al. (2017), in this regard, indicates that each of them addresses in a different way solving the situations that arise according to the context, and seeks to fill the shortcomings of the previous model.

2.2.2 Normative model

This model is one of those examples that allows starting the planning processes investigated by (Harashchenko et al., 2019).This was conceived in education from a quantitative vision of the system. The normative vision expresses a gridded vision of the future. From a theoretical point of view, this model indicates what should happen and how it should happen in the educational management processes, since the technical planning consisted in the application of projection techniques from the present to the future.(García-Martínez et al., 2018)

(Harashchenko et al., 2019)affirm that this model is the expression of a rationalist model Weberian, with a high level of abstraction and where the dynamics of society were absent. That is why this normative vision gets along well with normative culture and verticals of the traditional educational system. Muraru and Patrascu (2017) points out that in addition to offering some advantages because it allows offering job stability, it also

offers a stable work environment due to the schedules that were previously established, in addition to the presence of a boss who assumes responsibility of educational processes.

Likewise, Muraru and Patrascu (2017) indicates that this model has deficiencies in terms of its application, since it is vertical; there is no participation by teachers in the decision-making, and the work will be carried out taking into account the established rules without any opportunity to seek changes. Harashchenko et al. (2019) Also developed a growth-oriented planning quantitative system based on the models developed in corporate education in the United States.

2.2.3 Prospective model

This model proposes a criteria that allows educational institutions to develop activities considering the present to project it into the future. Harashchenko et al. (2019) points out that the instrumental aspect of the prospective vision is the same approach representation of the normative vision, only applied through impact matrices to the construction of different scenarios.

Luzik, Khomenko-Semenova, Kokareva, and Hurska (2018) understands that this model has managed to become the key tool for that construction of the desired and possible future. Harashchenko et al. (2019) points out that this model from its methodology is built through the technique of matrices of relationships and impact between variables. Likewise, to try to reduce the uncertainty, a series of techniques is developed through methods such as Delfi, the abacus by Reiner and others.

Harashchenko et al. (2019) maintains the rationalist perspective based on the projection (even if it consists of alternative scenarios) as a technique. Financial management remains the predominant element, and in decisions about options and alternative projects the criterion of cost-benefit analysis is the predominant. If a desired scenario or future is conceived, to arrive at it, it is necessary to equip oneself with a management model of standards that can lead to that place; norms that allow the organization to relate to the environment.

2.2.4 Situational strategic model

Harashchenko et al. (2019) highlights that in this model the planning approach situational recognition recognizes not only the antagonism of the interests of actors in society, but also

in addition to that, it recognizes the issue of political viability, the issue of technical, economic, and organizational and institutional.

Organizations whose management is of a strategic nature have learned to move from normative or bureaucratic practices and relationships to a strategic orientation, focusing on important aspects that cannot be neglected, and is permanently related to the achievement of objectives and goals that allow them to fulfill their mission to achieve the future vision to which they aspire.

Harashchenko et al. (2019) points out that the main objective of educational management, from this perspective except developing a proper system, but exist in other management units (smaller than the system as a whole) or SBU's that can determine their own objectives and against which they can allocate resources which can vary by the adoption of different leadership styles.

This model aims, like the previous ones, to offer alternatives that favor educational management, seeking from their perspective a clearer reality in the face of the problems that can arise in educational institutions.

2.2.5 Total quality model

It arises from the need in the East specifically in Japan, as a means for the production and efficiency in companies, with the success of Japan in the context of the economy worldwide, attention was directed towards the causes of developing the TQM model. However, it is only much later that the concerns for quality is transferred to the educational system in the United States (Harashchenko et al., 2019).

The principles of thinking about quality refer to planning, control, and continuous improvement, which allow the quality vision to be introduced "strategically" into the organization (da Silva, de Oliveira Cabral, & Pacheco, 2020). Its central components are, on one hand the identification of users and their needs, the design of norms and quality standards, the design of processes that lead towards quality, and the continuous improvement of the different parts of the process and the reduction of the error margins that make the processes more expensive. On the other hand, the need to apply leadership styles to overcome organizational obstacles specifically in education management.

