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Leadership Motivation and Styles of Graduating Nursing Students of the National University-Manila

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Abstract

The significance of leadership in healthcare has always been recognized as impacting patient care. As such, the requirement for early training is critical. While there is strong literature support on the impact of leadership on productivity and morale at the workplace, the development of leadership capability has been limitedly explored, especially in the context of students. Leadership Motivation and Leadership Styles are relevant in training future nurse leaders. A descriptive correlational design was utilized to determine the relationship between leadership styles and the motivation of graduating students. To determine the leadership motivation of students, the Leadership Motivation Assessment Tool of McLeod et.al. (2023) and Goleman's (2017) Six Leadership Styles were used. The Leadership Motivation of nursing students is very high. The predominant motivation is on the parameter: "I find pleasure in recognizing and celebrating the accomplishments of others." The predominant Leadership Style was the Democratic Leadership Style, characterized by collaboration. This was evident in the highest rating on the statement: "I believe teams work best when everyone is involved in making decisions." There is a positive low correlation with Democratic Leadership Style and Leadership Motivation. A negative moderate relationship was observed between leadership motivation and Commanding Leadership Style. The Improvement on other leadership styles may represent further empirical testing. Visionary and Pacesetting leadership Styles, as they appear to be relevant today, may be enhanced through exposure and familiarity with breakthrough organizations known for their strategic directions. The leadership motivations of nursing students may be enhanced with early exposure to leadership concepts in the classroom, community, and clinical areas. The Student Nursing Organization of the University may include Leadership Development Activities focusing on competency development of the predominant leadership style valued by NU students.

Introduction:

Leadership in Nursing is a social influence process. An effective leader influences followers to achieve desired outcomes. Leadership is crucial in the lives of nurses and in ensuring high-quality client outcomes, particularly during times of significant change in healthcare (Kilty, 2005). Leaders are defined as individuals who are dedicated and capable of making sound decisions, as well as identifying common goals and values with others. Leaders provide hope, guidance, vision, and direction for followers and leaders to move forward and succeed (Bormann & Abrahamson,2014)The significance of leadership in healthcare has always been recognized as impacting patient care. As such, the requirement for early training is critical. The development of a leader starts from exposure to opportunities to lead, both informal and formal. In nursing, the need to train leaders begins during nursing students' lives.The training, however, will not be successful if the motivation to lead is lacking. Styles of leading will likewise be crucial in the process of leadership development. The Leadership Trajectory Model shows that leadership development is an intentional process that all who aspire to leadership can accomplish over time. The leaders' growth begins with honest self-assessment and ongoing reflection on where they have been, what they have learned, and what they can do differently. Nursing Students' training encompasses a variety of clinical, medical, socio-psychological, and political knowledge, skills, and values. The need to train nurses to lead a team starts from the nursing program. Curricular programs have addressed the necessity to develop the competencies of students to lead. The nursing program has integrated related learning activities geared towards enabling the students to realize their potential as leaders. The curricular integration of leadership concepts in the nursing program addressed the strong desire to start leadership training realistically.While there is strong literature support on the impact of leadership on productivity and morale at the workplace, the development of leadership capability has been limitedly explored, especially in the context of students who will eventually lead the unit and the hospital at large. The development of the potential to lead can be best understood when one is aware of motivation and style. This action research is aimed at determining the leadership motivation and styles of graduating students at the National University-Manila

Review of Literature:

Motivation can inspire someone to act. Motivation is a factor that encourages a person to engage in a particular activity; therefore, it is often interpreted as a driving force behind one's behavior (Hapid & Sunarwan, 2016).

Motivation is essential for success. It comprises an individual's internal characteristics and the external factors that include job factors, individual differences, and organizational practices (Gopal & Chowdhury, 2014).

Motivation is closely associated with aspects such as job satisfaction, which drives people to
perform. Marimin (2017) offers an understanding of leadership, which is the art of motivating and influencing a group of people to act in concert to achieve common goals.

Leadership Motivation

Motivation to lead, according to Miner et al. (1995), is essential to developing leadership talent, and individuals vary in their motivation to be effective in leadership roles (Gilbert & Kelloway, 2018). Leadership Motivation relates to leaders' decisions, intentions, and behaviors. (Chan, 2001)

Costa (2025) emphasized that the teaching of leadership should be promoted fromthe beginning of training, in a transversal, continuous, consistent, sustained, and articulated way, incorporating different disciplines, because only in this way will it be possible to train competent nurse leaders who are capable of acting in today's complex and dynamichealth contexts.

