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ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE AND CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STYLES AS PREDICTORS OF TEACHER LEADERSHIP COMPETENCY: A CONVERGENT DESIGN

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ABSTRACT
This study utilized mixed methods research, particularly convergent design, to determine the influence of organizational culture and conflict management styles on teacher leadership competency. The data were gathered from public secondary school educators in Region XI, Philippines. Sets of validated adapted survey tools with a five–point Likert scale and interview guide were used to gather data. The statistical tools used to treat the quantitative data were mean, standard deviation, and multiple regression analysis, while in the qualitative phase, thematic analysis was employed. In the quantitative phase, results showed that the level of organizational culture is very high, while the conflict management styles were rated high. Also, their level of teacher leadership competency was rated very high. Further, organizational culture and conflict management styles significantly predicted teacher leadership competency. In terms of the lived experiences of participants as regards their teacher leadership competency, three themes emerged: manifestation of a highly efficient leader, establishing positivity, and fostering a supportive environment. In terms of how their experiences shaped their beliefs, two themes were generated: the multifaceted role of a teacher being a leader, embodiment of leadership attributes. In terms of how their experiences shaped their attitudes, another two themes were generated: value-laden leader, attributes of a proactive leader. As to how their experiences shaped their commitment, two themes were also generated: an agent of change, and carrying out leadership through teacher efficiency. Finally, the nature of data integration revealed merging – converging and merging – expansion.

KEYWORDS: *Education, Leadership, Organizational Culture, Conflict Management Styles, Teacher Leadership Competency, Convergent, Philippines*

INTRODUCTION
The leadership competency of teachers is characterized as an ideal of teaching and presents an array of capabilities that provide an optimistic goal of embracing diversity, equity, and cultural expertise in schools (Ibrahim & Mazin, 2017). However, Estudillo and Mhunpiew (2021) highlighted that ambiguous school policies, heavy workloads, and unnecessary training and upgrading compromised the ability of teachers' leadership competency, leading to poor professional performance in the educational setting.

There were many issues that pervaded and influenced the competence of teacher leaders in service. Few of which include the traditional 'principal-oriented' approach of leadership in public schools coupled with the scarcity of leadership training among teachers as well as the lack of motivating incentives on undertaking teacher leadership roles. These issues highly limit the capacity of teachers to lead projects, activities, and programs, as most opportunities are only concentrated among school principals and head teachers. This is on top of the attitude problems of certain teacher leaders which inhibit the development of their competence to manage groups and schools (Alegado, 2018; Tarraya, 2023). More so, the school culture in Africa may be adversely affected by several problems of excessive turnover rates, often experiencing burnout and intense settings that make it hard for any teacher leader to attain their full competence (Akinyomi, 2019). Kilag and Sasan (2022) expanded that all these challenges ultimately have an impact on schooling in Indonesia, demanding teacher leaders to work competently in an unclear and negative society to provide students with the greatest learning opportunities.

In Philippine school organizations, teacher leadership still faces predicaments in school settings (Alegado, 2018). Teacher leaders struggled with the loneliness and crab bucket culture's existence, the absence of rewards or acknowledgment for exercising competence, and the lack of support to perform leadership roles (Perez & Lumaad, 2021). Their positions were viewed as teachers' input receivers rather than decision-makers, with less possibility for growth on a personal and professional level, as well as the drive to accomplish more (Bongco & Ancho, 2019). Tarraya (2023) mentioned that teacher leaders are not recognized to assist in management and administration most of the time as opposed to using their knowledge and skills.
Moreover, teacher leaders were met with myriads of obstacles as they find ways to settle conflicts in their schools. Teachers who lead are demotivated and experience irritation, rage, and stress, all of which harm the culture of the organization (Hidayat et al.,

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2020; Ghani, 2019). Such are attributed to the counterproductive management and handling of disputes. Guinot et al. (2018) added that teacher leaders in schools have not developed their competence to potential conflicts, both inside and outside the organization. As such, conflict comes as a surprise which leads them to get confused and frustrated.

