

A Pilot Survey Linking Personality, Leadership Style, and Leadership Success among Probation Directors in the U.S.

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PROBATION, AS A suspended prison sentence, has the dual responsibility of controlling offenders while concurrently offering a “helping hand” for them to maintain community and family ties. At year-end 2008, fully 83.8 percent (4,270,917) of a total of 5,095,200 adult offenders under local, state, and federal community supervision were on probation, and the adult probation population has slightly but steadily grown annually (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2009). Despite being one of the most promising formal social control mechanisms employed in the United States to promote public safety and serve a large offender population, probation has been distrusted and criticized by political leaders and the public for its perceived failure to contribute to public safety (e.g., high number of unnoticed violations and absconders, and high recidivism rates among probationers).

Lack of credibility with politicians and the public has unfortunately hampered probation funding, negatively affecting its ability to employ quality supervision strategies and specialized treatment for special needs (Petersilia, 1997). Consequently, probation has been recognized as “the most troubled component of the criminal justice system” (Reinventing Probation Council, 2000, p. 49). The response to that negative assessment should be renewed effort to build an effective probation system to better provide for public safety, and consequently to regain trust,

confidence, and support from the political arena and the public (Beto, Corbett, & DiIulio, 2000). To implement effective probation practices and to reduce the challenges they face, current probation administrators and managers need to lead their departments, rather than merely manage them. Despite the emphasis on effective probation leadership, many probation leaders over the past 100 years “have been replaced by competent but unimaginative managers” (Beto, 2007, p. 9). In other words, many probation executives have proven deficient in formulating an inspiring vision and transforming their probation organizations. Absent such sustained leadership, probation will fail to engender public support and positively impact public safety.

Leadership has long been an important topic to both probation practitioners and researchers. Despite the emphasis on effective probation leadership, there has been no empirical leadership research in this particular area of probation. Responding to this need, this pilot research seeks answers to what makes an effective leader by assessing the effects of probation executives' personality and leadership style behavior on their leadership success. According to Bass (1990), “leadership can be learned, and it can—and should—be the subject of management training and development” (p. 27). In a similar vein, Kirkpatrick and Locke (1991) contend that individuals can learn leadership traits, even though some are born with leadership traits. Findings from the present study will provide substantively useful and practical managerial information on which leadership style and personality are significant determinants of leadership success, and may help probation administrators and managers not only better lead their departments, but also develop hiring/promotional criteria and leadership development programs for more effective future leaders.

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Literature Review

Leadership theories have evolved over time, with two primary schools of thought concerning how leadership effectiveness can be approached. These schools are trait theory (the “born leader”) and style theory (learned leadership). Although trait theory was popular until the 1950s, little empirical research succeeded in finding the strong relationship between a set of personal traits and leadership, or to differentiate non-leaders from effective leaders (e.g. House & Aditya, 1997). The inconsistent and disappointing results of early research have prompted researchers to focus on the style approach rather than the personal trait approach (Smith & Canger, 2004). Style theory is about leader behavioral characteristics, focusing on what on-the-job activities, roles, and responsibilities leaders perform and how they behave toward their followers. Determining how effective leaders differ in their behavior from ineffective ones is critical. Therefore, these two different leadership theories should be distinguished from each other.

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Style Theory: Transformational Leadership Style

The dominant leadership style theory, originally introduced by Burns (1978), is Bass's (1985) transformational leadership, which has captured many leadership scholars' attention. Bass (1985) succinctly defined transformation leadership as a process in which a leader increases followers' awareness of what is right and important and motivates them to perform beyond expectation. As DiIulio (1987) notes: “Organizations are largely the shadows of their executives. . . . It does not matter whether one is talking about Harvard University, the Chrysler Corporation, or the Texas Department of Corrections. The executive's skills and abilities, his sense of mission and dedication to duty, are decisive in determining how—and how well—an organization runs” (p. 187). That is, an effective leader is one who can focus individual motivation and group involvement on organizational vision, mission, and goal. Bass and Avolio (1997) proposed three major leadership behavioral styles: laissez-faire, transactional, and transformational. According to Bass (1990), laissez-faire leadership refers to behaviors where leaders avoid accepting and carrying out any leadership and management responsibilities.