Leadership Styles

Leadership style is the overall pattern of a leader's actions, both visible and invisible to their subordinates. Leadership style refers to a consistent philosophy, set of skills, traits, and attitudes that underlie behavior. A leader's leadership style directly reflects their belief in the abilities of their team subordinates. Larsson (2010) states that leadership style is a set of characteristics used by leaders to influence subordinates so that organizational goals are achieved. Leadership style is a pattern of behavior and strategies that a leader prefers and often applies. A leadership style that shows, directly or indirectly, a leader's belief in the abilities of his subordinates. This means that leadership style is behavior and strategy, resulting from a combination of philosophies, skills, traits, and attitudes, which are often applied by a leader when he tries to influence the performance of his subordinates. Leadership style shows a leader's belief in the abilities of their team subordinates directly. This means that leadership style is behavior and strategy, resulting from a combination of philosophy, skills, traits, and attitudes, which are often applied by a leader when he tries to influence the performance of his subordinates (Putra, 2013).

Autocratic Leadership

Autocratic leaders take charge and call all the shots. The phrase "my way or the highway" is a fitting way to describe the overall approach of autocratic leaders.

Autocratic leaders provide direction and expect their direct reports to follow it. It's a "command-and-control" type of approach that has become less prevalent in modern times but still has value in certain situations.For instance, a military leader, a firefighter, or a surgeon in an operating suite might all need to exhibit an autocratic leadership style—calling the shots and demanding adherence to what they ask for in dangerous or life-and-death situations.The pros of autocratic leadership are that it is direct and leaves no question in employees' minds about what is expected of them. As we've seen, it can also be effective in ensuring that followers do as they're told in serious or dangerous situations.The cons, though, are that employees generally balk at this type of leadership style and resent the command-and-control aspects of the direction they receive. It allows for little to no autonomy and can be disheartening and demotivating for many employees.

Democratic Leadership

Democratic leadership style is a leadership style that gives broad authority to subordinates. Whenever there is a problem, always involve subordinates as a whole team. In ademocratic leadership style, the leader provides much information about the duties and responsibilities of their subordinates. The democratic type of leader interprets his leadership not as a dictator but as a leader among his group members (Danişman et al., 2015).

Democratic leaders always try to stimulate their members to work productively toachieve common goals. In his actions and endeavors, he always bases himself on the interestsand needs of his group and considers the abilities and abilities of his group (Hunter & Lean,2014). Democratic leadership is a pattern that views humans as capable of self-direction andseeks to provide opportunities for members to grow and develop and act independentlythrough their participation in controlling themselves in making decisions. Leaders guide and provide opportunities for groups to participate and participate in decision-making. The view of
a democratic leader towards others is more optimistic and not authoritarian. It supports the interaction between the Administrative and Educational Supervision of group members by motivating them to determine their own policies and group activities (Harrison et al., 2018).

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A democratic leader has characteristics in his leadership, according to Sono (2020),including a) In the process of mobilizing subordinates through criticism, rejecting the opinion that humans are the noblest creatures. b) Always try to align the interests and goals of the organization with the interests and goals of the team. c) Happy to receive suggestions, opinions, and even criticism from his subordinates. d) Always try to prioritize cooperation and teamwork to achieve goals. e) Sincerely giving his team members, the broadest possible freedom to make mistakes, compared to being corrected so that the subordinates no longer make the same mistakes but still dare to make other mistakes. f) Always trying to make his subordinates more successful than he is. g) Trying to develop his capacity as a leader.Democratic leadership sits in sharp contrast to autocratic leadership. Democratic leaders seek input from others before making decisions and consider their direct reports to be equal in the job of getting the work of the department or division done. Under democratic leaders, employees have the autonomy to make decisions on their own and feel empowered to get their work done their way. Teams often benefit from a strong culture of trust and collaboration.
In situations where decisions need to be made quickly, though, the democratic leadership style may not be effective and may harm productivity and positive outcomes for the team.

