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Ethno-Leadership and Values Development: Examining Cultural Identity and Student Governance Among Supreme Pupils' Government Officers in Glan, Sarangani Province

Geornie T. Somohid^{*1}, Alan A. Maglantay²

¹ Enrique D. Yap, Sr., Elementary School, Calabanit, Glan Sarangani Province, Philippines

² Sultan Kudarat State University, ACCESS, EJC Montilla, Tacurong City, Philippines

*Corresponding Author email: geornie.somohid@deped.gov.ph

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Abstract

Aim: This study explored the extent to which ethno-leadership influences the values development of Supreme Pupils' Government (SPG) officers in Glan, Sarangani Province, focusing on how cultural background—defined by ethnic affiliation and language—shapes student leadership behaviors and ethical foundations. Specifically, it examined whether culturally rooted leadership styles, practices, and communication strategies are associated with the core values of honesty, empathy, fairness, responsibility, and respect.

Methodology: Employing a descriptive-correlational research design, the researchers administered validated survey questionnaires to 88 SPG officers, 12 SPG advisers, and 12 school heads. The instruments measured three domains of ethno-leadership—leadership style, leadership practices, and communication style—and five dimensions of values development. Spearman's Rho correlation and ANOVA were used to analyze the relationships among the variables and to assess the moderating effect of cultural background.

Results: The SPG officers consistently achieved very high mean scores across all dimensions of leadership and values development. Participants came from various ethnolinguistic backgrounds, with Cebuano and indigenous groups such as B'laan and Maguindanaon well represented—highlighting the multilingual and multicultural composition of student leaders in Glan. Leadership style showed statistically significant positive correlations with integrity, empathy, and overall values development. In contrast, leadership practices and communication styles, although also rated very high, did not yield statistically significant correlations—suggesting that while these aspects are present, their direct influence on values development may be less pronounced than that of leadership style. Additionally, no significant differences were found across ethnic or linguistic groups, indicating that cultural background did not moderate the ethno-leadership influence.

Conclusion: The findings affirm that well-structured student leadership programs, particularly those emphasizing leadership style, can effectively foster ethical development among young leaders regardless of cultural identity. This research contributes empirical evidence supporting culturally responsive, values-based student governance as a model for youth leadership in diverse educational settings.

Keywords: cultural identity, ethno-leadership, student governance, supreme pupils' government, values development

INTRODUCTION

Globally, the demand for culturally responsive leadership continues to grow as schools become increasingly diverse and interconnected. In multicultural educational contexts such as those in Canada, India, and the United States, research underscores that effective leadership requires the ability to lead with cultural sensitivity, mutual respect, and collaboration (Macpherson, 2018; Littlejohn, 2019). Studies affirm that embracing—rather than minimizing—cultural diversity fosters equity, innovation, and community cohesion.



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In the Philippines, student leadership is deeply shaped by collective values and indigenous traditions. Supreme Pupils' Government (SPG) leadership, especially at the elementary level, functions not merely as a preparatory activity for adult governance but as a vital space for nurturing empathy, accountability, and inclusive decision-making. David et al. (2019) emphasized that Filipino leadership embodies bayanihan and pakikisama—core socio-cultural values that reflect group harmony, cooperation, and shared responsibility. These ideals are especially evident in indigenous communities such as the Blaan and Maguindanaon, where leadership is transmitted through oral tradition, consensus-building, and collective dialogue (Javier & Reyes, 2021).

Despite the growing attention to student leadership in secondary and tertiary levels, a notable research gap persists: how do elementary school leaders, particularly those from multi-ethnic communities, develop their leadership behaviors and ethical values? More importantly, how does their cultural background—defined by ethnic affiliation and primary language—shape this development? This gap is particularly relevant in Glan, Sarangani Province, a culturally diverse area where leadership dynamics intersect with ethnicity and language.

To address this, the present study investigates the role of ethno-leadership—defined as leadership rooted in cultural identity and values—in influencing the values development of SPG officers. While previous literature has established connections between leadership behavior and values formation (Weng & Yan, 2019; Hrvat, 2018), limited empirical studies have explored this relationship within elementary-level student leadership, especially in the Philippine context.

This study narrows that gap by examining how leadership styles, practices, and communication strategies—operationalized through the ethno-leadership framework—relate to core values such as integrity, empathy, fairness, responsibility, and respect. It also evaluates whether cultural background, as indicated by ethnic affiliation and home language, moderates these relationships.

In doing so, the study makes a distinct contribution to educational leadership research by highlighting a largely understudied demographic: elementary student leaders. It questions the assumption that cultural identity inevitably determines leadership behavior and considers whether institutional frameworks and shared Filipino values serve as unifying elements for student governance.

Foundational leadership theories further guide this investigation. Lewin et al.'s (1939) typology of authoritarian, democratic, and laissez-faire leadership remains influential in evaluating student leadership behaviors. In collectivist societies like the Philippines, democratic leadership—characterized by participation and group consensus—is especially relevant. Goleman (2000) extended this framework by introducing emotional intelligence as a critical factor in adapting leadership styles to meet the socio-emotional needs of a team.