Transactional leadership is defined as a process of gaining compliance from followers through contacts with the leader. This approach to leadership refers to management and “occurs when one person takes the initiative in making contact with others for the purpose of an exchange of valued things” (Bass, 1985, p. 19). Transactional leaders usually display behaviors associated with the following: active management-by-exception, passive management-by-exception, and contingent reward (Bass & Avolio, 2004). Specifically, transactional leaders use either of the two forms of management-by-exception (active or passive) to correct followers' poor performance through corrective criticism, negative feedback, and negative enforcement. A leader taking the active form of management-by-exception intensively focuses attention on mistakes, complaints, and poor performance or rule violations, and then concentrates full attention on taking corrective action. The leader using passive management-by-exception intervenes only after detecting serious mistakes. In essence, both active and passive management-by-exception are primarily based on implicit or explicit contingent reinforcement of rules and keeping track of and avoiding mistakes. Alternatively, contingent reward involves an exchange between leaders and followers in recognizing good performance towards attainment of organizational goals.

Transformational leadership differs from transactional leadership and “occurs when one or more person[s] engage with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality” (Bass, 1985, p. 20). Central to transformational leadership are the following four related behavioral characteristics: 1) idealized influences (decide, share, and encourage a clear vision, mission, and purpose for organization, while being role-models for followers), 2) inspirational motivation (communicate a vision of a desired future state and high level of expectations to make the pain of change worth the meaningful and challenging effort), 3) intellectual stimulation (challenge and inspire followers to go beyond their own self-interests for the desired good of the group), and 4) individual consideration (coach and elevate the concerns of individual followers from lower-level physical needs to higher-level psychological needs). These behaviors support a transformational process wherein leaders inspire followers with a vision for organization that goes beyond their own self-interests (Judge & Bono, 2000).

Transformational leadership behaviors, in contrast to the transactional and laissez-faire leadership behaviors, can develop followers into leaders to fulfill a clearly defined vision and mission for any organization. Across many different types of organization, such as governmental, educational, or nursing organizations, empirical research has demonstrated a highly positive relationship between transformational leaders and leadership success, as measured by followers' satisfaction, extra effort, commitment, and effectiveness when compared with transactional leaders (e.g., Medley & Larochelle, 1995; Wofford, Whittington, & Goodwin, 2001). Additionally, Howell and Avolio (1993) found that transformational leadership predicts organizational effectiveness after controlling for transactional leadership, but the reverse is not true. Most of the reviewed literature empirically supports the theoretical propositions that transformational leadership is positively related to leadership success. Transactional leadership is positively but weakly related to leadership success. Laissez-faire leadership is negatively related to leadership success (e.g., Bono & Judge, 2004; Dumdum, Lowe, & Avolio, 2002; Lowe, Kroeck, & Sivasubramaniam 1996). Interestingly, according to Judge and Piccolo (2004) in their recent meta-analysis of testing relative validity of transformational and transactional leadership, contingent reward among both transactional leadership behaviors and transformational leadership behaviors shows strong positive relationships to follower job satisfaction, satisfaction with the leader, and follower motivation.

More specifically, in the relationships between transformational leadership and leadership success, a recent meta-analysis conducted by Lowe et al. (1996) found that transformational leadership behaviors substantially correlate with and significantly predicted both subordinate attitudes and measures of leader effectiveness. Among all four transformational behaviors, the authors found the construct charisma, a combination of idealized influence and inspirational motivation, to be a major component of transformational leadership. More recently, Bono and Judge (2004), in their meta-analysis study, found that the construct charisma, a combination of idealized influence and inspirational motivation, encapsulated the fundamental nature of

transformational leadership behavior, explained much of the variance in leadership success, and affirmed the results from Lowe et al. (1996). In sum, these findings suggest that transformational leadership, especially the charismatic leadership behaviors drawn from idealized influence and inspirational motivation, correlates better with and predicts leadership success. Along with transformational leadership behaviors, it appears that contingent reward, one component of transactional leadership behaviors, is a critical element to understand the process of how transformational leaders affect followers and their performance.

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Personality of Transformational Leaders

As noted earlier, following the '50s there was a shift from the trait approach to the style approach, since many scholars doubted whether any personal traits are reliably associated with leadership success. Despite this unpopularity, however, personality traits as a correlate and predictor of successful leadership style and effectiveness have demonstrated consistent reliability and usefulness, leading to a revival of this approach in recent years (e.g., Hogan, Curphy, & Hogan, 1994). Among many personality trait measurements of a leader's performance, the Big Five Model of personality trait measurement has enhanced the value and usefulness of personality trait measurement in correlating with and predicting successful leadership (Hogan, et al., 1994). The Big Five Model components, developed by Costa and McCrae (1992), cover most constructs of personality and include neuroticism (i.e. impulsive), extraversion (i.e. active), openness (i.e. open-minded), agreeableness (i.e. selfless), and conscientiousness (i.e. strong-minded).

