EXPLORING THE LEADERSHIP STYLES OF FILIPINO – CHINESE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

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ABSTRACT

In the context of education, leadership is critical in delivering the company vision and mission. An organization that functions in unison can attain its objectives effortlessly. This study explored the leadership style of Chinese schools in the Philippines. It seeks to answer 1 important question: the description of the leadership style of school administrators of Filipino-Chinese schools. It utilized qualitative research to achieve its objectives. A total of 9 participants were chosen using purposive sampling. The participants were 3 administrators, 3 employees with managerial and supervisory functions, and 3 from teaching and non-teaching staff. The data were gathered using in-depth interview and were analyzed using Thematic Analysis. The results revealed that the most common leadership styles are visionary, autocratic, hierarchical, empowering, cooperative, and participative. Moreover, the leader's behaviors include people-centered, conservative, decent, and professional. The results of this exploratory study will benefit school administrators of Filipino-Chinese schools in determining the dominant and valuable leadership styles and organizational culture.

Keywords: educational institution, Filipino-Chinese schools, leadership style, management style.

INTRODUCTION

Educational institutions, especially smaller ones that lack financial reserves to weather economic storms, are not immune to collapse. Even before the COVID-19 epidemic broke out in the Philippines, several schools were fighting for survival. For example, educational innovations (such as the establishment and execution of the K12 program) have resulted in various amounts of income reduction in some schools. Educational institutions that had not made enough preparations for this shift found themselves in a difficult situation, and the transition process had far-reaching consequences for the organization's growth and viability. Some Filipino-Chinese schools especially those in the provinces have seen an organizational downturn, as seen by the declining number of students enrolled. Some of these schools have even shut down and stopped operating.

For organizations to truly withstand the crisis, organizations need to develop leaders. Eliot (2020) underlined that servant leadership has comparable affirmative impacts on the resilience of their followers. Servant leaders can likewise help improve the organization's resilience level. When a servant leader exhibits resilient behaviors, he can increase the resilience capabilities

of his organization. Servant leadership is deemed unique from other forms of leadership like transformational, ethical, and authentic as it focuses on the psychological needs of individual followers as a goal in itself (Eva et al., 2019). Servant leadership builds a sense of social identity in their followers and creates teams where members assist and build the capacities of other team members. Contrary to other performance-oriented leadership approaches, servant leaders concentrate on sustainable performances over time. In addition, unlike other leadership approaches, servant leadership focuses on cohorts' growth in diverse areas (e.g., psychological well-being, emotional maturity, etc.).

This study explored the leadership styles of administrators of Filipino-Chinese schools. Moreover, the study is drawn from the 'self-enhancement theory,' which proposes that individuals form their self-worth based on how they are treated by others. As leaders play a key role in representing an organization, perceptions of servant leadership enhance employees' self-worth within the organization. The results will be used in the second phase of the study which represents the quantitative method.

RELATED LITERATURE

"The process of exercising social influence" is how leadership is defined (Teo et al., 2017). Most leadership theories embrace this concept (i.e., "leadership as an influence process") (Seidel et al., 2019). The process is triggered by the leader's actions. Leadership is critical in delivering the company vision and mission in the educational context. An organization that functions in unison may attain its objectives with ease.

At all levels of an organization, leadership is required (Koohang et al., 2016). Leadership is crucial for cultivating the resilience-enhancing potential of diverse work units, according to recent organizational resilience studies (Duchek et al., 2020). Similarly, Southwick et al. (2017) said that for an organization to be resilient, it needs strong leadership that supports cohesive and interdependent teams. A high-caliber leader capable of inspiring and motivating personnel is required in each firm. Leadership and resilience are inextricably linked (Morales et al., 2018). Employee resilience is favorably related with supportive leadership (Cook et al., 2018). As a result, past study has credited the significance of leadership in the staff resilience-building process (Zhu et al., 2019).

In educational institutions, servant leadership, like most leadership styles, is essential (Gocen & Sen, 2020). A servant leader is someone who nurtures and enables people to reach their full potential (Gandolfi et al., 2017). A servant leader in an organization caters to the needs of followers and encourages them to take on new responsibility (Seidel et al., 2019). Servant leadership refers to the human need "to be recognized, to care, and to be cared for in the pursuit of the common good" in educational settings (Gocen & Sen, 2020). The focus of this leadership is on others rather than on oneself (Seidel et al., 2019).

The 'servant leadership theory' serves as another foundation for this study. The theory posits that leaders adopt behaviors that transcend their self-interest to serve their followers' interests. This study is anchored on servant leadership, as many previous studies stressed that servant leaders positively impact subordinate resilience (Eliot, 2020).