Leadership practices such as task delegation, decision-making involvement, and accountability are equally important for effective student governance (Abenojar, et al., 2025; Carvajal, et al., 2023; Carvajal, et al., 2025; Muñoz & Sanchez, 2023). Kouzes and Posner (2017) emphasized that leadership is more about practiced behaviors than personality traits—an assertion reflected in SPG officers who actively manage responsibilities and promote student participation in school initiatives. This aligns with Bandura's (1997) theory of self-efficacy, which highlights that belief in one's capability to lead or influence others often develops through repeated behavioral reinforcement and positive modeling. This is particularly relevant in elementary school settings, where leadership confidence is still emerging and shaped by both structure and culture.

Communication styles—direct, indirect, and respect-based—also play a vital role in ethno-leadership. In the Philippine and broader Asian contexts, indirect and respectful communication are culturally embedded (Hall, 1976; Gudykunst & Ting-Toomey, 1988). These styles allow leaders to maintain harmony and express authority without confrontation. Moreover, Hofstede's (2001) concept of high-context communication supports the idea that in cultures like the Philippines, non-verbal cues, politeness, and deference are essential in maintaining group cohesion and effective leadership.

The importance of cultural diversity in leadership development is well-established. Basnet (2024) found that exposure to diverse cultural settings enhances students' adaptability and critical thinking. Brion (2020) highlighted how culturally aware leadership fosters inclusive school governance. Within the SPG context, Cruz et al. (2022) emphasized that ethnolinguistic representation in leadership enables broader student engagement and more equitable decision-making.

Ethnic affiliation shapes leadership by influencing social roles, conflict resolution approaches, and communication norms. Graoui (2019) noted that students with strong ethnic identities often exhibit leadership behaviors grounded in cultural customs, while Huerta and Miguel (2022) found that diverse leadership teams create more inclusive and relatable school environments. These findings are consistent with Berry's (2005) acculturation



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theory, which suggests that individuals from minority ethnic backgrounds who retain their cultural identity while engaging with the dominant culture experience more holistic development—including leadership efficacy.

Language, too, plays a central role. Bilingual and multilingual student leaders are often more culturally sensitive and effective communicators (Kamales & Knorr, 2020; Lopez, 2020). In the Philippines, Javier and Reyes (2021) found that students fluent in both their indigenous language and Filipino demonstrated stronger leadership capacity, acting as cultural bridges among peers. Fishman (1991) emphasized that language is a vehicle for cultural identity, and multilingualism in school leaders fosters inclusive communication and strengthens peer relationships in culturally diverse classrooms.

Values development is intrinsically tied to student leadership. Weng and Yan (2019), Mydin and Amran (2019), and Hrvat (2018) consistently found that student leaders develop values such as integrity, respect, and responsibility through both training and cultural immersion. Zavatska et al. (2022) and Peck and Callahan (2019) likewise confirmed that student leaders become ethical role models, influencing their peers through both formal and informal leadership activities. According to Schwartz's (2012) theory of basic human values, ethical values such as honesty, fairness, and responsibility are central to leadership development and are cultivated through consistent engagement with socially endorsed norms—such as those taught in student governance programs.

Taken together, the literature affirms the deep interconnection between cultural identity, leadership behavior, communication style, and values formation (Amihan, et al., 2023; Carvajal & Sanchez, 2024; Pangilinan, 2025). When student leaders are equipped with culturally grounded practices and inclusive leadership strategies, they are more likely to lead ethically and effectively in multicultural settings.

As Philippine schools seek to cultivate young leaders who are not only competent but also compassionate and culturally aware, understanding the role of ethno-leadership becomes critical. This study aims to fill that gap by examining how leadership behaviors shaped by culture influence values development among SPG officers—and whether cultural background moderates these effects.

Objectives

This study aimed to examine the influence of ethno-leadership and cultural diversity on the values development of Supreme Pupils' Government (SPG) officers in Glan District, Sarangani Province.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the level of ethno-leadership influence among SPG officers in terms of:
 - 1.1. Leadership style;
 - 1.2. Leadership practices; and
 - 1.3. Communication style?
2. What is level of the cultural diversity of SPG officers based on:
 - 2.1. Ethnic affiliation; and
 - 2.2. Primary language spoken at home?
3. What is the level of values development among SPG officers in terms of:
 - 3.1. Integrity and honesty;
 - 3.2. Respect for authority and peers;
 - 3.3. Responsibility and dependability;
 - 3.4. Empathy and compassion; and
 - 3.5. Fairness and justice?
4. Is there a significant relationship between ethno-leadership influence and the values development of SPG officers?
5. Is the cultural background—specifically ethnic affiliation and primary language spoken at home—significantly moderates the relationship between ethno-leadership influence and values development among SPG officers?

Hypothesis

Given the stated research problem, the following hypotheses were tested on 0.05 level of significance:

Ha₁: There is a significant relationship between the level of ethno-leadership influence and the values development of Supreme Pupils' Government (SPG) officers.

Ha₂: Cultural background, specifically ethnic affiliation, and primary language spoken significantly moderates the relationship between ethno-leadership influence and the values development of SPG officers.