Existing literature (such as Silvershorne, 2001) has empirically supported the contention that effective leaders tend to score significantly higher on extraversion, openness, agreeableness and conscientiousness, and lower on neuroticism, than non-effective leaders. Examining the relation between personality traits and transformational leadership, some studies (such as Dubinsky, Yammarino, Jolson, & Spangler, 1995) have not found expected relationships, but other recent studies have successfully linked personality traits to transformational leadership. Judge and Bono (2000) found that among the Big Five components, extraversion and agreeableness significantly and positively predicted transformational leadership. More recently, Judge, Bono, Ilies, and Gerhardt (2002), in their meta-analysis of the extensive literature on personality and leadership, found that extraversion, openness, and conscientiousness were all positively correlated and neuroticism was negatively correlated with both leadership emergence (being perceived as leader-like) and effectiveness (being able to influence subordinates to perform). After regressing all Big Five personality traits on overall leadership, they found that extraversion, openness, and conscientiousness are the most consistent predictors of both leadership emergence and effectiveness.

Given the accumulated theoretical explanation and empirical findings, both leadership style behaviors and personality traits have been recognized as important attributes of successful leadership. Extending the previous literature on both leadership style behaviors and personality traits into this study, the authors developed and tested the following four specific hypotheses to generalize the previous findings to the probation setting:

H₁: Overall leadership styles will be more important than personality traits in correlating with and predicting leadership success.

H₂: Transformational leadership, especially idealized influence and inspirational motivation, will significantly and positively correlate with and predict leadership success.

H₃: Contingent reward within the transactional leadership style will significantly and positively correlate, but laissez-faire leadership style will negatively correlate with and predict leadership success.

H₄: Extraversion, openness, and conscientiousness among the Big Five Model personality traits will significantly and positively correlate with and predict leadership success.

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Method

Sample and Data Collection

This study was conducted under the auspices of the National Association of Probation Executives (NAPE).¹ The survey was distributed through the mail to 187 members of NAPE who are directors of probation departments in the United States. In the survey, the sampled directors were asked to self-assess their personality, leadership style and leadership success as well as provide certain demographic information. To secure a high response rate for a valid and reliable analysis, one follow-up survey was mailed. Both surveys included an encouragement cover letter from NAPE Executive Director Christie Davidson and emphasized the anonymity of responses, guaranteeing confidentiality. The survey period began on April 15 and ended on June 15, 2009. Each respondent was provided a self-addressed, stamped envelope to return the survey directly to the researcher at Angelo State University. Survey responses were obtained from a total of 135 probation directors in the U.S. After examining the data on an item-by-item and case-by-case basis, it appeared that of the 135 responses, 4 cases required deletion due to missing data. This reduced the usable data sample to 131, giving a response rate of 70.1 percent, indicating very good survey quality for adequate analysis and reporting (Maxfield & Babbie, 2005).

Individual status data listed in [Table 1](#) represents respondents' socio-demographic and work-experience information. The selection of these individual status variables incorporated into the survey was guided by an extensive literature review. Males accounted for 67.9 percent of the survey population. The average age of the respondents was 50.7 years (the minimum was 34 years, and the maximum 72 years), with 90.1 percent reported to be Caucasian, compared to African-American (4.6 percent), Hispanic (3.1 percent), and Others (2.3 percent). With respect to educational background, 45 percent had a bachelor's degree or less, while a slight majority (55 percent) had earned a master's degree or doctorate degree (50.4 percent and 4.6 percent, respectively). Respondents had been directors of their departments for an average of 6.34 years, ranging from a minimum of 0.27 to a maximum of 34 years. Of the 131 respondents, the majority (64.1 percent) were selected or promoted from outside the department. The responses indicate that the majority (61.8 percent) directed departments with fewer than 100 total employees. It should be noted that these individual status variables are not being studied. Instead, they are used as control variables in this study.