Participative Leadership

The participative leadership style, as it sounds, is a style that encourages employees or team members to participate in the leadership of the team. It's a "we're all in this together" approach. Participative leaders actively seek team members' input and include them in decision-making. An example of a participative leader would be a Director of Marketing who involves team members in creating and implementing a marketing campaign. This is a good example of a situation where multiple viewpoints can help to create more innovative ideas. The pros of a participative leadership style are that it leverages the knowledge of the group and serves to engage and motivate employees. It also boosts the odds that good decisions will be made because it calls upon the input and insights of others.The cons can involve a longer time for decision-making and, for certain employees, may cause them to feel that the leader is not doing their job—instead of getting the answers they're seeking, they're asked to participate in the process of coming up with those answers.

Coaching Leadership

Coaching leadership is an approach taken by leaders who are committed to developing the potential of others. They provide less specific direction to employees while encouraging and supporting them to make decisions and be proactive in performing their work.Well-known business leaders who had a coaching style of leadership include Steve Jobs, Andrew Carnegie, and Richard Branson. They are often pointed to as examples of leaders who were able to generate passion and drive innovation among their employees. he pros of coaching leadership are that it serves to help develop people by providing positive support and more autonomy. The cons are, as we've seen with other approaches, it may take more time and may in some cases, make team members feel frustrated that they're not getting a clearer direction.

Affiliative Leadership

or affiliative leaders, it's all about support and encouragement. Affiliative leaders are focused on meeting the emotional needs of their employees and encouraging strong relationships between and among team members. Affiliative leaders are hands-on but, unlike more authoritative leaders, in a more supportive and directive way. An example of affiliative leadership can be seen in healthcare settings. The director of a behavioral health department, for instance, will be focused on the emotional needs of therapists and will work closely with them to ensure these needs are met. They are focused on forming a cohesive team that supports one another. The pros of the affiliative leadership style are that it can be very engaging for employees who feel they are cared for and supported by their managers.
The cons can be that, especially during times of conflict, employees may not feel the leader is providing enough direction or constructive feedback.

Leadership Development in Nursing

Leadership is seen as a competence that can be developed and improved, which is associated with behaviors and practices, not just personality traits, which highlights the importance and need to include it as a fundamental element in undergraduate nursing training. (Costa, 2025)
The Institute of Medicine (2010) proposed that nursing students should exercise their potential for leadership before graduation by participating in the university's leadership activities and discussing leadership issues with faculty.
The leadership styles and motivation to lead among nursing students are only marginally explored in the literature.

Research Objectives:

Leadership Motivation and Leadership Styles are relevant in training future nurse leaders. The trajectory can be determined and may be relevant in the practice of leadership. This research intends to be able to:

1. Determine the leadership motivation of graduating nursing students.
2. Identify leadership styles of graduating nursing students.
3. Determine the relationship between leadership motivation and the styles of graduating nursing students

Research Questions:

1. What is the leadership motivation of graduating nursing students?
2. What are the leadership styles of graduating nursing students?
3. Is there a relationship between leadership motivation and the styles of graduating nursing students?

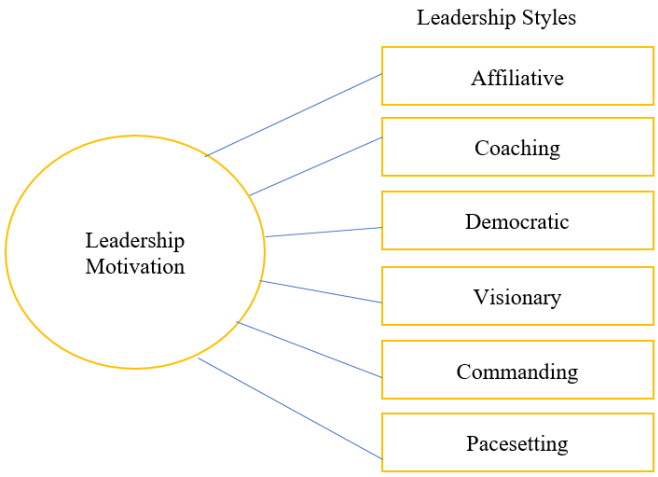

Figure 1: Relationship of Leadership Motivation and Styles

Leadership Motivation is an intrinsic potential to lead. The enthusiasm to lead innately can be assessed. One's motive may direct behaviors toward accomplishing a goal. Leadership is goal-oriented, and once set, it can likewise determine the style one is inclined to manifest and influence others. The study was anchored on the possible existence of leadership motives and the kind of style graduating students may pursue as they traverse the journey in the professional practice of nursing.