2.2.6 Reengineering models

This model was formed in the recognition of changing contexts within a framework of global competition. In this perspective, three aspects of change can be distinguished. In first and second aspects, the need for improvements are not considered sufficient. To respond more appropriately to changing needs of users in this case, students, it is not only about improving what rules and regulations exists, but also it requires a qualitative change. On the other hand, it is also recognized that users have, by the intermediate of decentralization, the openness of the system and, due to the importance that it occupies in the lives of people and nations, greater power, and greater demand about the type and quality of education they expect. And the third aspect refers to change. It is estimated that not only is greater change evident, but the nature of the change process has also varied. This leads to perceive the need for a social rearrangement, in its structures, change in values, in the way of seeing the world. The quality of education can be linked to the leaders of the educational institutions and the effects they pose on students (Harashchenko et al., 2019).

2.2.7 Communicational Model

To understand this model, it is necessary to recognize that an organization can be perceived as an entity, which, from the linguistic perspective, exists as networks and communicational that are oriented by the management of the acts of the speaks. (Markina, Dedukhno, Nichugovskaya, Karapuzova, & Kazarian, 2020) developed the structural and functional model of formation of an inclusive education management system.

In this perspective, the manager is considered as a coordinator of actions that they result from conversations to actions. In this point of view, management is conceived as developing action that led to commitments derived from conversations for action; leaders are required to obtain through the ability to make requests and obtain the trust of students. Therefore, instruments of communication in educational management are the essential in motivating students and on the long term retain them at their current institutions (Markina et al., 2020).

2.3 Empirical background related to leadership and management styles educational:

2.3.1. International empirical background

Roberts (2018) indicates that there is a strong positive relationship between planning and leadership styles of the members in educational Institutions. This investigation allowed the

group of researchers to have a broader overview of the different scholars who raise issues addressed in the scope of this research, also according to the results presented there is a relationship between leadership and educational management that influences quality improvement. In addition, focusing on the impact of professional staff contributions to student retention and success in higher education

Roha Mohamed Jais et al. (2020) established that there is a significant relationship between leadership styles and administrative management and its dimensions: teamwork, which is essential in any organization and community participation is correlated with administrative management.

This research focused on higher education leadership competency framework that concentrated on the overview of the methodological framework since the same research design, the same paradigm and variables are similar with many other scholars.

Scheerens and Blömeke (2016) points out that the work carried out by the educational management staff is assertive because it manages the conditions of quality and efficiency, also the work in team allows leadership advantage since communication is horizontal, allowing teachers to participate in decision-making by integrating teacher education effectiveness research into educational effectiveness models.

Regarding the leadership of the teaching staff, it is shown how they exercise their style of leadership based on concern for the achievement of goals and the participation of all learners, opening the necessary spaces, however, there are certain traces of autocratic type specifically with some age groups at the lecturers which follow some traditions and follow rules and regulations by the book.

Regarding educational management, it is clearly reflected, the lack of dynamic tools that allow higher performance in processes.

Finally, taking into account the general objectives of this research, it has been concluded that: The predominant leadership style in managing educational personnel is, according to (Bryman, 2007), Transactional with some vestiges of leadership transformational promoting group cohesion.

(Miller et al., 2016) highlights the importance of school leadership for the transformation of educational institutions. This study emphasized the effect of professional development improving school leadership. The results from a randomized control trial assessing the

impact of McREL's balanced leadership program on principals in rural Michigan schools in the United States thus shows two complementary glances: a vision of the present, focused on the problems and dilemmas that they grip it, together with a vision of the future, which seeks to open new paths for its development.

(McCarley, Peters, & Decman, 2014), conclude that there is a need to more closely integrate the research on leadership and research on effective teaching and learning; overcome the current mismatch between the theory of leadership practices and our measures and how to identify practices that may be appropriate categorized as practices of leadership.

This study led the group of researchers to reflect on how the practices are taking place leadership, in educational institutions and inquire about the leadership styles that are used in education to improve teaching practices also concentrating on the transformational leadership related to school climate.

The following Hypotheses were developed:

H1: Democratic leadership style has the most influence on students' retention

H2: Laissez Faire leadership style has the most influence on students' retention

H3: Transformational leadership style has the most influence on students' retention

H4: Authoritative leadership style has the most influence on students' retention

H5: Transactional leadership style has the most influence on students' retention

3- Methodology

According to Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2007), the proposed study is not experimental, because it is based on observations of facts in a natural state without the intervention or manipulation of researchers. Saunders et al. (2007) define it as recent search that is conducted without deliberate manipulation of variables and in which phenomena are only observed in a natural environment and then analyzed. In this research, the natural environment is the university's context and the variables observed are the leadership styles and student retention.