Measurement of Variables & Descriptive Analyses

To obtain self-assessments of leadership style, personality, and success, two standardized questionnaires were used to gather data from the sampled directors. First, as suggested by Bass and Avolio (2004), the 45-item form of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ 5X-Short, Self) was used to conceptually capture three distinct leadership styles² (transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership). As for the MLQ's 9-item form to measure the following three different leadership outcomes: extra effort, effectiveness, and satisfaction, a principal components' factor analysis was conducted to determine whether the three underlying dimensions present can be conceptually combined into one variable. The three leadership outcome components were successfully reduced into leadership success.³ Questionnaire items were rated using a five-point response scale: 0=not at all; 1=once in a while; 2=sometimes; 3=fairly often; and 4=frequently, if not always. Participants were asked to self-assess how frequently, on average, they displayed the leadership style and outcome behaviors. Second, the personality inventory used was the 60-item form of the NEO Five Factor Inventory (NEO-FFI) (Costa & McCrae, 1992). This test is a concise measure of the five major dimensions of

personal traits: neuroticism, extraversion, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness. The items were measured using the five-point scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

While no missing response for the individual status variables was found, there were a minimum number of missing values for both the NEO-FFI personality trait and MLQ leadership style variables. Guided by the manual (Costa & McCrae, 1992), we selected the neutral response option for 5 missing responses for the NEO-FFI variables. Lacking any specific guideline in its manual (Bass & Avolio, 2004), however, we replaced 45 missing responses for the MLQ variables with the means of each variable. [Table 2](#) presents means, standard deviations, and reliability for all personality traits, leadership style variables, and leadership success. The Cronbach Alpha statistical reliability procedure was applied to test for the internal consistency of each scale. Alpha reliability coefficients for each scale in [Table 2](#) ranged from 0.56 to 0.88. Sample reliabilities for the five personal traits were well above the minimal level of acceptability. Among the leadership style and leadership success behaviors, the reliability of laissez-faire leadership was somewhat below the minimal level of acceptability. However, since the MLQ leadership style and outcome inventory is a standardized assessment with high validity, the laissez-faire leadership was retained, ensuring comparability of the results to other studies using this inventory.

Using two cut-off points (1.5 and 2.5, on the 5-point scale, ranging from 0 to 4), the leadership style variables were broken into the following three groups: laissez-faire leadership (0.59) for a low-average group, transactional leadership (1.83) for a neither low- nor high-average group, and transformational leadership (3.15) for a high-average group. Among the three leadership style variables, transformational leadership was found to have the highest average mean. Specifically, utilizing the cutoff point of 2.5 (the midpoint between sometimes and fairly often), all four components of transformational leadership behaviors, one component of transactional leadership, and leadership success behavior were identified as belonging to the high-average group. They were: idealized influence (attributed and behavior), inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, contingent reward, and leadership success. On the other hand, using the cutoff point of 1.5 (the midpoint between once in a while and sometimes), two of the three transformational leadership behaviors (active and passive management-by-exception) along with laissez-faire leadership behavior were identified as belonging to the low-average categorical group. Among the three leadership style behavioral variables, laissez-faire leadership behavior had the lowest average mean.

As for comparing the five-factor model of personality, based upon the published point in the professional manual (Costa & McCrae, 1992), the accumulated score for neuroticism in our survey of leaders (13.08) was much lower than the published average score (19.07), reflecting relatively high emotional stability among the participating probation directors. Similarly, the accumulated scores for the other four positive personality factors exceeded the published average scores, indicating relatively high extraversion, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness among the participants. The overall findings from the descriptive analyses suggest that the sampled probation directors have a desirable leadership style (transformational leadership) and leadership personalities, all theoretically contributing to leadership success.

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Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Extensive leadership literature (e.g., Yammarino & Dubinsky, 1994; Carless, 1998) argues that, due to high correlation with the four behavioral factors of the transformational leadership style, the four factors might be best represented as a single transformational leadership scale, not represented by separate transformational leader behaviors. It follows that this argument might be applied to the three behavioral factors of the transactional leadership style. In response to the issue of the unclear factor structure of the MLQ raised by previous research, this study examined whether a three-factor model of the leadership style behaviors (transformational,

transactional, and laissez-faire leadership style) may be proven empirically. Accordingly, we conducted a confirmatory factor analysis to test whether the three-factor model is better than the original eight-factor model.⁴

Based on the results of the first analysis in [Table 3](#), only the χ^2 ratio among the four indices used supported the absolute fit of both three-factor and eight-factor models.⁵ However, Modification Indices provided by AMOS 16 (Arbuckle & Wothke, 2006) suggested that the fit of the tested models could be improved by correlating selected parameters within the models. Accordingly, the results from the second analysis using the suggested modification indicated that all of the fit indices of both models improved from those of both models in the first analysis and supported the absolute and incremental fit of both models, although the results of the two-step confirmatory factor analyses suggested that the eight-factor model provided a better fit than the three-factor model. Therefore, this study used both the three- and eight-factor models as (respectively) general and specific approaches to better understand general leadership styles and specific leadership behaviors in the probation setting. Before conducting further analysis, we examined data based upon the pre-analysis data screening suggested by Mertler and Vannatta (2005) to secure the accuracy of the data and to prevent any biased result.⁶

