



**LEADERSHIP STYLE, WORKFORCE DIVERSITY, CONFLICT RESOLUTION
AND ETHICAL PRACTICES IN A FILIPINO-CHINESE SCHOOL:
IMPLICATIONS FOR PUBLIC MANAGERS**

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ABSTRACT

The descriptive–correlational study examined the leadership styles, workforce diversity challenges, conflict resolution strategies, and ethical practices at Hua Siong College of Iloilo. One hundred fifty respondents answered a researcher-adapted questionnaire administered through Google Forms using quota sampling, with additional inputs gathered from open-ended responses. The data were analyzed quantitatively using descriptive statistics and thematic analysis for qualitative data. Findings revealed that respondents highly preferred transformational and democratic leadership styles. Diversity-related challenges were present but generally manageable, while collaborative conflict resolution strategies were commonly practiced. Ethical practices were also found to be highly implemented within the institution. The findings emphasized the importance of participative and ethical leadership approaches in managing diverse educational environments and provide useful insights for public managers in improving leadership effectiveness and fostering harmonious workplace relationships.

Keywords: *Leadership Style, Workforce Diversity, Conflict Resolution, Ethical Practices, Public Managers*

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INTRODUCTION

Leadership is a critical factor in determining the effectiveness and success of organizations, particularly in educational institutions. A leader must possess the ability to foster strong interpersonal relationships with followers or subordinates and inspire them to contribute toward achieving organizational goals (Cantos, 2023). It also plays a pivotal role not only in guiding academic achievement but also in addressing workforce diversity and resolving conflicts that arise from it. Gautam (2023) emphasized that a diverse workforce promotes innovation and creativity within educational institutions. However, workforce diversity can be both an asset and a challenge, especially in culturally diverse institutions. Differences can create a complex working environment and that is why leaders should play an important role in addressing these conflicts within the organization. Successful implementation of conflict resolution skills and interventions requires leadership styles that promote teamwork and constructive feedback, along with adequate support and effective feedback mechanisms (Adham, 2023). The need for ethical leadership further complicates the role of leaders in these institutions. The study of Bhana & Bayat (2020) demonstrated that ethical leadership in higher education, especially among line managers, strongly affects employee behavior and performance, emphasizing the need for an ethical leadership environment to achieve institutional goals and engage stakeholders.

According to historian and former Iloilo Vice Governor Demy Sonza, the origins of the Filipino-Chinese community in Iloilo date back to before Spanish colonization (Burgos, 2023). Enriched by its distinct and diverse workforce, Hua Siong College of Iloilo has been committed

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to delivering quality education since its inception. Its workforce represents a rich blend of Filipino and Chinese cultural backgrounds. The school comprises distinct departments in both campuses in Main campus and Ledesco campus for Chinese and English in the Basic Education Departments, while non-teaching offices are predominantly staffed by Filipino employees. The school is headed by Principals for both the English and Chinese departments, under the supervision of the Academic Director, who oversees the overall operation. Each principal is supported by an assistant principal for the preschool, elementary, junior high school, and senior high school levels. This hierarchical structure enables efficient management and fosters collaboration between teaching and non-teaching staff. Pecson et al. (2024) highlight that the integration of social, moral, academic, and spiritual values in education plays a crucial role in shaping learners of a Chinese school into ethical, accountable, and productive individuals capable of contributing positively to societal change. Administrators at HSCI are guided by the school's core values of diligence, sincerity, loyalty, and courage, which influence ethical practices and support effective leadership within the institution.

Given the culturally diverse workforce and leadership structure of Hua Siong College of Iloilo, the researcher deemed it essential to investigate how leadership style influences workforce diversity, conflict resolution, and ethical practices within the institution. Findings from this study may provide insights relevant to public managers in managing similar multicultural settings.

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MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Methodology

This chapter presents the research design, research method, respondents of the study, sampling design, research instruments, data gathering procedure, and data analysis.

Research Method

The researcher used a mixed method approach to explore the complex relationships among leadership styles, workforce diversity challenges, conflict resolution strategies, and ethical practices at Hua Siong College of Iloilo. This approach ensured that both types of data were carefully examined and systematically integrated to produce coherent and meaningful conclusions (George, 2021). An adapted and modified questionnaire was used to collect quantitative data through a Likert scale administered to faculty members and non-teaching staff to gather measurable information regarding their perceptions of leadership and organizational dynamics. The "Yes or No" questions followed by open-ended questions provided qualitative insights, allowing the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of the faculty and staff's experiences and perspectives. These qualitative data enriched the findings by providing context and depth that quantitative data alone could not capture.