Taking into account the guiding objective of the research, this proposal is framed in the correlate domain, since its purpose is to identify probable relationships between the variables measured, namely, leadership styles and student commitment, in order to observe the direction and degree to which they are associated.

For this purpose, it will seek to verify the consistency of these two variables in their relationship with all the other variables that constitute the study, so as to indicate their possible influence on them. Therefore, in this proposal it is possible to establish how when each variable interacts with the others and its relationships with them is probed and revealed.

3.1 Sample and Population:

Population consists of all faculty members and staff in AUB (1214), USJ (1600) and AUL (400) Source: QS Ranking. In addition to total number of students in AUB (8000), USJ (12000) and AUL (3000) to add to a gross total of 26214 persons to choose the sample a Confidence Level of 95% and a Margin of Error: 5% led to the need for 379 fully filled surveys.

A pilot test will be performed to validate the results taking 30% of the sample which is 114 surveys. The test is randomized with 30% response in the first group. This method will yield a reliable estimate of the proportion of respondents who would have been likely to respond if they were given more time or necessary incentives. Questionnaires will be distributed to 379 members (academics and administrators and students).

3.2 Survey Instrument: Questionnaire

The developed questionnaire is based on the MLQ (Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire) developed by (Bass & Avolio, 1996) and is considered as the main questionnaire used for leadership studies. Some questions were inspired by the MLQ specially the ones targeting the transactional and transformational leadership styles. The scale used is a Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).

The developed questionnaire consists of nine demographic questions and thirty-one questions divided into six sections.

Section A contains eight questions related to the instructors/ advisor's leadership effect on students' commitment.

Section B covers five questions on the transformational leadership style.

Section C includes four questions on the transactional leadership style.

Section D includes four questions on the laissez faire leadership style.

Section E includes five questions on the authoritative leadership style.

Section F includes five questions on the democratic leadership style.
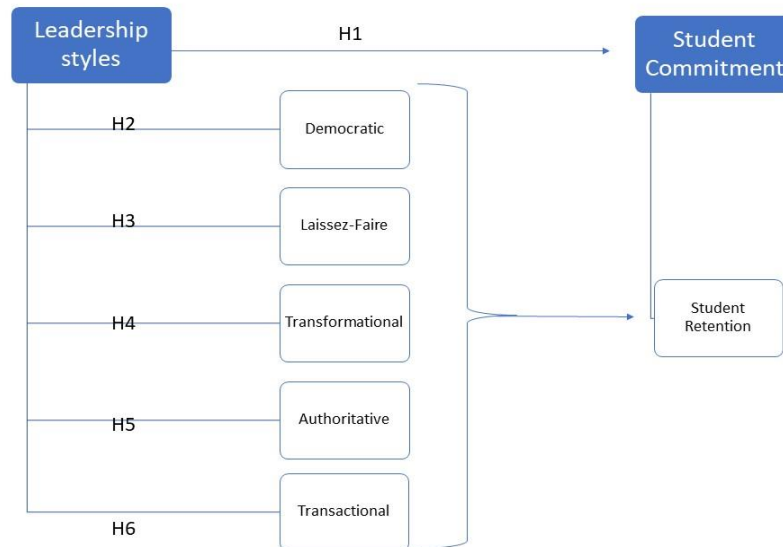
3.3 Developed Framework

Figure 1: Theoretical framework (developed by the authors)

4- Findings of the research

4.1 Descriptive Statistics:

The population of the study consists of faculty members, staff working in advising and supporting services for students, and students at private universities in Lebanon. The sample for this pilot study consisted of 114 which is 30% of the calculated sample size of 379 calculated with a confidence interval of 95% and a margin of error of 5%. The results in table (1) show that 43% of the sample were males, 57% were females. Table (2) displays the results of education level; 70.2% of respondents held a bachelor's degree, while 17.5% held a master's degree, and 12.3% held a PhD. As for the occupation in Table (3) 14% consisted of faculty members, 24.5% were staff, and 61.5% were students. As shown in Graph (1), 53.51% of the respondents were between 18-25 years old, 26.32% were between 26-33 years old, 15.79% were between 34-41 years old, 3.51% were between 42-49 years old, and 0.88% of the respondents were above 50 years old.