RESEARCH METHOD

The study used the qualitative method. It employed purposeful or purposive sampling. In this sampling technique, the researcher can intentionally select or recruit participants who have experienced the concept under investigation (Creswell & Clark, 2018). In selecting participants, the study used the 'maximal variation technique,' where diverse individuals to be chosen are those likely to hold different perspectives on the concept under investigation (Creswell & Clark, 2018). The key informants, nine (9) at least, will be purposively selected from these groups: teaching and non-teaching personnel (3), employees in managerial and supervisory levels (3), and administrators (3). This study followed the interview protocols. In the conduct of interviews, an interview guide was utilized. The interview guide included guide questions relative to the interviewees' demographic profile and research questions pertinent to the fundamental concepts or central phenomenon under investigation. The study used a thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a method used for "identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data" (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This kind of analysis is helpful when the research wants to identify, analyze, and report patterns or themes within the data. The analysis has six phases such as familiarizing with data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining themes, and summarizing the themes. The theme "captures something important about the data in relation to the research questions and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set" (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In the analysis of data, the study focused on the theoretical and conceptual issues related to leadership style and organizational culture.
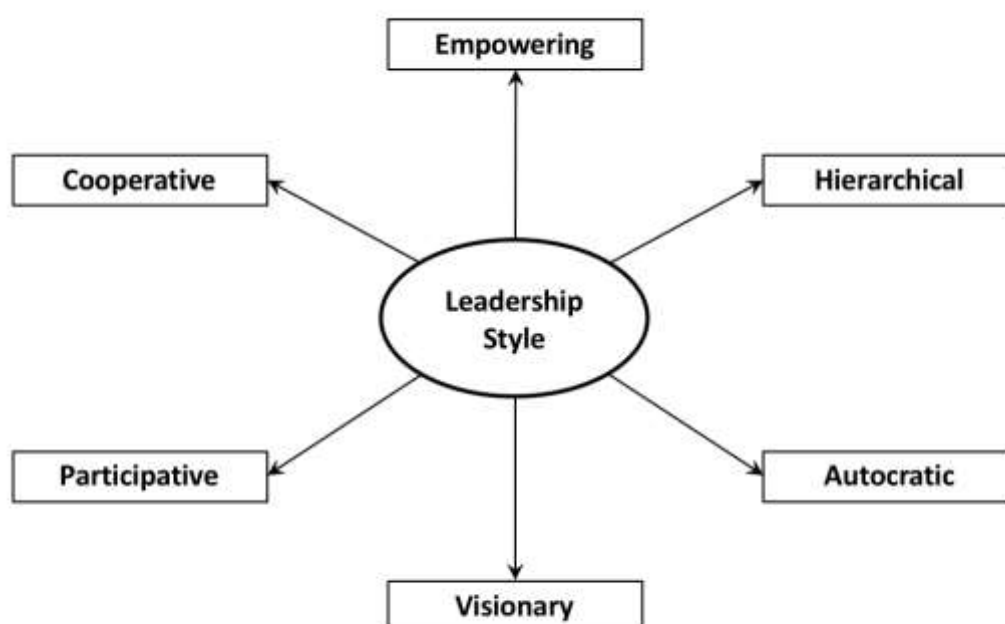
RESULTS

Figure 1: The leadership styles among Filipino-Chinese schools

Figure 1 shows the results of the main question which asked the participants to describe the leadership style of Filipino-Chinese schools. The most common responses were visionary, autocratic, participative, hierarchical, empowering, and cooperative. The participants enunciated the different leadership styles based on the engagements, interactions, and experiences. The different descriptions can be ascribed to the unique nature of the participant's roles in the organization, the size of the school and its Mission, Vision, and Values.
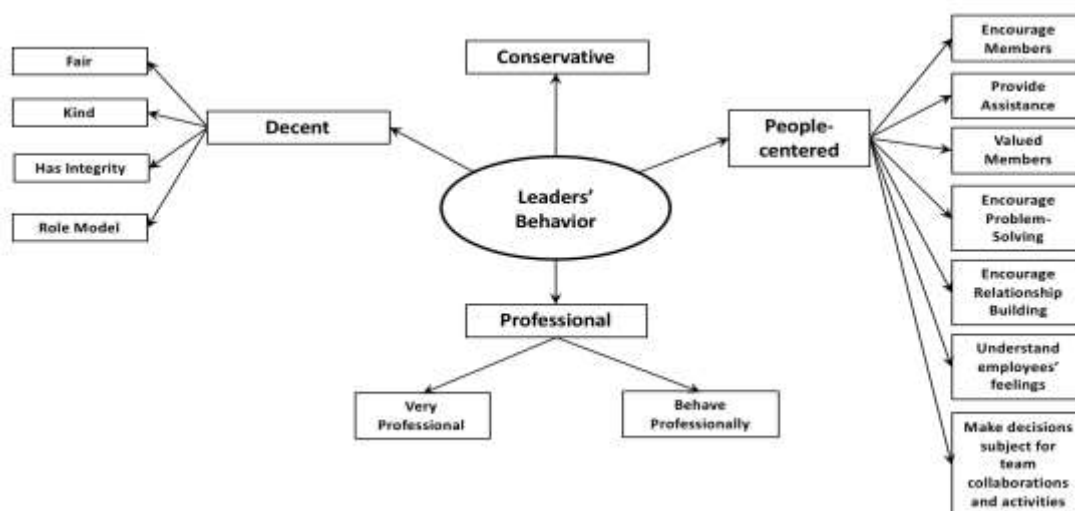