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Results

Zero-Order Correlation Analysis

Consistent with existing literature, transformational leadership style was significantly and positively related—and laissez-faire leadership was significantly and negatively correlated—with leadership success. However, transactional leadership style ($r = 0.17$) was positively but weakly and insignificantly associated with leadership success. Among the leadership styles, transformational leadership ($r = 0.68$) had the strongest relationship to leadership success. Specifically, using the cutoff point of ± 0.50 (Davis, 1971), the group with strong relationships (larger than ± 0.50) includes all four behavioral components of the transformational leadership style and contingent reward of the transactional leadership style. Inspirational motivation ($r = 0.69$), individualized consideration ($r = 0.64$), and idealized influence ($r = 0.56$) were found to have the top three strongest leadership behaviors to correlate with leadership success. As for the association of the five personality factors with leadership success, as expected, extraversion, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness were all positively correlated, and neuroticism was negatively correlated with leadership success. However, although conscientiousness ($r = 0.47$) had the strongest relationship to leadership success among the personality factors, the relationship was still moderate.

Multivariate Analysis

We examined the statistics to determine whether or not the findings on the sampled directors' leadership success are still maintained after statistically controlling for the effects of individual status, personality, and/or leadership style behavior variables, respectively. In each equation of [Table 5](#), the self-rated leadership success was the dependent variable and a total of seven individual status and work-experience characteristics (gender, age, race, education level, length of time as director, director selection method, and total employee population) were viewed and included as control variables.

Equation 1 in [Table 5](#) examines only the impact of five personality factor variables on the sampled directors' leadership success after statistically controlling for the effects of the individual status variables. We found that 44 percent of the variance in the dependent variable of leadership success was accounted for by three individual status control variables (age, gender, and education level) and two personality variables (conscientiousness and extraversion). That is, among the five personality factor variables, self-rated successful leadership tends to obtain from the sampled directors who scored significantly higher on extraversion (i.e. active) and

conscientiousness (i.e. strong-minded) than their counterparts. Not as hypothesized, however, extraversion was excluded from the final best-fit equation, since it lacked a statistically significant, high partial correlation (Hair et al., 2006).

Equation 2 in [Table 5](#) examines only the impact of effects of leadership style behavior variables on the sampled directors' leadership success after statistically controlling for the effects of individual status variables. Out of fourteen individual status and leadership style behavior variables, five variables based upon each statistically significant, high partial correlation were included in Equation 2. Among the seven control variables, only age had statistically significant effects on leadership success: older directors were more likely than younger directors to express higher levels of self-rated leadership success. Among the eight leadership style behaviors, three leadership transformational style behaviors (inspirational motivation, idealized influence, and individual consideration) were found to be positive and significant determinants of leadership success, whereas laissez-faire leadership was a negative and significant determinant. However, there was no significant determinant among three transactional leadership behaviors, especially contingent reward.

Two additional findings related to Equation 2 are worth mentioning. First, after controlling for the effects of the individual status variables, the four transformational and laissez-faire leadership style behavior variables included accounted for 68 percent of the variance in the dependent variable, leadership success. This portion of variance, explained by Equation 2 (R -square = 0.68) is almost 1.5 times higher than that explained by Equation 1 (R -square = 0.44). This finding suggests that leadership style behavior factors have a more substantial contribution to make in predicting a director's leadership success than the personality factor. Second, the standardized regression coefficient for laissez-faire leadership style behavior was significant but had weak prediction power ($Beta = -0.15$).

In contrast, the standardized regression coefficients for the three transformational leadership style behaviors (inspirational motivation, idealized influence, and individualized consideration) were 0.37, 0.29, and 0.23, respectively. All coefficients well exceeded 0.20. These three transformational leadership behaviors, therefore, appear to have both statistical and substantive significance in predicting directors' self-rated leadership success. Given the standardized regression coefficients, inspirational motivation had the strongest statistically significant effect on leadership success, suggesting that, among the four transformational leadership style behaviors, transformational leaders should communicate a vision of a desired future state and high level of expectations in a way that makes the pain of change worth the challenging but meaningful effort, greatly contributing to successful organizational transformation.