4.1.1 Analysis of the relationship between leadership styles and student retention

4.2 Hypothesis Testing

For testing our hypotheses, first we performed the test of normality to check for the normality of distribution of the dataset. Kolmogorov-Smirnov test is used to test the null hypothesis that a set of data comes from a normal distribution, it is for datasets that are above 100 and, in our case, the total is114, so this test is used to check for normality. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test had a p-value of less than 0.05, so the null hypothesis was rejected, and we concluded that the dataset is not normally distributed. Therefore, ordinal regression was used to test our hypotheses, with the significance level of ≤ 0.05. The critical value for acceptance and rejection was to reject the null hypothesis if p-value was ≤ 0.05.

Ho1: The Democratic Leadership style has no influence on students' retention.

Ha1: The Democratic Leadership style has an influence on students' retention.

The results presented in table (4) show that the coefficient for DMS is 0.962 with a p value of 0.029., since p-value is < 0.05, we shall reject the null hypothesis. This means that the Democratic leadership style has an effect on modifying students' commitment. DMS is a significant positive predictor of student's retention. For every (one unit) increase in democratic leadership style, there is a predicted increase of 0.962 in the log odds of being at a higher level of student retention.

Ho2: Laissez Faire leadership style has no influence on students' retention.

Ha2: Laissez Faire leadership style has an influence on students' retention.

The results presented in table (4) show that the coefficient for LFS is -0.097 with a p value of 0.598, since p-value is > 0.05, we shall accept the null hypothesis. This means that the Laissez Faire leadership style has no impact on modifying students' commitment.

Ho3: Transformational leadership style has no influence on students' retention.

Ha3: Transformational leadership style has an influence on students' retention.

The results show that the coefficient for TMS is 1.199 with a p value of 0.016, since p-value is < 0.05, we shall reject the null hypothesis. This means that the Transformational leadership style has an effect on modifying students' commitment. TMS is a significant positive predictor of student's retention. For every (one unit) increase in transformational leadership style, there is a predicted increase of 1.199 in the log odds of being at a higher level of student retention.

Ho4: Authoritative leadership style has no influence on students' retention.

Ha4: Authoritative leadership style has an influence on students' retention.

The results show that the coefficient for ATS is -0.033 with a p value of 0.933, since p-value is > 0.05, we shall accept the null hypothesis. This means that the Authoritative leadership style has no impact on students' commitment.

Ho5: Transactional leadership style has no influence on students' retention.

Ha5: Transactional leadership style has an influence on students' retention.

The results show that the coefficient for TRS is 1.997 with a p value of 0.000, since p-value is < 0.05, we shall reject the null hypothesis. This means that the Transactional leadership style has an effect on modifying students' commitment. TRS is a significant positive predictor of student's retention. For every (one unit) increase in transactional leadership style, there is a predicted increase of 1.997 in the log odds of being at a higher level of student retention.

Among the leadership styles that had a significant effect, table (4) displayed the coefficients for the Democratic, Transformational, and Transactional leadership styles as 0.962, 1.199, and 1.997 respectively. This indicates that the Transactional leadership style has the most positive influence on students' retention.

5- Discussion

The results of this pilot test correspond to previous research in the choice of leadership styles. Former studies such as (Alonderiene & Majauskaite, 2016; Dulewicz & Higgs, 2005; Lo, Ramayah, & Run, 2010; Yahaya & Ebrahim, 2016) have shown that applying the proper leadership styles have a positive effect on institutions at the organizational level while (Mews, 2019; Mohnot & Shaw, 2017; Owusu, 2020; Smith, Minor, Brashen, & Remaly, 2017; Suyudi et al.) revealed that the suitable leadership style in the educational sector is of high importance as it affected faculty members by being motivated by the principals as well as students that showed better performance and improved retention degree in the higher educational institutions.

Other authors such as (Al-Husseini & Elbeltagi, 2014; Cochran, 2020; El Turk & Cherney, 2016; Leithwood, 2000; Lo et al., 2010; McCarley et al., 2014; Muhammed, Aziz, Sadq, & Othman, 2020; Nandedkar, Mbindyo, & O'Connor, 2020; Philip, 2021; Yammarino & Bass, 1990) found that transformational leadership style is the most effective in educational institutions. While our pilot test results showed that transactional was the most effective in the context of the study.