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METHODS

Research Design

This study utilized a descriptive-correlational research design to examine the relationship between ethno-leadership influence and values development among Supreme Pupils' Government (SPG) officers in culturally diverse public elementary schools. The descriptive part identified the leadership styles, practices, and communication styles of the SPG officers, as well as their cultural backgrounds. The correlational aspect explored the relationship between ethno-leadership and values development, and whether cultural background significantly moderated this relationship. This design was appropriate in identifying patterns and statistical associations among variables using standardized responses for objective analysis.

Population and Sampling

The study involved a total of 112 respondents, comprising 88 Supreme Pupils' Government (SPG) officers, 12 SPG advisers, and 12 school heads from the 12 public elementary schools in Glan 1 District, Sarangani Province. These individuals were selected based on their active participation in SPG operations and student leadership initiatives within their respective schools.

A complete enumeration technique was employed, wherein all eligible SPG officers, advisers, and school heads within the identified schools were included in the study. This approach was considered appropriate given the relatively manageable population size and the objective of capturing comprehensive and context-rich perspectives. By including all stakeholders directly engaged in SPG leadership, the study ensured full representation across the district's multi-ethnic and multilingual educational landscape. This method supported the aim of exploring ethno-leadership's influence on values development from both student and adult leadership viewpoints within a culturally diverse setting.

Instrument

This study utilized a structured, expert-validated survey questionnaire to assess ethno-leadership influence, cultural diversity, student behavior, and values development among Supreme Pupils' Government (SPG) officers, using a 5-point Likert scale and anchored on established leadership and values theories. The instrument underwent content validation through CVR and CVI, and reliability testing via Cronbach's Alpha, ensuring its clarity, consistency, and relevance to the research objectives.

Data Collection

Data were gathered using a validated survey questionnaire administered to SPG officers, SPG advisers, and school heads across all 12 public elementary schools in Glan 1 District, Sarangani Province. Prior to the conduct of the data collection, formal permission was secured from the Office of the Schools Division Superintendent of Sarangani and the respective school principals of the participating schools.

The questionnaires for SPG advisers and school heads were self-administered. For SPG officers, the questionnaires were administered in small groups during class hours, with the researchers and SPG advisers reading the items aloud to ensure understanding and data accuracy. This method was employed to accommodate varying reading proficiencies among the student respondents.

Survey responses were systematically collected, reviewed, and organized for analysis to address the core research questions concerning the relationship between ethno-leadership, cultural background, and values development among student leaders.

Treatment of Data

The study used both descriptive and inferential statistics to analyze the data. Mean and standard deviation were applied to assess the levels of ethno-leadership influence, cultural diversity, and values development, while frequency and percentage described the distribution of ethnic affiliations and home languages. For inferential analysis, Spearman's Rho correlation was used to examine the relationships between the three domains of ethno-leadership and the five domains of values development. To test whether cultural background—operationalized through ethnic affiliation and language—moderated the relationship between ethno-leadership and values development, a one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was conducted.



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Ethical Considerations

All ethical standards were upheld to protect the rights, privacy, and well-being of respondents and institutions. The researcher ensured informed consent, voluntary participation, and confidentiality throughout the data collection process. Given that SPG officers are elementary pupils and classified as minors, the researchers ensured compliance with ethical standards by securing informed consent from their parents or legal guardians, as well as assent from the student participants themselves. All respondents were oriented about the purpose of the study, voluntary participation, anonymity, and confidentiality of their responses.

RESULTS and DISCUSSION

Table 1

Level of Ethno-Leadership Influence among Supreme Pupils Government (SPG) Officers in terms of Collaborative Leadership Style, Authoritative Leadership Style and Democratic Leadership Style

A. Collaborative Leadership Style		Mean	SD	Interpretation
1	I encourage my team members to share their ideas during meetings.	4.38	.57	Very High
2	I often work together with my peers to solve problems.	4.59	.52	Very High
3	I consider everyone's opinion before making a decision.	4.67	.47	Very High
4	I share responsibilities fairly among group members.	4.67	.52	Very High
5	I help my team members when they are struggling with their tasks.	4.61	.49	Very High
Section Mean		4.58	.51	Very High
B. Authoritative Leadership Style		Mean	SD	Interpretation
1	I take full control when making important decisions for the group.	4.48	0.66	Very High
2	I often give clear instructions and expect them to be followed.	4.73	0.45	Very High
3	I make final decisions even if others disagree.	4.53	0.64	Very High
4	I set clear rules for my team to follow.	4.82	0.39	Very High
5	I expect my team members to complete tasks exactly as instructed.	4.60	0.54	Very High
Section Mean		4.63	0.54	Very High
C. Democratic Leadership Style		Mean	SD	Interpretation
1	I encourage group voting when making decisions.	4.94	0.23	Very High
2	I listen to all ideas before making a final decision.	4.78	0.41	Very High
3	I allow my team members to share their suggestions freely.	4.83	0.38	Very High
4	I support team discussions before setting goals.	4.95	0.21	Very High
5	I respect the majority opinion when deciding on group matters.	4.82	0.47	Very High
Section Mean		4.87	0.34	Very High

In the culturally rich context of Glan, Sarangani Province, leadership among elementary student officers is shaped by both indigenous values and contemporary frameworks of student governance. The results presented in Table 1 indicate that SPG officers exhibit a very high level of ethno-leadership across three dimensions: collaborative, authoritative, and democratic styles—all of which consistently achieved mean scores above 4.50 on a 5-point Likert scale. This finding reflects a well-rounded leadership profile, shaped not only by formal training and school structures but also by the students' lived cultural experiences.