Equation 3 in [Table 5](#) is the final and most complete best-fit regression model ($\chi^2 = 49.28$, $df = 6$, $p < 0.001$). All individual status variables were treated as statistical control variables to mainly determine whether the significant personalities and leadership style behaviors found in Equation 1 and 2 are still statistically significant. The proportion of variance explained by Equation 3 (R -square = 0.71) is slightly higher than that explained by Equation 2 (R -square = 0.68) and is almost 1.6 times higher than that explained by Equation 1 (R -square = 0.44). This finding from Equation 3 indicates that the leadership style behavior factor still has a greater contribution to make in predicting the sampled directors' successful leadership, even after controlling for the effects of the personality factor.

While there was still no significant determinant of transactional leadership behavior variables, six variables were included in Equation 3: only one control variable (age), only one personality variable (conscientiousness), and the same four leadership style behavior variables, statistically supportive of the identical direction and almost the equal strength of the same individual status and leadership style behavior variables found in Equation 2. In comparison with the findings of Equation 1 and 2, two inconsistent findings relevant to Equation 2 are worth mentioning. First, in comparison with Equation 1, two individual status control variables, gender and education level, were excluded from Equation 3. Only age was still included as being statistically significant in Equation 3, and age turned out to be associated with personality and leadership style behaviors in significantly predicting leadership success. Second, unlike the findings of

Equation 1, extraversion was excluded from the final best-fit equation after leadership style behavior variables were included in Equation 3, while only conscientiousness was still included in the final model. These findings suggest that the effects of gender and education level, among the individual status variables, and extraversion, among the personality variables, on leadership success are indirect and are mediated through the leadership style behavior variables. Furthermore, the prediction strength of conscientiousness reduced almost one-half ($Beta = 0.32$ in Equation 1 to 0.17 in Equation 3).

Taken together, overall findings from the bivariate and multivariate analyses suggest that the hypotheses (H_1 and H_2) are fully supported and indicate that transformational leadership style behaviors, rather than the other leadership styles and all personalities, have a substantially greater association with leadership success. However, contingent reward among transactional leadership behaviors significantly correlated with but had no contribution to make in predicting leadership success. Also, extraversion had an indirect impact on leadership success, while openness had no significant impact. Therefore, the hypotheses (H_3 and H_4) are only partially supported. Despite some partially supported hypotheses, these findings clearly indicate that the three transformational leadership style behaviors (inspirational motivation, idealized influence-attributed, and individualized consideration) have more substantial contributions to make in predicting the sampled directors' self-reported leadership success, whereas one personality trait, conscientiousness, contributes significantly, but weakly, to predict.

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Discussion and General Policy Implication

The literature suggests that the present probation system, despite its actual benefits, fails to gain trust, confidence, and support from politicians and the public (Beto, Corbett, & DiIulio, 2000; Reinventing Probation Council, 2000). In response to this negative assessment, it is essential for probation administrators and managers to be leaders. Kotter (1996) noted, "Successful transformation is 70 to 90 percent leadership and only 10 to 30 percent management" (p. 26). From this, transformational leadership provides the organization with new vision and influences, and the entire culture changes, within which transactional management must follow the new vision and adjust to the change. That is, only leaders (rather than managers) can formulate an inspiring vision for an effective probation system, and influence and transform probation personnel from passive into active participants in building a more effective system, eventually engendering public support and positively promoting public safety.

As a pilot study on leadership in the area of probation, this research began by asking what makes an effective leader. The literature indicates two dominant schools of thought on how to approach leadership effectiveness. Overall findings from the descriptive analysis suggest that the sampled probation directors exhibit transformational leadership, higher levels of desirable personality traits (i.e., extraversion, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness), and lower levels of undesirable personality (neuroticism), all theoretically contributing to leadership success. However, results from the further analyses clearly indicate that, of all three leadership styles, transformational leadership style has a substantially greater association with sampled directors' leadership success and has a substantial contribution to make in predicting such success. Also, consistent with leadership literature such as Lowe et al. (1996), the construct charisma—a combination of idealized influence and inspirational motivation—was confirmed as fundamental to transformational leadership. Leadership success is predicted for those who have higher levels of ability to provide a vision and a sense of mission, while role-modeling for followers (idealized influence) and communicating a vision of a desired future state in a way that makes the pain of change worth the effort (inspirational motivation). That is, for probation directors, leadership style, especially charismatic transformational leadership, is seen as more important than personality in correlating with and predicting leadership success.