Additionally, teacher leadership competency is viewed by school administrators as a different aspect from pursuing academic achievement and excellence. The administrators regarded their functions as more of a voice than just following orders. They feel inferior in terms of governance as can be seen on how hesitant they are in engaging themselves in crucial decision-making phases and how they deemphasize the quality of their performance. Suppose that teacher leaders possess the competence and dispositions needed to mentor other educators and support the development of the school (Amirreza, 2019). Yayin (2019) pointed out reasons why teacher leaders remain optimistic about the potential ahead, despite the problems they face. They consider their positions as a means or a platform for their personal advance in public schools in the future.

On one hand, recent studies showed that organizational culture is linked to leadership competence of teachers. In fact, Kara (2022) espoused that a school or an organization that promotes good culture on the aspects of task, success, bureaucracy, and support is more likely to enhance the competence of teachers to lead. Likewise, this idea was reinforced in Andrade-Zambrano and Ureta-Alvear (2021) which claimed that a supportive organizational culture that champions productive interpersonal relationships, constantly provides leadership trainings to teachers, as well as allows teachers to mentor, be challenged, and cooperate in groups breeds successful teacher leaders as well as foregrounds their capacities to lead groups of teachers to achieve a specific goal together. The opposite may also likely happen if the culture of the organization is characterized to be toxic and unsupportive of the teacher leaders.

On the other hand, there were also scholars who evidenced the association between the conflict management and leadership competence of teachers. In fact, Sergeeva et al. (2020) highlighted that teachers who employ an array of conflict managerial strategies such as effective communication in dealing with learners and stakeholders alike have greater propensity to become successful teacher leaders who are capable of converting educational dilemmas into opportunities for growth and development. In conjunction, Aula et al. (2020) discussed that school principals who possess the capacity to manage conflicts in different ways such as deliberating, taking the middle ground, compromising between or among various parties, as well as reinforcing strong friendship ties are considered to be competent in leadership.

Thus, it can be said that there were already numerous investigations that have been undertaken on the bivariate correlation between organizational culture and conflict management (Hillary, 2019; Gore et al., 2018; Kleynhans et al., 2021) and teacher leadership competency (Halliwell et al., 2022; Taylor et al., 2019). However, more must be done to connect organizational culture and conflict management as predictors of teacher leadership competency, despite the presence of several researches discussing how conflict management mediates issues in school (Frahm & Cianca, 2021). Several studies used other predictors of teacher leadership competency, such as instructional resource provider and professional growth (Jeppe et al., 2020; Kara, 2022). Consequently, as far as previous literature is concerned, there were scanty discussions about the influence and implications of organizational culture and conflict management styles in the context of schools. More research investigations should be attributed to revealing the influence of organizational culture and conflict management styles on teacher leadership competency.

Although, most research revealed that teaching leadership competence has been studied only at the tertiary level, but not as much has been done in public secondary schools (Abendaño, 2024; Lacerenza et al., 2018). Moreover, these mentioned studies adopted the quantitative research designs to predict the influence of certain variables on teacher leadership competency; thus, it is claimed by the researcher that a study applying the research topic in this paper which utilized the approach of mixed methods was yet to be encountered by the researcher.

In view of these conditions, the importance of studying the teacher leadership competency in junior high school department in public schools and how it affects the student outcomes and the school's development is evident. To add further, teachers can use the important points of the results of this study to reflect and improve on their teacher leadership competencies which are always open for improvements and upskilling. This could also enable teacher leaders in schools to assess their strengths and points of improvement in embodying their duties as implementers of the curriculum and facilitation of learning in the classroom. Thus, this also lends contribution for teachers to effectively reexamine their pivotal role that could certainly benefit not just their classrooms, but also the community at large. This research effort also implies the necessity to open a series of empirical investigations on the teacher leadership competence in public schools as this can inform the directions of future studies, discoveries, and educational policies.