Collaborative Leadership Style

With a section mean of 4.58 (SD = 0.51), SPG officers exhibited strong collaborative tendencies. High mean scores on items such as "I consider everyone's opinion before making a decision" (M = 4.67, SD = 0.47) underscore how inclusivity and mutual respect inform their team decision-making. These results align with the findings of Sunarso et al. (2024), who emphasized the importance of collaboration in student leadership, particularly within diverse educational settings. Similarly, Kouzes and Posner (2017) highlighted that empowered student leaders foster peer trust and a sense of shared responsibility. The results further reflect the cultural values of *pakikisama* and *bayanihan*, as articulated by David et al. (2019), affirming how Filipino cultural norms reinforce SPG officers' preference for cooperative engagement over individualistic approaches.



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Authoritative Leadership Style

Interestingly, SPG officers also demonstrated a very high level of authoritative leadership, with a mean score of 4.63 (SD = 0.54). The highest-rated indicators—"I set clear rules for my team to follow" (M = 4.82, SD = 0.39) and "I often give clear instructions" (M = 4.73, SD = 0.45)—suggest that these young leaders recognize the importance of order and structure in effective governance. This finding is consistent with Goleman's (2000) assertion that authoritative leadership offers clarity and direction—qualities that are particularly essential in early-stage leadership development. In Glan's multicultural classrooms, such leadership helps uphold structure amid diversity, a point further supported by Hidayat et al. (2020). Moreover, as students continue to develop their leadership identities, structure-driven models may provide the stability and confidence they need, a notion reinforced by Komives et al. (2017) through their developmental leadership theory.

Democratic Leadership Style

Democratic leadership emerged as the strongest among the three dimensions, with a section mean of 4.87 (SD = 0.34). Statements like "I support team discussions before setting goals" (M = 4.95) and "I encourage group voting" (M = 4.94) highlight the SPG officers' commitment to participatory leadership. This affirms Anwar et al.'s (2021) assertion that democratic leadership fosters trust, fairness, and cultural sensitivity, and mirrors the Filipino value of *pakikipagkapwa*—harmonious relationships built on respect and empathy (David et al., 2019).

Overall, SPG officers demonstrated a well-rounded leadership profile, blending collaboration, decisiveness, and inclusivity. These adaptive practices are shaped not only by training and school policies, such as DepEd Order No. 47, s. 2014, but also by cultural norms and role models. Grounded in Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1977), the findings suggest that students internalize leadership behaviors observed from adults in their communities. Ultimately, SPG leadership programs have the potential to cultivate young leaders who are culturally rooted, values-driven, and effective.

Ethno-Leadership Influence Among SPG Officers in Terms of Leadership Practices

Table 2

Level of Ethno-Leadership Influence among Supreme Pupils Government (SPG) Officers in terms of Leadership Practices on Decision-Making Involvement and Task Responsibility

	of Leadership Practices on Decision-Making Involvement	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1	I ask for opinions from my team before making decisions.	4.74	0.44	Very High
2	I involve my team in setting group goals.	4.60	0.58	Very High
3	I encourage my peers to help solve problems.	4.68	0.58	Very High
4	I listen to suggestions from team members before finalizing decisions.	4.80	0.43	Very High
5	I make sure everyone's voice is heard during discussions.	4.66	0.52	Very High
	Section Mean	4.70	0.51	Very High
	Task Responsibility	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1	I complete my assigned duties on time.	4.57	0.64	Very High
2	I ensure that team members understand their responsibilities.	4.73	0.45	Very High
3	I keep track of the progress of the tasks I am assigned.	4.69	0.46	Very High
4	I help distribute tasks fairly among team members.	4.77	0.42	Very High
5	I take responsibility if a task is not completed properly.	4.68	0.49	Very High
	Section Mean	4.69	0.49	Very High

Decision-Making Involvement.

As shown in Table 2, SPG officers demonstrated a very high level of decision-making involvement, with a section mean of 4.70 (SD = 0.51). The highest-rated item, "I listen to suggestions from team members before finalizing decisions" (M = 4.80, SD = 0.43), reflects the inclusive and consultative nature of SPG leadership. This finding affirms the principle advanced by Kouzes and Posner (2017) that empowering leadership promotes team ownership and collaboration.

Similarly, items such as "I ask for opinions from my team before making decisions" (M = 4.74) and "I involve my team in setting group goals" (M = 4.60) highlight a consistently democratic culture among student leaders. These results are consistent with Northouse's (2021) concept of participative leadership, which emphasizes



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collective input and shared accountability in governance. Furthermore, they align with the Department of Education's advocacy for participatory leadership, as outlined in DepEd Order No. 47, s. 2014.

Task Responsibility.

For the second component, task responsibility, the section mean was 4.69 (SD = 0.49), also interpreted as *Very High*. The top-rated item, "I help distribute tasks fairly among team members" (M = 4.77, SD = 0.42), indicates that SPG officers value equity and balance in the delegation of responsibilities—an essential aspect of team leadership and conflict prevention. Likewise, the item "I ensure that team members understand their responsibilities" (M = 4.73, SD = 0.45) underscores the importance placed on clarity and communication within student-led organizations.