Research Methodology:A descriptive correlational design was utilized to determine the relationship between leadership styles and the motivation of graduating students. To determine the leadership motivation of students, the Leadership Motivation Assessment Tool of McLeod et.al. (2023) was utilized. As to Leadership Styles, Goleman's (2017) Six Leadership Styles was used.

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Statistical Test: Descriptive Statistics were used to describe the demographics of graduating student nurses, including age, gender, and civil status. Mean and Standard Deviation were employed to determine the agreement on leadership motivations and styles. Pearson Product of Product-Moment Correlation was used to establish the relationship between leadership styles and motivation.

Analysis and Interpretation: The table below shows the leadership motivation of graduating nursing students. Thirty-two (32) graduating students answered the survey. The survey revealed the leading motivation of the students. There was a very strong agreement to lead among nursing students of NU Manila.

Table 1: Leadership Motivation of Graduating Nursing Students (N=32)

LEADERSHIP MOTIVATION	MEAN	SD	INTERPRETATION
1. I am energized when people count on me for ideas.	4.25	0.56	Strongly Agree
2. As a practice, I ask people challenging questions when we are working on projects together.	4.28	0.57	Strongly Agree
3. I take delight in complimenting people that I work with when progress is made.	4.62	0.48	Strongly Agree
4. I find it easy to be the cheerleader for others, when times are good and when times are bad.	4.31	0.58	Strongly Agree
5. Team accomplishment is more important to me than my own personal accomplishments.	4.34	0.73	Strongly Agree
6. People often take my ideas and run with them.	3.24	0.69	Agree
7. When involved in group projects, building team cohesiveness is important to me.	4.34	0.54	Strongly Agree
8. When involved in group projects, coaching others is an activity that I gravitate toward.	.78	0.74	Strongly Agree
9. I find pleasure in recognizing and celebrating the accomplishments of others.	4.65	0.47	Strongly Agree
10. When involved in group projects, my team members' problems are my problems.	4.50	0.56	Strongly Agree
11. Resolving interpersonal conflict is an activity that I enjoy.	3.53	0.66	Agree
12. When involved in group projects, I frequently find myself to be an "idea generator."	3.65	0.77	Agree
13. When involved in group projects, I am inclined to let my ideas be known.	4.03	0.59	Agree
14. I find pleasure in being a convincing person.	3.92	0.66	Agree
Weighted Mean	4.11		Strongly Agree

Legend: 1.0-1.5 Strongly Disagree
1.6-2.0 Disagree
2.1-3.0 Unsure
3.1-4.0 Agree
4.1-5.0 Strongly Agree

Motivation: 1.0-1.5 Low Motivation
1.6-2.0 Fair Motivation
2.1-3.0 Moderate Motivation
3.1-4.0 Highly Motivated
4.1-5.0 Extremely Motivated

Analysis:eadership motivation among graduating students is notably high in two parameters: I find pleasure in recognizing and celebrating the accomplishments of others. (M=4.65, SD=0.47) and "I take delight in complimenting people that I work with when progress is made." (M=4.62, SD=0.48). The findings suggest that the leadership motivation of graduating nursing students is generally influenced by optimism and the establishment of relationships. Optimism is a helpful, internal, personal resource characterized by a positive outlook for the future (Scheier & Carver, 1992). In leadership, this is an internal characteristic that affects employees positively by providing important psychological resources (Greenberg & Arakawa, 2006). This appears to be perceived by graduating students as motivation to lead when they rated the parameter as the highest. Relationship is likewise valued by the students as motivation to lead. The relationship within a team is manifested by compliments received when there is group progress. This suggests that senior nursing students believe that complementing progress when it is made is a motivator for a leader. Compliments at work are a form of motivation and may be influenced by the relationship established by the leader with their subordinates. This suggests that students strongly agree that relationships are developed when compliments are made, enabling the leader to motivate people to accomplish work. These findings are supported by the study of Abdul Rahim (2025), where it was emphasized that The lowest rating on leadership motivation was on the parameter: "People often take my ideas and run with them." (M=3.24, SD=0.69) This suggests that graduating students agree that pilfering with one's idea in a group is a demotivator. Demotivation to lead becomes detrimental to team development and, therefore, may affect how a leader may influence his subordinates. This further suggests that future leaders are becoming more discerning of the qualities of a leader. The ability to discern between motivation and demotivation becomes more evident when a leader works closely with the team. This result corroborates the findings of the studies made by The overall motivation of the graduating nursing students reflects an extremely motivated cohort. (M=4.11) This suggests that nursing students are motivated to lead. Motivation in leading refers to an individual's willingness to lead others, which affects their personal decision to pursue leadership training, roles, and responsibilities, and the intensity and persistence of these leadership aspirations. This, therefore, has a central role in leadership emergence and effectiveness as emphasized by Badura, Grijalva, Galvin, Owens, & Joseph. (2019)Table 2 shows the leadership styles of graduating nursing students. Leadership Styles were self-assessed by the students from a rating scale of 1-5, representing their agreement with the statements describing the predominant leadership style.