Drawing theoretical explanations from different theories of school leadership (Burns, 1978; Harrison, 1975; McMaster, 2002), this study employed a convergent parallel mixed methods design to explore how organizational culture and conflict management styles influence teacher leadership competency in public secondary schools within the Davao region. The findings, specific to this context, provide tangible evidence of the interconnections among these variables. By delving into these traits, the study could contribute to addressing issues related to teacher leadership within the scope of the research.

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Research Questions

This study determined the influence of organizational culture and conflict management styles on teachers' leadership competency in public secondary schools in Region XI. Specifically, the study sought answers to the following questions:

1. What is the status of organizational culture, conflict management styles, and teachers' leadership competency as perceived by the participants?
2. Do organizational culture and conflict management styles significantly influence the teacher leadership competency?
3. What are the lived experiences of the participants concerning teachers' leadership competency?
4. How do the experiences of the participants with regard to their leadership competency shape their belief, attitude, and commitment?
5. To what extent do the qualitative data corroborate with the quantitative findings?

METHODS

The study utilized the convergent design of mixed-method studies. Combining descriptive-correlational techniques and phenomenology in this study, realities about teacher leadership competency were uncovered in relation to its relationship with organizational culture and conflict management styles. This study was conducted among secondary educators in public schools in Region XI. Data collection methods such as surveys and interviews were simultaneously done among 328 randomly sampled respondents for the quantitative phase and 17 participants for the qualitative phase. Instruments for quantitative phase were adapted from different seminal works such as that of Efeoğlu and Ulum (2017), Noor et al. (2019), as well as Yuet et al. (2017). These were also pilot tested to ensure the reliability and suitability of the items in the study's context. Expert validators were also tapped to ensure the validity and cultural appropriateness of the items, together with the interview guide questions for the qualitative phase of this study. Collected data were separately processed through different statistical tools such as mean, standard deviation, regression and data analysis technique called thematic analysis. Then, both sets of data were corroborated to check whether both data sets were either converging or diverging. The data gathering and analysis phases concluded in the careful presentation of the findings.

RESULTS

Level of Organizational Culture

Depicted in Table 1, the study measured the organizational culture as perceived by secondary teachers in the public schools in Region XI. Results revealed that the variable garnered a mean of 4.33 which is interpreted as very high or always observed. Its standard deviation (SD=.50) which is below 1.0 also denotes the homogeneous responses of the teachers about the variable. The indicator of organizational culture which holds the highest mean is success dimension (M=4.39, SD=.63) which is followed by mission dimension (M=4.33, SD=.59) and bureaucracy dimension (M=4.32, SD=.64). The indicator of the variable with the lowest mean is support dimension (M=4.28, SD=.69). Nonetheless, all of the indicators are gauged as very high, indicating that these dimensions are always perceived by the respondents.

Table 1
Level of Organizational Culture

Indicators	Mean	SD	Description
1. Support Dimension	4.28	.69	Very High
2. Mission Dimension	4.33	.59	Very High
3. Success Dimension	4.39	.63	Very High
4. Bureaucracy Dimension	4.32	.64	Very High
OVERALL	**4.33**	**.50**	**VERY HIGH**

Level of Conflict Management Styles

As shown in Table 2, the study measured the conflict management styles of secondary teachers in the public schools in Region XI. Results revealed that the variable garnered a mean of 4.09 which is interpreted as very high or always manifested. Its standard deviation (SD=.63) which is below 1.0 also denotes the homogeneous responses of the teachers about the variable. The indicator of conflict management styles which holds the highest mean is integrating style (M=4.30, SD=.73) which is followed by obliging style (M=4.22, SD=.69), which are both very high in level or always manifested. These are followed by compromising style (M=4.13, SD=.64) and avoiding style (M=4.09, SD=.90). All these indicators are gauged as high, indicating that these dimensions are oftentimes perceived by the respondents and responses about these indicators are homogeneous. However, the indicator with only a high level of mean is dominating style (M=3.70, SD=1.15) with a standard deviation, indicating that the responses about this indicator are heterogeneous.