Komives et al. (2017) emphasized that student leaders who are clear and dependable in assigning tasks are more likely to gain the trust of their peers and advisers. Similarly, Caldarella et al. (2017) found that task reliability and responsibility strongly predict leadership potential and pro-social behavior in young learners.

These results highlight the growing capacity of SPG officers to manage peer relationships and institutional duties effectively. They also suggest that the SPG framework successfully fosters early leadership competencies, including accountability, fairness, and collaborative responsibility.

Taken together, the consistently high scores in both decision-making and task responsibility affirm the value of providing elementary students with meaningful opportunities to lead, engage, and collaborate in inclusive governance environments.

Level of Ethno-Leadership Influence Among Supreme Pupils' Government (SPG) Officers in Terms of their Communication Styles

Table 3

Level of Ethno-Leadership Influence among Supreme Pupils Government (SPG) Officers in terms of Direct, Indirect and Respect-Based Communication Style

	Direct Communication Style	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1	I clearly state my expectations when giving instructions.	4.68	0.56	Very High
2	I share my thoughts openly during meetings.	4.76	0.43	Very High
3	I provide clear feedback to my peers.	4.67	0.56	Very High
4	I communicate my ideas directly without hesitation.	4.76	0.45	Very High
5	I ask questions when I don't understand something.	4.72	0.50	Very High
	Section Mean	4.72	0.50	Very High
	Indirect Communication Style	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1	I prefer to suggest ideas in private rather than in front of a group.	4.59	0.56	Very High
2	I use body language or gestures to express my feelings.	4.81	0.40	Very High
3	I let others speak first before sharing my opinion.	4.75	0.46	Very High
4	I avoid confrontation when disagreements arise.	4.67	0.50	Very High
5	I communicate my feelings through hints or suggestions instead of direct statements.	4.77	0.42	Very High
	Section Mean	4.72	0.47	Very High
	Respect-based Communication Style	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1	I show respect by speaking politely to my elders and peers.	4.66	0.52	Very High
2	I use culturally appropriate greetings when addressing others.	4.80	0.41	Very High
3	I listen carefully to others before responding.	4.58	0.62	Very High
4	I avoid interrupting others during discussions.	4.68	0.52	Very High
5	I show respect for others' opinions, even if I disagree.	4.61	0.56	Very High
	Section Mean	4.67	0.52	Very High

Direct Communication Style

SPG officers demonstrated a *Very High* level of direct communication, with an overall mean score of 4.72 (SD = 0.50). The highest-rated items—"I share my thoughts openly during meetings" (M = 4.76, SD = 0.43) and "I communicate my ideas directly without hesitation" (M = 4.76, SD = 0.45)—indicate that these young leaders are confident in expressing their ideas clearly and proactively. This communication style reflects Hall's (1976) low-context communication theory, which emphasizes explicit and unambiguous messaging. Such clarity is especially valuable in

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leadership roles where transparency and effective delegation are critical. Kouzes and Posner (2017) also affirm that clear communication enhances credibility and fosters trust within teams.

Indirect Communication Style

The mean score for indirect communication style was also 4.72 (SD = 0.47), interpreted as *Very High*. Respondents most strongly agreed with the statement, "I use body language or gestures to express my feelings" (M = 4.81, SD = 0.40), indicating a strong reliance on non-verbal cues. This preference for subtle, indirect communication reflects the Philippine cultural context, where high-context communication is common and valued for preserving group harmony (Gudykunst & Ting-Toomey, 1988). Behaviors such as allowing others to speak first and using hints rather than direct statements further demonstrate the SPG officers' cultural sensitivity and inclination to avoid confrontation—an essential trait in student leadership, as emphasized by Javier and Reyes (2021).

Respect-Based Communication Style

The respect-based communication style received a *Very High* rating, with a mean score of 4.67 (SD = 0.52). The highest-rated item, "I use culturally appropriate greetings when addressing others" (M = 4.80, SD = 0.41), reflects SPG officers' adherence to traditional values of politeness and deference. Respectful communication—especially toward elders and authority figures—is deeply rooted in Filipino culture and plays a key role in promoting harmony within the school community (Miranda & Torres, 2020). These results suggest that SPG officers possess a high degree of emotional intelligence and intercultural communication competence.

Collectively, the data reveal that SPG officers exhibit strong command over multiple communication styles. Their ability to shift between direct, indirect, and respectful approaches reflects adaptability and effective leadership in multicultural settings. This supports the notion that young leaders, when properly mentored, can internalize culturally grounded communication practices that promote inclusive and respectful governance. As Gudykunst and Ting-Toomey (1988) emphasized, such hybrid communication strategies are essential for navigating diverse environments like those found in Glan, Sarangani Province.

Cultural Diversity of the Supreme Pupils Government (SPG) Officers

Table 4

Cultural Diversity of SPG Officers in terms of Ethnic Affiliation and Language Spoken at Home by SPG Officers.