Both leadership style and personality have recently been recognized as important attributes to successful leadership. For example, Kenny and Zaccaro (1983) concluded that between 49

percent and 82 percent of the variance in transformational leadership behavior could be explained by stable personality traits across different situations. Likewise, results from the multivariate analysis indicated that 44 percent of the variance in leadership success was accounted for by some personalities after controlling for individual status variables. Conscientiousness (strong-minded, responsible, and accountable) had a direct impact on leadership success, while extraversion (active) had its indirect impact on leadership mediated through leadership style. However, openness had no significant impact on leadership success. Rather than finding comfort in things that are routine, open-minded probation leaders should be focused on helping their departments continually respond and adapt to the ever-changing demands and needs from their internal and external environments. Even though some are born leaders, individuals can learn leadership traits (Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1991). Probation leaders should be aware of the important role of open-mindedness in developing their leadership personality.

Judge and Piccolo (2004) found that contingent reward among the transactional leadership behaviors and transformational leadership were significantly correlated with and significantly predicted leadership success. Given the important role of contingent reward, we recommend that probation administrators recognize the limited opportunities for extrinsic rewards available in public service and strongly consider internal rewards, such as opportunities for professional growth and development to enhance leadership success. This might serve to compensate for extrinsic rewards such as pay and promotion. Initiating intrinsic rewards might encourage individual probation personnel to move toward a more effective system to rehabilitate offenders and promote public safety. Despite the importance of transformational leadership over transactional leadership (management), fulfilling the vision *for* and *of* an organization should require both leadership styles. Therefore, transactional leadership should not be ignored by probation administrators.

This exploratory study was the first empirical leadership study in the field of probation. Despite the potentially significant academic and practical contributions, however, it may not be appropriate to generalize findings from the data obtained from the sampled probation directors. The accumulated findings suggest that the sampled probation directors utilize the desirable transformational leadership style, which should contribute to their leadership success. The laissez-faire style, anticipated to be the most prevalent leadership style according to Hardyman (1992), was the least common style reported to be used by probation administrators. Accordingly, we suspect that there was a degree of selection bias in this study; members of NAPE are likely more invested in and more committed to the probation profession than administrators who are not members. Therefore, the findings in this study should be interpreted with caution. In addition, this study is limited to a self-assessment of leadership style and leadership success by the sampled directors. Assessing both leadership style and leadership success should also be conducted from the subordinate's perspective, since leadership is a social behavioral phenomenon (Conger & Kanungo, 1987). In response to these two limitations, future research should employ Equal Probability of Selection Method in a geographic-specific survey to provide external validity. Also, future research should utilize the rater (subordinates) MLQ form to measure leadership style and leadership success, eventually securing internal validity.

We conclude that it is clearly better to incorporate personality into leadership style behavior research, eventually improving leadership success and providing more crucial and useful criteria for personnel selection and placement, and leadership training.

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Table 1.
Individual Status Variable Statistics (N = 131)

Variable	N (%)	Mean	Min	Max	SD*
Gender					0.47
Male	89 (67.9)				
Female	42 (32.1)				
Age	in years	50.67	34	72	7.48
Race					0.30
Caucasian	118 (90.1)				
Non-Caucasian	13 (9.9)				
Education Level					0.50
Bachelor's degree or less	59 (45)				
Master's degree or more	72 (55)				
Length of Time as Director	in years	6.34	0.27	34	6.23
Director Selection Method					0.48
Inside	47 (35.9)				

Outside	84 (64.1)				
Total Employee Population					2.01
Fewer than 25	40 (30.5)				
25–49	22 (16.8)				
50–99	19 (14.5)				
100–149	14 (10.7)				
150–299	13 (9.9)				
300–999	13 (9.9)				
1000 or more	10 (7.6)				
* Standard Deviation					

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Table 2.

Personality and Leadership Style Variable Descriptions, Statistics, and Reliability (N = 131)

Variable	No of Final Items	Item Mean*	SD**	α***
Personality				
Neuroticism	12	13.08	6.50	0.84
Extraversion	12	31.95	6.62	0.85
Openness	12	28.00	6.16	0.77
Agreeableness	12	33.96	5.51	0.77
Conscientiousness	12	36.92	5.25	0.81
Leadership Style				
Transformational Leadership	20	3.15	0.43	0.88
Idealized Influence****	8	3.08	0.56	0.62
Inspirational Motivation	4	3.26	0.57	0.82
Intellectual Stimulation	4	3.11	0.55	0.74
Individualized Consideration	4	3.22	0.49	0.65
Transactional Leadership	12	1.83	0.33	0.62
Management-by-Exception (Active)	4	1.45	0.62	0.66

Management-by-Exception (Passive)	4	0.99	0.60	0.62
Contingent Reward	4	3.05	0.52	0.64
Laissez-faire Leadership	4	0.59	0.48	0.56
Leadership Success	9	3.21	0.43	0.86

* The items in the five factor model of personality were measured using the five point scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree); Responses to each item in the eight factor model of leadership are made on a 5-point Likert scale with anchors labeled (0) strongly disagree or not at all, and (4) strongly agree or frequently, if not always.
** Standard Deviation; *** Cronbach's Alpha reliability scores.
**** For a simplicity purpose, two dimensions of idealized influences (attributed and behaviors) were combined into an overall measure of idealized influence.