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Table 2
Level of Conflict Management Styles

Indicators	Mean	SD	Description
1. Integrating Style	4.30	.73	Very High
2. Obliging Style	4.22	.69	Very High
3. Dominating Style	3.70	1.15	High
4. Avoiding Style	4.09	.90	High
5. Compromising Style	4.13	.75	High
OVERALL	**4.09**	**.63**	**HIGH**

Level of Teacher Leadership Competency

Depicted in Table 3, the study measured the teacher leadership competency of secondary teachers in the public schools in Region XI. Results revealed that the variable garnered a mean of 4.45 which is interpreted as very high or always manifested. Its standard deviation (SD=.48) which is below 1.0 also denotes the homogeneous responses of the teachers about the variable. The indicator of teacher leadership competency which holds the highest mean is modeling leadership attributes and skills (M=4.54, SD=.55) which is followed by facilitating improvement and establishing standards (M=4.50, SD=.60) and fostering a collaborative culture (M=4.44, SD=.63). This is followed by the indicator with the lowest mean which is performing as a referral leader (M=4.40, SD=.58). All of these indicators are gauged as very high, indicating that these dimensions are always perceived by the respondents.

Table 3
Level of Teacher Leadership Competency

Indicators	Mean	SD	Description
1. Fostering a Collaborative Culture	4.44	.63	Very High
2. Facilitating Improvement and Establishing Standards	4.50	.60	Very High
3. Modeling Leadership Attributes and Skills	4.54	.55	Very High
4. Performing as Referral Leader	4.40	.58	Very High
OVERALL	**4.45**	**.48**	**VERY HIGH**

Significant Influence of Organizational Culture and Conflict Management Styles on Teacher Leadership Competency

Table 4 showcases the significant influence of both organizational culture and conflict management styles on teacher leadership competency. For instance, an increase of .461 is observed in teacher leadership competency as a result of 1-unit increase in organizational culture. Likewise, teacher leadership competency is augment by .282 as a consequence of 1-unit increase of conflict management styles. Further, the statistical model accounted 45.1% of the variance observed in teacher leadership competency, which leads to the conclusion that the remaining 54.9% of variance on the same variable is possible due to variables not accounted in this paper. Thus, further studies must be pursued to shed light on these unknown variables.

Table 4
Significant Influence of Organizational Culture and Conflict Management Styles on Teacher Leadership Competency

	Standardized Coefficients Beta	T	p-value	Interpretation
Organizational Culture	.461	8.843	.000	Significant
Conflict Management	.282	5.408	.000	Significant
R =.672				
R Square = .451				
F = 133.348				
p value = .000				

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Lived Experiences of Secondary Teachers on Teacher Leadership Competency

The participants in the interviews recounted their experiences regarding teacher leadership competency. These are summarized into three themes namely, manifestation of a highly efficient leader, establishing positivity, and fostering a supportive environment. First, the participants said that in schools, they were empowered to become leaders who practice efficiency by maximizing outcomes using minimal resources. Second, the participants also opened about how they exhibited positivity in the face of overwhelming challenges as teachers and leaders in their respective schools. Third, the participants also shared how their environment in school fostered and supported them to become empowered teachers. These ideas are better expressed and illustrated in Table 5.

Table 5
Lived Experiences on Teacher Leadership Competency

Emerging Themes	Core Idea
1. Manifestation of a Highly Efficient Leader	They tend to lead with high productivity, while only using minimal available resources.
2. Establishing Positivity	They said that they made sure to consistently adopt a positive mindset, a reflective stance, and the openness to accept any challenges that came in their way.
3. Fostering a Supportive Environment	They affirmed that what they also prioritized in their respective settings was to cultivate a working environment that supported all teachers to be productive and successful in meeting the school organizational goals.