The empirical research in this study is a work in progress from the PhD dissertation and has shown that transactional leadership style has highest significant positive impact on student retention which is supported by the studies of (Foon, 2016; Mahmoud, 2008; Paracha, Qamar, Mirza, Hassan, & Waqas, 2012; Stover, 2005). Transactional leadership emphases the exchanges that arise between leaders and followers (Bass & Stogdill, 1990; Yammarino & Bass, 1990). "These interactions allow leaders to achieve their performance objectives, complete required tasks, maintain the current organizational situation, motivate followers through contractual agreement, direct behavior of followers toward achievement

of established goals, emphasize extrinsic rewards, avoid unnecessary risks, and focus on improve organizational efficiency"(McCleskey, 2014).

6- Conclusions, limitations, further research topics and practical implications

The analysis of previous research has shown that leadership has significant impact on student retention. Transactional, Transformational and Democratic styles if applied properly in higher educational institutions can lead to higher retention rate for students. Also, applying those styles can lead to job satisfaction at the organizational level which influences the performance of faculty and staff directly. Support from the higher institutions is required to the academic staff in order to perform better and therefore behave as leaders and in consequence retain students better and increase their input in academic success. This study has tested the impact of leadership styles on student retention as a pilot test.

The empirical research revealed students are affected by their advisors and instructors in higher educational institutions, especially with transactional factors and even more fulfilled than their supervisors' expectations. The empirical research also has shown that leadership in general has a significant positive impact on student retention in the context of the study: transactional leadership style having highest positive significant impact and authoritative leadership style having lowest positive significant impact.

The limitations of the study lay in the sample selected for the research and its representativeness. First, not all of the universities and their departments in Lebanon have been chosen for this research. The number of respondents could have been higher for better representativeness which will be the case in the doctoral dissertation surveying a larger sample.

Leadership and student retention can be explored in how they impact academic environment, academic success, academic learning and also students' performance, absenteeism, motivation and stress in Lebanese higher educational institutions. The research can be expanded whether by adding more Lebanese private universities to enlarge the population and therefore have a bigger sample or by expanding to public universities.

On the other hand, as stated by various studies, the impact of leadership style on students might be indirect, through different mediators such as academic success (Roberts, 2018), students satisfaction (Paracha et al., 2012), institutional diversity (Adserias et al., 2016). Therefore, further studies in the Lebanese higher educational institutions might lead to testing the above-mentioned mediators. Additionally, performing this study in a different country and context might be important as proven by (Muhammed et al., 2020). Accordingly, additional research including the mentioned variables is recommended. For example, how leadership styles and their impact on student retention would vary in different countries. Or to test how leadership styles and their impact on student retention would change if comparing public and private universities due to distinct organizational culture.

Practical implications of this pilot study is a work in progress from the PhD dissertation are dedicated to academics as well as advisors and staff in Lebanese universities. Corresponding the results of this study, instructors have the ability to increase the levels of student retention, by specifying their role as a leader, displaying leadership behaviors and gaining certain leadership styles.

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Appendixes:

Appendix A: Tables and Graphs

Table 1: Gender

Gender

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Female	65	57.0	57.0	57.0
	Male	49	43.0	43.0	100.0
	Total	114	100.0	100.0	

Table 2: Education Level

Education Level

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Bachelors	80	70.2	70.2	70.2
	Masters	20	17.5	17.5	87.7
	PhD	14	12.3	12.3	100.0
	Total	114	100.0	100.0	

Table 3: Current Occupation

Current Occupation

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Faculty	16	14.0	14.0	14.0
	Staff	28	24.5	24.5	38.5
	Student	70	61.5	61.5	100.0
	Total	114	100.0	100.0	