Table 2: Leadership Styles of Graduating Nursing Students (N=32)

Leadership Styles	Mean	SD
I believe in taking people with me, not just telling them what to do.	4.09	0.80
I like to be involved in setting the direction of travel.	4.09375	0.76
I like to set out a clear vision for the future	4.53125	0.55
I like to make sure that everyone understands where we're going.	4.6875	0.46
I'm good at helping people to change direction	3.78125	0.69
Visionary Leadership	4.24	
It's always worth putting time into developing people's skills	4.21875	0.60
I enjoy seeing my team achieve	4.75	0.43
I like to help people think through issues for themselves	4.09375	0.63
I believe that everyone can work out the answer to their problems, with a bit of help.	4.40625	0.55
I think that people should be allowed to try things out and make mistakes to learn.	4.5625	0.61
Coaching Leadership	4.41	
The needs of my team are more important than achieving our objectives.	3.84375	1.00
My goal is a united team because I believe that we'll achieve more that way.	4.46875	0.66
We work best when we work together in harmony.	4.84375	0.36
I value team harmony and try to avoid confrontation.	4.125	0.89
I make a real effort to ensure that everyone in my team is happy	4.4375	0.56
Affiliative Leadership	4.34	
I like to make sure that everyone takes ownership of team projects.	4.375	0.60
I draw on the skills in my team to get things done.	4.09375	0.58

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I always ask what others think before making decisions.	4.8125	0.39
I make sure that everyone knows what's going on at all times.	4.78125	0.41
I believe teams work best when everyone is involved in making decisions.	4.84375	0.36
Democratic Leadership	4.58	
I set high standards for my team.	4.15625	0.75
I am strongly driven to succeed in life.	4.625	0.54
I expect the best from those around me.	4.03125	0.77
I set high standards for myself and expect others to meet those standards too.	3.8125	0.98
I expect my team to take responsibility for their own work.	4.46875	0.61
Pacesetting Leadership	4.22	
I pride myself on getting things done.	4.15625	0.62
I usually think that I know best	2.9375	1.03
I can usually find solutions to problems.	3.65625	0.64
Usually, the best way to do things is my way.	2.875	1.11
I like to tell people what to do.	2.78125	1.19
Commanding Leadership	3.28	

Legend: 1.0-1.5 Strongly Disagree
1.6-2.0 Disagree
2.1-3.0 Unsure
3.1-4.0 Agree
4.1-5.0 Strongly Agree

Analysis:eadership Style refers to the power to influence subordinates or another group in a job. (Sari, 2023) The predominant leadership style among graduating nursing students is Democratic (M=4.58). This finding suggests that graduating nursing students' preference for leading is more participative and collaborative. Democratic Leadership Style is characterized by leaders seeking input from others before making decisions. Under democratic leaders, employees have the autonomy to make decisions on their own and feel empowered to get their work done their way. Teams often benefit from a strong culture of trust and collaboration. Graduating students in the study rated the parameter with the highest mean of 4.84, relating to "I believe teams work best when everyone is involved in making decisions". The finding is further corroborated by the second-highest score in the parameter: "I always ask what others think before making decisions," with a mean rating of 4.81. This finding is supported by the 2025 study of Abdul-Rahim in Brunei, emphasizing that leadership and management involve considering the inputs and opinions of the nursing team, including individuals from diverse backgrounds, experiences, and expertise. Moreover, the finding of the second-highest rating, coaching, in the leadership style appears to complement the predominant democratic leadership style. Students in the study rated "I think that people should be allowed to try things out and make mistakes to learn" (M=4.5), making decision making evident, a characteristic of a democratic leader. These findings were supported by Abdul-Rahim's (2025) study in Brunei, emphasizing that most students see the benefits of these particular leadership styles as they allow them to enhance their abilities to lead and manage in the long run while also providing enough motivation to navigate their clinical learning experiences.The lowest rating was noted in Commanding Leadership Style. The highest parameter was on the statement: "I pride myself on getting things done" with a mean rating of 4.15, interpreted as Strongly Agree. This suggests that, despite being autocratic, students recognize that this characteristic appears to be a moral boost. Autocratic leaders take charge and call all the shots. Autocratic leaders provide direction and expect their direct reports to follow it. It's a "command-and-control" type of approach that has become less prevalent in modern times but still has value in certain situations. This appears to be true in the context of this current study among graduating nursing students. Abdul-Rahim's (2025) study in Brunei similarly pointed out that the least preferred style, where a single leader authoritatively manages the nursing team, provided the least amount of learning flexibility and opportunity to practice leadership and management skills, is autocratic or commanding.