Role of Teacher Leadership Competency Experiences in Shaping the Participants' Beliefs

In Table 6, participants shared how their experiences in teacher leadership competency shaped their beliefs. This idea is encapsulated in the following themes: multifaceted role of a teacher being a leader, and embodiment of leadership attributes. First, many participants admitted that being delegated as a leader in their schools exposed them into various roles such as being a mentor, and educator, and a negotiator, among others. Second, the participants were also led to believe that their experiences shaped how they view the importance of embracing the role of leaders in schools.

Table 6
How Experiences on Teacher Leadership Competency Molded the Beliefs of the Participants

Emerging Themes	Core Idea
1. Multifaceted Role of a Teacher Being a Leader	They were able to subscribe to the belief that being a teacher who exercised leadership entails a multifaceted and complex set of roles.
2. Embodiment of Leadership Attributes	The depth of the experiences shared by the participants in the interviews molded their strong belief on the importance of embodying the attributes befitting the leaders in schools.

Role of Teacher Leadership Competency Experiences in Shaping the Participants' Attitudes

The participants in the interviews recounted how their experiences on teacher leadership competency shaped their attitudes. These are summarized into two themes namely, value-laden leader and attributes of a proactive leader. First, the participants firmly maintained that values such as integrity, kindness and humility are integral in making the workplace a nice place to thrive at. Second, the participants were also led by their experiences to be more strategic and proactive in managing the faculty and students as well as in addressing the obstacles faced by the schools. These ideas are better expressed and illustrated in Table 7.

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Table 7
How Experiences on Teacher Leadership Competency Molded the Attitudes of the Participants

Emerging Themes	Core Idea
1. Value-laden Leader	The participants cited in the interviews that they maintained integral values such as integrity, workplace wholesomeness, respect, kindness, and humility, which were all essential in casting an ideal picture on how the teaching workplace should look like.
2. Attributes of a Proactive Leader	This only means that the teachers took a proactive stance in leading the faculty and students, often finding themselves strategizing for the improvement of the school .

Role of Teacher Leadership Competency Experiences in Shaping the Participants' Commitment

In Table 8, participants shared how their experiences in teacher leadership competency shaped their beliefs as teachers. This idea is encapsulated in the following themes: an agent of change and carrying out leadership through teacher efficiency. First, many participants espoused that their experiences on teacher leadership competency have increased their commitment to be an agent of change by delivering a significant impact to the community. Second, the participants were also made committed to be efficient in performing their duties in upholding lifelong learning and 21st century skills among learners and teachers alike.

Table 8
How Experiences on Teacher Leadership Competency Molded the Commitment of the Participants

Emerging Themes	Core Idea
1. An Agent of Change	Their experiences called each participant to not just be mere employees in their workstations, but also as agent of changes who were able to bring a significant impact on the lives of their co-workers, students, and stakeholders.
2. Carrying Out Leadership Through Teacher Efficiency	Their experiences shaped them to be consistent and efficient in terms of exercising collaboration, performing their responsibilities and duties, and cultivating the competencies of students in 21st century skills and lifelong learning.

Joint Display of Salient Quantitative and Qualitative Findings

In the corroboration of quantitative and qualitative data as shown in Table 9, it was found that both data sets merged and converged. This only generally indicates that both quantitative and qualitative data confirm each other. First, it was confirmed in both phases that participants observed a good organizational culture in their schools. It was also expanded in the data corroboration that their perceived organizational culture comprises of a working environment that supports teachers to become good leaders in their respective areas of responsibility. Second, it was also corroborated from both data sets that a diverse set of conflict management styles is apparent in secondary schools. Third, teachers confirmed in both study phases that they observed and possessed a great deal of teacher leadership competency in schools where they were working. Finally, the influence of organizational culture and conflict management styles on teacher leadership competency was confirmed in both quantitative and qualitative phases.