Graph 1: Age Distribution
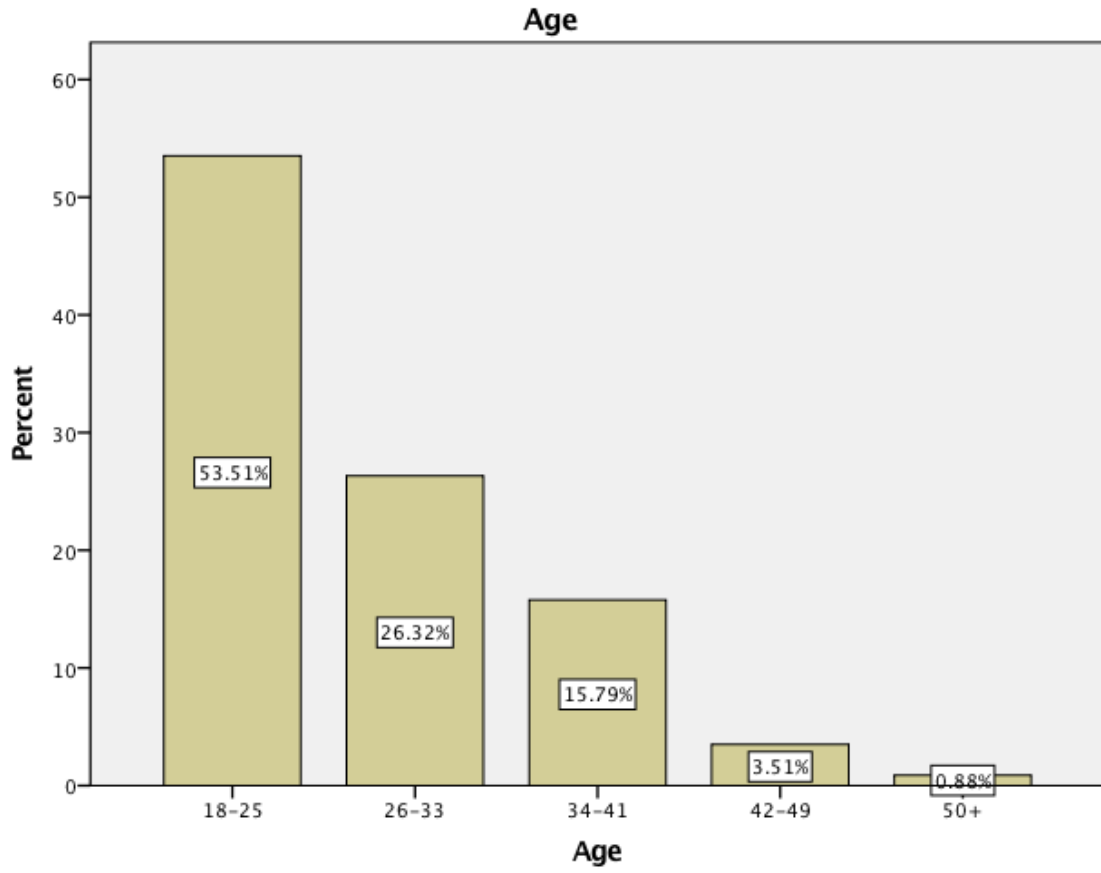
Table 4: Ordinal Regression

Parameter Estimates

		Estimate	Std. Error	Wald	df	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
							Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Threshold	[SC = 3.63]	11.072	2.198	25.372	1	.000	6.764	15.381
	[SC = 3.75]	13.551	2.025	44.799	1	.000	9.583	17.519
	[SC = 3.88]	14.053	2.034	47.754	1	.000	10.067	18.039
	[SC = 4.00]	15.374	2.089	54.185	1	.000	11.281	19.468
	[SC = 4.13]	16.023	2.122	57.000	1	.000	11.863	20.182
	[SC = 4.25]	16.892	2.175	60.305	1	.000	12.628	21.155
	[SC = 4.38]	17.563	2.220	62.577	1	.000	13.212	21.915
	[SC = 4.50]	18.031	2.252	64.084	1	.000	13.616	22.445
	[SC = 4.63]	18.524	2.286	65.679	1	.000	14.044	23.004
	[SC = 4.75]	19.106	2.322	67.692	1	.000	14.554	23.657
	[SC = 4.88]	19.747	2.356	70.235	1	.000	15.129	24.366
Location	TMS	1.199	.498	5.805	1	.016	.224	2.174
	TRS	1.997	.440	20.622	1	.000	1.135	2.859
	LFS	-.097	.185	.277	1	.598	-.460	.265
	ATS	-.033	.387	.007	1	.933	-.791	.726
	DMS	.962	.440	4.785	1	.029	.100	1.824

Link function: Logit.