Ethnic affiliation	Frequency	Percentage
B'laan	21	23.87
Maguindanao	9	10.22
Cebuano	46	52.27
Aklanon	3	3.41
Marore/Persons of Indonesian Decent	9	10.23
Other	0	0
Total	88	100%
Language Spoken at Home	Frequency	Percentage
B'laan	21	23.87
Maguindanao	9	10.22
Cebuano/Bisaya	46	52.27
Aklanon/Akeanon	3	3.41
Filipino/Tagalog	0	0
PIDS/Sangir	9	10.23
Total	88	100%

The survey revealed that SPG officers come from diverse ethnic backgrounds, reflecting the multicultural composition of schools in Glan, Sarangani Province. As shown in Table 4, the majority identified as Cebuano (46 respondents, 52.27%), aligning with the dominant demographic in the region. This was followed by the B'laan, an indigenous group, comprising 21 respondents (23.87%), indicating strong indigenous representation. Maguindanaoan and Marore/Indonesian descent students accounted for 9 respondents each (approximately 10.22–10.23%), while



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the Aklanon group was represented by 3 respondents (3.41%). No participants selected "Other," suggesting the categories effectively captured students' self-identified ethnicities.

Patterns in home language use closely mirrored ethnic affiliation. Cebuano/Bisaya was the most commonly spoken language (52.27%), followed by Blaen (23.87%), Maguindanaoan (10.22%), and Sangir (10.23%). Aklanon was spoken by 3.41% of respondents, and notably, no students reported Filipino/Tagalog as their primary home language. These findings underscore the predominance of regional and indigenous languages in students' everyday lives.

This multilingualism enhances student leaders' communication and leadership capacities. Most SPG officers are fluent in their mother tongue and capable of using Filipino and English in academic contexts. Language, as Fishman (1991) emphasized, is a key vehicle for cultural identity, while Gudykunst and Ting-Toomey (1988) noted that communication styles are shaped by linguistic and cultural norms.

From a leadership perspective, multilingual competence strengthens ethno-leadership by enabling student officers to navigate diverse cultural contexts with greater sensitivity and inclusion. As Cruz et al. (2022) asserted, linguistic and cultural diversity in student leadership promotes inclusivity, improves conflict resolution, and ensures broader representation. Javier and Reyes (2021) further emphasized that preserving indigenous languages and customs allows young leaders to serve as cultural bridges, fostering respect and harmony within multicultural environments.

In sum, the ethnic and linguistic diversity of SPG officers in Glan is a critical asset. It supports the development of culturally responsive, inclusive, and collaborative student governance, reinforcing the role of language and identity in shaping effective school leadership.

Level of Values Development among Supreme Pupils' Government (SPG) Officers

Table 5

Extent of Values Development among SPG Officers Integrity and Honesty

	A. Integrity and Honesty	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1	SPG officers uphold integrity and honesty in their leadership roles and school engagements.	4.68	0.47	Very High
2	SPG members demonstrate truthfulness and transparency in handling responsibilities.	4.81	0.43	Very High
3	The SPG encourages ethical decision-making in resolving school-related concerns.	4.78	0.41	Very High
4	SPG officers take responsibility for their actions and uphold fairness in all interactions.	4.80	0.41	Very High
5	The SPG promotes ethical leadership by setting a good example for their peers.	4.48	0.62	Very High
	Section Mean	4.71	0.47	Very High
	B. Respect for Authority and Peers	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1	SPG officers treat teachers, administrators, and peers with respect in all interactions.	4.64	0.53	Very High
2	The SPG fosters an environment where students value the opinions and contributions of others.	4.86	0.38	Very High
3	SPG officers ensure that student concerns are addressed with courtesy and professionalism.	4.76	0.45	Very High
4	SPG officers actively discourage bullying and discrimination in the school community.	4.69	0.49	Very High
5	The SPG promotes a culture of mutual respect through its leadership and activities.	4.66	0.57	Very High
	Section Mean	4.72	0.48	Very High
	C. Responsibility and Dependability	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1	SPG officers fulfill their assigned tasks and commitments with dedication and efficiency.	4.85	0.42	Very High
2	The SPG encourages students to take responsibility for school projects and community initiatives.	4.75	0.44	Very High



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3	SPG officers demonstrate reliability by consistently meeting deadlines and attending engagements.	4.75	0.44	Very High
4	SPG members understand the importance of accountability in leadership and teamwork.	4.77	0.44	Very High
5	SPG officers actively participate in school governance and decision-making processes.	4.88	0.33	Very High
	Section Mean	4.80	0.41	Very High
	D. Empathy and Compassion	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1	SPG officers actively listen to and support students who need assistance.	4.94	0.23	Very High
2	The SPG promotes programs that encourage kindness and compassion within the school.	4.73	0.45	Very High
3	SPG officers assist students who are struggling academically, emotionally, or socially.	4.56	0.50	Very High
4	The SPG advocates for the well-being of all students, ensuring a safe and inclusive school environment.	4.90	0.30	Very High
5	SPG members promote community service initiatives that reflect empathy and social responsibility.	4.95	0.21	Very High
	Section Mean	4.82	0.34	Very High
	E. Fairness and Justice	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1	SPG officers promote equality and fairness in implementing school policies and programs.	4.83	0.43	Very High
2	The SPG ensures that all students have an equal opportunity to participate in school activities.	4.80	0.48	Very High
3	SPG members uphold impartiality in resolving conflicts and disputes among students.	4.68	0.54	Very High
4	The SPG encourages a school culture that respects individual differences and promotes inclusion.	4.56	0.62	Very High
5	SPG officers advocate for the rights of students and act as mediators in school-related concerns.	4.49	0.64	Very High
	Section Mean	4.67	0.54	Very High

Table 5 presents the extent of values development among Supreme Pupils' Government (SPG) officers across five dimensions: Integrity and Honesty, Respect for Authority and Peers, Responsibility and Dependability, Empathy and Compassion, and Fairness and Justice.