Research Design

According to Aprecia et al. (2022) a descriptive correlational research design describes the variables and determines the degree of relationship that exists between and among them.

In this study, this design was used to describe the leadership styles, workforce diversity

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challenges, conflict resolution strategies, and ethical practices at Hua Siong College of Iloilo, and to determine whether significant relationships exist among these variables.

Respondents of the Study

The respondents of this study consisted of faculty members from the English and Chinese departments, and the non-teaching staff of Hua Siong College of Iloilo, categorized into two distinct campuses, the Main Campus and the Ledesco Campus. From a total population of 190 respondents, Slovin's formula was used to determine the overall sample size which resulted in a total sample size of 150 respondents, 85 from the Main Campus and 65 from the Ledesco Campus.

Sampling Design

This study employed a quota sampling design to ensure that respondents from the different campuses and departments of Hua Siong College of Iloilo were adequately represented. Quota sampling is a non-probability sampling technique in which researchers select participants based on specific characteristics to ensure that certain groups are proportionally represented in the sample (Simkus, 2023). This approach allows the researcher to ensure that specific segments of the population are proportionally represented in the study. The sample size was determined using Slovin's formula with a 0.05 margin of error, and respondents were chosen based on their availability and relevance to the objectives of the study. This approach ensured that the participants included in the research could provide meaningful and reliable information.

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Research Instrument

The study employed an adapted and modified questionnaire using a Likert scale to quantitatively collect the data. Additionally, "Yes or No" questions followed by open-ended questions were included to gather qualitative insights on these topics.

The first part of the questionnaire gathered information about the respondents' demographic profile, while the second part covered the questionnaire proper. The instrument was researcher-developed and conceptually anchored on Bass and Avolio's transformational and transactional leadership theory, whereas the items measuring authoritarian and democratic leadership were developed based on the leadership style framework discussed by Northouse (2009). Similarly, the conflict resolution items were conceptually anchored on the five conflict-handling modes identified by Thomas and Kilmann (1974), namely competing, collaborating, compromising, avoiding, and accommodating. The statements were modified and contextualized for the present study.

Cronbach's alpha was used to assess the reliability and internal consistency of the questionnaire.

Validation of the Research Instrument

To ensure accuracy and relevance, the questionnaire underwent both content and face validation. Initially, the draft was submitted to the research adviser for review and recommendations. Following this, it was presented to a group of experts in the field of research and their recommendations were carefully reviewed and incorporated prior to

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conducting the pilot test for reliability. The eight-point content validation criteria are presented in Appendix C. All suggested revisions and recommendations from the experts were incorporated into the final version of the questionnaire before further evaluation of its reliability.

Reliability of the Research Instrument

To test the reliability of the questionnaire, a pilot test was conducted with 30 participants prior to the main data collection. These respondents and their responses were not included in the actual study and were used solely for pilot testing purposes. A letter requesting permission to conduct the pilot test was sent to the school head of one of the Filipino-Chinese schools in Iloilo City. The data gathered from the pilot test were analyzed using Cronbach's alpha to determine the reliability of the instrument. The reliability test yielded a Cronbach's alpha of 0.92, indicating a high level of reliability (See appendix D). This result confirms that the questionnaire is a consistent and dependable instrument for collecting data in the actual study.

Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher prepared a formal letter requesting permission to conduct the actual data gathering, which was duly approved by the Research Adviser and the Dean of the PHINMA University of Iloilo Graduate School. The approved letter was then forwarded to the Academic Director of Hua Siong College of Iloilo, who subsequently granted authorization for the conduct of the study.

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Upon receiving approval from the Academic Director, the letter was disseminated to the department heads through the institution's official email system. Attached to the communication was the QR code and link to the Google Forms questionnaire. The respondents were clearly informed that their participation was voluntary and that all information collected would be treated with strict confidentiality and used solely for the purposes of this study.

The respondents were given a specified time frame within which to complete the survey. Follow-up reminders were sent to encourage participation and to ensure a satisfactory response rate.