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Table 3.
Comparison of Overall Fit Measures between the Two Separate Factor Models

Model	χ^2	df	χ^2 ratio*	RMSEA	CFI	TLI
First Analysis						
Three factor model	1033.74	594	1.74	0.08	0.66	0.64
Eight factor model	791.32	567	1.40	0.06	0.83	0.81
Second Analysis						
Three factor model	656.27	547	1.20	0.04	0.92	0.90
Eight factor model	571.62	534	1.07	0.02	0.97	0.97

Note: All models were significant at $p < .05$.
* χ^2 Ratio is calculated by dividing the χ^2 value by the degrees of freedom.

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Table 4.
Zero-Order Correlations

Personality and Leadership Style	Correlation	Individual Status	Correlation
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Variables		Coefficient	Variables		Coefficient
Personality			Gender		-0.08
Neuroticism		-0.44**	Age		0.35**
Extraversion		0.44**	Race		-0.01
Openness		0.19*	Education Level		0.16
Agreeableness		0.34**	Length of Time as Director		0.07
Conscientiousness		0.47**	Director Selection Method		-0.09
			Total Employee Population		0.26**
Leadership Style					
Transformational Leadership		0.68**			
Idealized Influence (Attributed)		0.56**			
Inspirational Motivation		0.69**			
Intellectual Stimulation		0.52**			
Individualized Consideration		0.64**			
Transactional Leadership		0.17			
Management-by-Exception (Active)		-0.01			
Management-by-Exception (Passive)		-0.18*			
Contingent Reward		0.55**			
Laissez-faire Leadership		-0.30**			
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed); ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).					

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Table 5.
The Determinants of Leadership Success

Included Variables	Equation 1		Equation 2		Equation 3	
	Beta ^a	VIF ^b	Beta ^a	VIF ^b	Beta ^a	VIF ^b
Control Variables						
Age	0.32***	1.14	0.15**	1.10	0.15**	1.10
Gender	-0.16*	1.12				

Education Level	0.14*	1.04				
Personality						
Conscientiousness	0.32***	1.17			0.17**	1.26
Extraversion	0.31***	1.14				
Leadership Style						
Inspirational Motivation			0.37***	1.71	0.32***	1.82
Idealized Influence			0.29***	1.40	0.26***	1.43
Individualized Consideration			0.23***	1.62	0.25***	1.62
Laissez-faire Leadership			-0.15**	1.05	-0.13*	1.12
<i>R</i> -square =	0.44***		0.68***		0.71***	
<i>F</i> =	19.23		53.48		49.28	
^a Standardized Coefficients; ^b Variance Inflation Factor; * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$.						

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A Pilot Survey Linking Personality, Leadership Style, and Leadership Success among Probation Directors in the U.S.

1. Founded in 1981, NAPE is a professional organization representing the chief executive officers of local, county, and state probation agencies, and has been substantially devoted to the issue of leadership and the challenges faced by probation administrators.
2. As described earlier, four leadership behavioral scales were defined as characteristic of transformational leadership (idealized influence: attributed and behavior, inspirational motivation, individual consideration, and intellectual stimulation). Three behavioral scales were identified as characteristic of transactional leadership (contingent reward, active management-by-exception, and passive management-by-exception). The last behavioral scale was described as non-leadership and non-management, also known as laissez-faire leadership.
3. The three subordinate outcome components factored together with an appropriate *eigenvalue* of 2.75—greater than 1.00 through a discontinuity test—and factor loadings all over 0.50, suggesting substantial loadings.
4. The fit of the model to the data was evaluated by the following four indices: χ^2 Ratio, RMSEA, CFI and TLI (Hair, Black, Anderson, & Tatham, 2006).
5. The χ^2 ratio test itself should not be considered as a best test of the model's absolute fit (Hair et al., 2006).
6. The assumption of normality, linearity and homoscedasticity was met. According to variance inflation factor (VIF) scores, no multicollinearity was found.

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Alcohol: Still the Forgotten Legal Drug

1. I will use “client” and “offender” interchangeably, out of deference to both sides of the ever-present law enforcement–social work chasm.
2. Emphasis added by author throughout.

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