Empathy and Compassion emerged as the highest-rated dimension ($M = 4.82$, $SD = 0.34$), reflecting the officers' strong sensitivity to their peers and commitment to inclusive leadership. The item "SPG members promote community service initiatives that reflect empathy and social responsibility" scored the highest overall ($M = 4.95$), highlighting their dedication to meaningful service. These results align with Grigoropoulos (2020), Bonaparte (2024), and Miranda and Torres (2020), who emphasized compassion and *malasakit* as essential in ethical student leadership.

Responsibility and Dependability followed closely ($M = 4.80$, $SD = 0.41$). High scores, including "SPG officers actively participate in school governance and decision-making processes" ($M = 4.88$), suggest that SPG officers are reliable and engaged leaders. These findings affirm the importance of student accountability (*pananagutan*), as noted by Komives et al. (2017) and Dedicatoria et al. (2023).

Respect for Authority and Peers also received a *Very High* rating ($M = 4.72$), with strong emphasis on inclusivity and mutual respect, supporting Cruz et al. (2022). Integrity and Honesty ($M = 4.71$) reflect the officers' commitment to transparency and ethical behavior, consistent with the moral reasoning frameworks of Kohlberg (1984) and Rest (1986).

The lowest-rated—though still *Very High*—dimension was Fairness and Justice ($M = 4.67$). While most indicators were highly rated, "SPG officers advocate for the rights of students and act as mediators in school-related concerns" received the lowest individual score ($M = 4.49$), suggesting room for growth in student advocacy and



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conflict resolution. This is echoed by Waite and Brooks (2014), Ellis and Rivera-McCutchen (2014), and Javier and Reyes (2021), who stress the importance of equity and *katarungan* in school leadership.

These findings suggest that SPG officers embody core Filipino values—honesty, respect, responsibility, empathy, and fairness—demonstrating both personal character and the influence of a values-oriented school environment. The implication for practice is clear: schools must continue to implement structured, values-based leadership programs that include mentorship, reflection, and advocacy components to nurture leaders who act not only with competence, but also with compassion and integrity.

In sum, the SPG officers in Glan are well-equipped with foundational leadership values. Their strong ethical grounding contributes to a school governance culture defined by inclusivity, responsibility, and moral integrity—reinforcing the value of integrating character-based leadership training in basic education.

Relationship Between Leadership Style and Values Development

Table 6

Results of Spearman's Rho Correlation Analysis between Ethno-Leadership Influence and the Values Development of SPG Officers

Indicators	Integrity and Honesty	Respect for Authority and Peers	Responsibility and Dependability	Empathy and Compassion	Fairness and Justice	Overall
Leadership Style	.273* (.010)	.091 (.401)	.143 (.184)	.244* (.022)	.068 (.530)	.240* (.024)
Leadership Practices	.111 (.303)	.202 (.059)	-.083 (.444)	-.038 (.728)	.039 (.720)	.103 (.337)
Communication Style	.019 (.859)	.031 (.773)	.028 (.792)	.125 (.247)	.077 (.479)	.103 (.341)
Overall	.247* (.020)	.166 (.121)	.111 (.302)	.174 (.105)	.092 (.394)	.139 (.198)

*Significant at the .05 level (two-tailed).

Using Spearman's Rho correlation analysis, the results presented in Table 6 revealed that among the three leadership dimensions, leadership style exhibited the most significant relationship with values development. Specifically, leadership style showed statistically significant positive correlations with Integrity and Honesty ($r = .273$, $p = .010$), Empathy and Compassion ($r = .244$, $p = .022$), and Overall Values Development ($r = .240$, $p = .024$). These findings indicate that SPG officers who adopt democratic, collaborative, or culturally responsive leadership styles are more likely to embody honesty and compassion in their leadership roles. This supports the assertions of Kouzes and Posner (2017), who emphasized the role of morally grounded leadership in building trust and credibility, and David et al. (2019), who highlighted the importance of culturally rooted leadership behaviors in strengthening ethical values among student leaders.

In contrast, leadership practices did not demonstrate significant correlations with any specific components of values development. However, a near-significant association emerged with Respect for Authority and Peers ($r = .202$, $p = .059$), suggesting that participative leadership behaviors may contribute to respect-driven values, albeit inconclusively. Likewise, communication style—comprising direct, indirect, and respect-based approaches—did not yield statistically significant correlations with any values dimensions.