Table 3: Correlation of Leadership Styles and Leadership Motivation (N=32)

Leadership Styles	Correlation
Visionary Leadership	0.098
Coaching Leadership	0.203
Affiliative Leadership	0.300
Democratic Leadership	0.338
Pacesetting Leadership	-0.024
Commanding Leadership	-0.502

Analysis: Leadership Motivation relates to leaders' decisions, intentions, and behaviors. (Chan, 2001)Overall, the Leadership motivation and styles were low in correlation. This suggests that the motivation to lead and the styles are slightly related to each other.The relationship between leadership styles and motivation revealed that the Democratic Leadership style is correlated with motivation to lead. There is, however, a low correlation (r=0.338) between the motivation to lead and being democratic. This suggests that graduating students who rated the style as high also believed it was a form of leadership motivation. This finding is further supported by the high rating on the parameter of leadership motivation: "I find pleasure in recognizing and celebrating the accomplishments of others". (M=4.65, SD= 0.47). The rating given manifested the graduating nursing students' predominant leadership style of democratic leadership, where optimism is a manifestation of a leader in a collaborative style of leadership.There is, likewise, a low correlation with leadership motivation and affiliative leadership style (r=0.300). This suggests that graduating students are motivated to lead when connections are made. The finding is corroborated by the second to the highest rating on leadership motivation in the parameter: "I take delight in complimenting people that I work with when progress is made". (M=4.62) Complimenting people builds relationships and is based on associations or interactions, a characteristic of the affiliative style in leadership. A moderate negative correlation was observed with the motivation to lead and Commanding leadership style. (r=-0.502). This suggests that students are aware that the style of leading, which is characterized by "command-and-control," and therefore less preferred. This notion has become less prevalent in modern times, but it is still valued in certain situations. The finding may be observed to be negatively correlated, but it was shown to be moderately associated with the appropriate leadership style. It may be correlated and not necessarily preferred by the students. The finding is supported by the highest rating on the parameter: "I pride myself on getting things done". A negatively stated parameter was rated as strongly agree.

Conclusion: The study investigated the relationship between Leadership Motivation and Leadership Styles of Graduating Nursing Students of NU Manila. The study concluded that:

1. The Leadership Motivation of nursing students is very high. The predominant motivation is on the parameter: "I find pleasure in recognizing and celebrating the accomplishments of others."
2. The predominant Leadership Style was the Democratic Leadership Style, characterized by collaboration. This was evident in the highest rating on the statement: "I believe teams work best when everyone is involved in making decisions."
3. There is a positive low correlation with Democratic Leadership Style and Leadership Motivation. A negative moderate relationship was observed between leadership motivation and Commanding Leadership Style

Recommendations: Based on the findings, the following are the recommendations:

1. The Improvement on other leadership styles may represent further empirical testing. Visionary and Pacesetting leadership Styles, as they appear to be relevant today, may be enhanced through exposure and familiarity with breakthrough organizations known for their strategic directions. This approach can be used in the discussion on the leadership and management course to ensure that these styles are well understood and, therefore, can also be considered as a leadership style.
2. The leadership motivations of nursing students may be enhanced with early exposure to leadership concepts in the classroom, community, and clinical areas.
3. The Student Nursing Organization of the University may include Leadership Development Activities, competency development of the predominant leadership style valued by NU students.

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