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Table 9
Summarized Joint Display of Salient Quantitative and Qualitative Findings

Comparison of Quantitative and Qualitative Results	Core Idea
Organizational Culture	Merging-Converging Merging-Expansion
Conflict Management Styles	Merging-Converging
Teacher Leadership Competency	Merging-Converging
Influence of OC and CMS on TLC	Merging-Converging

DISCUSSION

Conclusions

1. The level of organizational culture in schools was very high.
2. Meanwhile, the level of conflict management styles among the public high school teachers was rated high.
3. Moreover, results revealed that the teacher leadership competency was very high among the respondents.
4. Further, results disclosed that both organizational culture and conflict management styles influence teacher leadership competency.
5. When asked about their experiences on teacher leadership competency, the participants openly shared that they possessed good attributes as teacher leaders. They manifested efficiency when given a chance to lead groups of students and teachers within and beyond their schools. They also advocated positivity and a culture of a supportive environment within their schools, enabling them to brave challenges while maintaining a positive outlook in life.
6. Based also on the interviews, the experiences of the participants shaped their beliefs, attitudes, and commitment toward teacher leadership competency in different interesting ways. Their experiences shaped them to believe that they should embrace leadership, expecting that they must wear multiple hats or assume different kinds of responsibilities as leaders. Their exposures also shaped their attitudes to be value-laden and proactive as leaders and, at the same time, teachers in the field. Resultantly, their experiences also molded them to be committed to becoming a catalyst of change and an efficient teacher leader whom everybody can rely on.
7. Furthermore, integration of the data on salient results from both quantitative and qualitative phases revealed similar results. After corroborating the findings, it was concluded that the quantitative and qualitative findings merged and converged as well as expanded.

Recommendations

1. Since a very high level of organizational culture was pinpointed in the research setting, it is suggested that high school teachers and the administration make more efforts to sustain this desirable result. School leaders need to focus more on setting the goals and objectives of the organization, making it as a primary mission for all teachers to uphold and pursue. Likewise, they may also continue to provide support to teachers and give the faculty more chances to lend their assistance to other teachers to bolster the existing organizational culture in schools.
2. Since a high level of conflict management style was attributed to the secondary school teachers in Region XI, the teachers and leaders may sustain their effort of taking some steps to elevate the level of this variable. One of the few ways that can be done in this aspect is to maintain the effort of providing trainings and programs for teachers and administrators to increase their capacity, resilience, and adaptability to tackle different issues, challenges and conflicts within the organization.
3. Since a very high level of teacher leadership competency was pinpointed in the research setting, it is suggested that this positive finding have to be sustained through different coordinated efforts between the faculty and the administration. Mentoring sessions and programs have to be encouraged between head teachers and neophyte educators in hopes of molding more capable and productive leaders within the schools. The scope and access of leadership trainings and programs in terms of curriculum, pedagogy, time management, bureaucracy and many others may be expanded to a greater number of teachers to maintain the rich extent of teacher leadership competency among the respondents.
4. Since the lived experiences of the participants generally centered mostly on good attributes of the teacher leaders such as efficiency and workplace optimism, it is suggested that more learning and development programs tailored for teachers have to focus more on activities that can potentially lessen work toxicity, and instead capitalize on the power of optimism and supportive work environment. More leadership opportunities and exposures may be given to all teachers for them to enhance their skill of being an efficient leader, leveraging significant school achievements and outcomes using only minimal available resources. An established and reliable mentoring and support system facilitated by seasoned and skilled teacher leaders to train and mold more capable teacher leaders maybe be introduced in schools to enrich the experiences

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of many more teachers in the context of teacher leadership competency.

5. While these salient findings were found to be no less significant and representative of the actual status of teacher leadership competency among the respondents in Region XI, its limitations such as the focus of the study solely on public schools and secondary teachers, its scope that was limited only to Region XI, and the corresponding weaknesses of using interviews and survey questionnaires as data gathering methods, have certainly introduced more research gaps for other willing researchers to fill in in the future. Thus, more research should be dedicated in uncovering other possible angles and perspectives about teacher leadership competency by utilizing different research methods and designs, recruiting different sets of respondents and participants, as well as considering the use of alternative data gathering and analysis tools to enrich and expand what this study has managed to glean thus far.

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