These results point to an important insight: it is not solely what student leaders do or say, but how they lead—their leadership style, inclusivity, and cultural awareness—that significantly shapes values development. The meaningful link between leadership style and values such as integrity and empathy affirms the perspectives of Grigoropoulos (2020) and Javier and Reyes (2021), who advocate for leadership grounded in cultural responsiveness and moral character as essential to developing ethical leaders.

In summary, the findings confirm that leadership style, as a core element of ethno-leadership, plays a vital role in fostering the values development of SPG officers. Leadership approaches that emphasize collaboration, empathy, and integrity are instrumental in shaping student leaders who are both ethical and inclusive. While leadership practices and communication styles remain important, their limited direct impact on values formation



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suggests that school leadership programs should place greater emphasis on cultivating leadership mindsets anchored in ethical principles and cultural sensitivity.

Cultural Background as a Significant Moderator in the Relationship Between Ethno-Leadership Influence and SPG Behavior and Values Development

Results and Discussion

To examine whether cultural background moderates ethno-leadership dimensions, an Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was conducted using three indicators: Leadership Style, Leadership Practices, and Communication Style, with cultural background serving as the grouping variable.

The analysis revealed no statistically significant differences across all three indicators when grouped by cultural affiliation. For Leadership Style, the computed F-value was 1.045 ($p = 0.377$); for Leadership Practices, $F = 1.561$ ($p = 0.205$); and for Communication Style, $F = 1.841$ ($p = 0.146$). In all cases, the p-values exceeded the 0.05 threshold, leading to the conclusion that cultural background does not significantly influence the ethno-leadership behaviors of SPG officers.

This consistency may be attributed to the structured nature of school-based leadership programs, which establish shared expectations, standardized training, and values-based leadership frameworks. These programs emphasize collective decision-making, moral integrity, and service—core principles rooted in Filipino collectivist culture (David et al., 2019).

The absence of significant variation across cultural groups may also reflect the effectiveness of inclusive leadership initiatives that provide equal opportunities for student participation, regardless of ethnic identity. As Cruz et al. (2022) noted, inclusive practices reduce cultural divides by fostering unity, collaboration, and shared governance in student organizations.

These findings underscore that while students bring diverse cultural experiences into their roles, their leadership behaviors align with institutional norms and expectations. The ANOVA results affirm that cultural background does not significantly moderate ethno-leadership among SPG officers in Glan, Sarangani Province. This suggests that leadership development at the elementary level is both standardized and inclusive, enabling diverse students to adopt common leadership values and practices.

Ultimately, the findings highlight the importance of continuing to promote culturally responsive, yet integrative, leadership training. Embedding respect, unity, and equity within student leadership programs fosters not only individual development but also collective cohesion and social responsibility among young leaders.

Conclusion

This study affirmed the significant influence of ethno-leadership on the values development of Supreme Pupils' Government (SPG) officers in Glan, Sarangani Province, within the context of their diverse cultural identities. It revealed that student leaders—regardless of their ethnicity or language spoken at home—consistently demonstrated very high levels of leadership behaviors and core values such as honesty, empathy, fairness, responsibility, and respect.

Among the three dimensions of ethno-leadership, leadership style emerged as the most impactful in shaping values development. This finding underscores the importance of how students lead—particularly when their leadership approach is democratic, inclusive, and culturally grounded. While leadership practices and communication styles were also rated highly, their influence on values development was not statistically significant.

A particularly noteworthy finding was that cultural background—measured by ethnic affiliation and home language—did not significantly moderate the relationship between ethno-leadership and values development. This suggests that school structures and shared Filipino values such as *paggalang*, *pakikipagkapwa*, and *bayanihan* provide a strong common ground for leadership development. The implementation of DepEd Order No. 47, s. 2014, which institutionalizes student government organizations, has contributed to a uniform framework that supports inclusive and values-driven student leadership.

Ultimately, the study reinforces a powerful truth: ethical, compassionate leadership begins in childhood and flourishes when nurtured through culturally inclusive, structured, and values-based environments. The SPG officers of Glan are living testaments that young learners, when given proper guidance, can lead with integrity, empathy, and a strong sense of identity and purpose.

In sum, this study highlights the transformative potential of student leadership when grounded in values, supported by structure, and nurtured through mentorship. The SPG officers in Glan are a testament to the capacity of young learners to lead with purpose and principle, regardless of cultural background. By continuing to cultivate



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leadership that is culturally sensitive and values-driven, schools can help shape a new generation of Filipino leaders who are not only capable—but also compassionate, ethical, and inclusive.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study recommends sustaining and enhancing values-based leadership training in schools, with an emphasis on Filipino core values such as *paggalang*, *pakikipagkapwa*, and *bayanihan*. These trainings should go beyond administrative tasks and focus on character-building and ethical leadership. While cultural background was not a significant moderating factor, student governance programs should continue to incorporate culturally responsive activities that celebrate diversity and foster inclusivity. Strengthening mentoring systems is also vital—advisers and school heads should actively guide SPG officers through modeling, feedback, and reflection. Additionally, schools are encouraged to regularly review and contextualize SPG practices to ensure alignment with DepEd mandates while addressing the unique needs of each school. Finally, documenting leadership stories and promoting reflective activities such as journaling can further support the personal and ethical growth of student leaders.

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