Figure 2: Filipino-Chinese school leader's behavior

As depicted in Figure 2, the leader's behavior is described as conservative, professional, decent, and people- centered. As a people-centered leader, one must be able to promote teamwork in order to build strong relationships among members of the organization. He must show empathy to understand the feelings of his employees. As a people-centered leader, he must encourage its members to be problem solvers and must assist the team whenever needed. As a decent leader, one must show fairness, kindness, and must have integrity. As a decent leader, members of the team look at him as a role model.
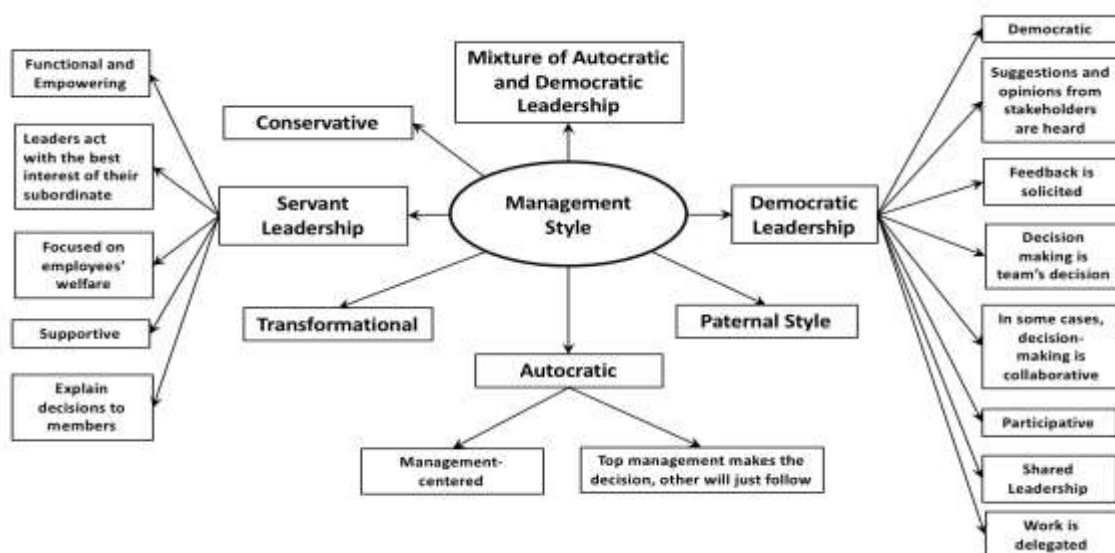

Figure 3: Management styles of Filipino-Chinese schools

Figure 3 centers on the management style of Filipino-Chinese schools. As shown in the figure, 7 management styles were mentioned. These are autocratic, paternal, democratic, combination of autocratic and democratic, conservative, servant, and transformational. As a servant leader, one must be able to function and empower its people. He should put his people first, their interests, welfare, and must be supportive. Conversely, as an autocratic leader, employees will just follow whatever the management tells them to do. It is management centered. Finally, democratic leadership style is participatory. There is delegation of work, and the management involves its employees to participate in the decision making. Employees are asked of their feedback and in some instances, there is a collaboration between management and employees. The goal of this management style is shared leadership.

CONCLUSION

Filipino-Chinese schools have different leadership and management styles. Some schools are democratic, others are autocratic, some schools promote participative leadership where employees are consulted in the decision-making process. The different descriptions given by the participants are attributable to different factors like the nature of their job, position, and classification which affect the employee's interaction in the organization. Moreover, the size of the organization also influenced the responses of the participants since smaller organizations tend to involve everyone given the limited number of manpower whereas, bigger organizations prefer involving key people in the decision-making process

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