After the data collection period, the responses were carefully reviewed to ensure completeness and accuracy. The data were then organized, tallied, and prepared for statistical analysis. The researcher consulted a statistician to determine the appropriate statistical tools for data interpretation. Based on the findings, conclusions were drawn, and corresponding recommendations were formulated.

Data Analysis

This study employed a mixed-methods approach, integrating quantitative and qualitative analyses to provide a comprehensive understanding of leadership styles, workforce diversity challenges, conflict resolution strategies, and ethical practices within the institution.

For the quantitative data, descriptive statistics such as Frequency Count and Percentage were used to describe the respondents' demographic profile. The Mean and Standard Deviation were computed to determine the level and consistency of responses

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regarding leadership styles, conflict resolution strategies, and ethical practices. For inferential analysis, Spearman's Rank-Order Correlation was utilized to examine the significant relationships among the major variables. Tests of significant difference were also conducted to determine variations when respondents were grouped according to age, gender, cultural background, years of service, and designation. All hypotheses were tested at a 0.05 level of significance.

For the qualitative data, responses from the open-ended questions were analyzed using thematic analysis. The researcher coded and categorized recurring ideas to identify key themes that explained and supported the quantitative findings. The integration of both methods strengthened the validity of the results and served as the basis for the study's conclusions and

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study was conducted in March 2025 to examine the leadership styles, workforce diversity challenges, conflict resolution strategies, and ethical practices at Hua Siong College of Iloilo. It also determined whether there are significant relationships among these variables and identified the implications of the findings for public managers. A descriptive-correlational research design with a mixed-method approach was used. A total of 150 faculty and non-teaching personnel were selected through quota sampling from a population of 190 employees across the Main and Ledesco campuses. Descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation were used to describe the data. Inferential statistical tools,

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including Spearman’s Rank-Order Correlation, Kruskal–Wallis H Test, and Mann–Whitney U Test, were applied at a 0.05 level of significance.

The findings revealed that respondents generally prefer leadership styles that are supportive, participative, and development-oriented. Leadership behaviors that emphasize inspiration, clear direction, open communication, and employee involvement were highly valued, while overly controlling or purely reactive approaches were less favored. This suggests that employees respond more positively to leadership that promotes trust, collaboration, and professional growth.

The study also found that workforce diversity presents both opportunities and challenges within the organization. Differences in culture, communication, and perspectives may lead to misunderstandings; however, these are manageable when guided by effective leadership. Conflict resolution practices within the institution are generally collaborative, emphasizing communication, cooperation, and mutual understanding to maintain a harmonious work environment.

Furthermore, ethical practices were consistently observed within the institution, highlighting the importance of integrity, accountability, and adherence to core values. The findings further indicate that leadership style is closely associated with how conflicts are addressed and how ethical standards are maintained. Overall, the study underscores the vital role of leadership in fostering a positive, inclusive, and ethical organizational climate in a diverse educational setting.

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CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, it is concluded that the most preferred leadership style in Hua Siong College of Iloilo is transformational leadership, supported by democratic characteristics. Employees value leaders who lead by example, inspire them to improve, provide mentorship, communicate clearly, and involve them in decision-making. These leadership behaviors create a positive work environment where employees feel respected and motivated.

Although authoritative and transactional leadership behaviors are accepted, especially in maintaining order, discipline, and accountability, they are more effective when combined with empathy and participation. Employees do not strongly prefer leadership styles that rely mainly on close supervision or reward-and-punishment systems. Instead, they respond better to leaders who build trust and encourage professional growth.

The institution shows a generally strong ethical climate. Employees perceive that ethical guidelines, loyalty, and diligence are practiced consistently. Diversity-related challenges exist, but they are manageable when leaders promote open communication and collaboration. The common use of collaborative and compromising conflict resolution strategies further supports the presence of constructive workplace relationships.

The study also confirms that there is a significant positive relationship between leadership styles, conflict resolution strategies, and ethical practices. This means that leadership behavior plays a central role in shaping how conflicts are handled and how ethical

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standards are maintained. When leaders practice inclusive and empowering leadership, employees are more likely to engage in ethical behavior and cooperative problem-solving.

For public managers, these findings emphasize that leadership is a key factor in organizational success. Leadership is not merely administrative authority, it is a responsibility that shapes culture, influences behavior, and determines the overall effectiveness of governance. An integrated leadership approach combining inspiration, participation, clarity, and accountability is essential for managing diverse workforces and maintaining ethical standards in public institutions.



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