The Influence of Leadership Styles on Conflict Resolution Strategies among Secondary School Principals in General Santos City: A Basis for Designing Targeted Training Programs

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Abstract: This study examined the relationship between leadership styles and conflict resolution strategies among public secondary school principals in General Santos City during the academic year 2024–2025. Specifically, it aimed to determine the leadership styles most commonly exhibited by principals, identify the prevailing conflict resolution strategies, assess the relationship between the two variables, and evaluate the influence of contextual factors such as school size, location, socio-economic status, and student-teacher ratio. A descriptive-correlational research design was employed, utilizing a validated survey questionnaire distributed to all twenty-four (24) public secondary school principals in the city through total population sampling. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson's correlation coefficient, and multiple regression analysis, while minimal qualitative insights were derived from open-ended responses and thematically analyzed to complement the statistical findings. Results revealed that transformational and democratic leadership styles were highly prevalent, while transactional leadership was also common. Laissez-faire and authoritative styles were only moderately evident. In terms of conflict resolution, collaboration, problem-solving, and compromise were very commonly used, while avoidance, accommodation, and competition were rarely employed. A statistically significant moderate positive relationship ($r = 0.5178$, $p < 0.01$) was found between leadership styles and conflict resolution strategies. However, no significant correlations were observed between leadership styles and the contextual moderating variables. Qualitative themes further highlighted principals' training needs in leadership adaptability, conflict resolution, and staff development. Findings underscore the importance of fostering participatory and adaptive leadership in school settings and developing principals' capacity to employ constructive conflict resolution approaches. The study contributes to a deeper understanding of school leadership practices within the Philippine public education system and provides insights for targeted professional development programs.

Keywords: *Leadership styles, conflict resolution, school principals, transformational leadership, public secondary schools, educational leadership, total population sampling*

I.   Introduction

In educational institutions, particularly at the secondary level, leadership is far more than an administrative function – it is the cornerstone of school climate, organizational behavior, and interpersonal relationships. A principal's leadership style influences how conflicts are handled, how trust is cultivated, and how institutional goals are achieved. In settings where teachers, students, parents, and other stakeholders interact daily, conflict is not an exception but a reality. Whether it arises from differences in values, misunderstandings, competition over limited resources, or policy implementation, conflict is inevitable. The question is not whether conflict will occur, but how effectively school leaders can manage and resolve it to support positive outcomes.

Effective conflict resolution in schools is inextricably tied to leadership approach. Among the most widely studied styles are transformational, transactional, laissez-faire, authoritative, and democratic leadership. Transformational leaders inspire and empower teachers and students to work toward a shared vision, fostering

collaboration and proactive conflict resolution (Jamali et al., 2022). In contrast, transactional leaders emphasize performance, rules, and structured feedback, often resolving conflict through formal mechanisms (Ruloff & Petko, 2022). Democratic leaders promote participatory decision-making, valuing consensus and open dialogue (Silva et al., 2021), while authoritative leaders may adopt a more top-down, directive approach, sometimes limiting engagement. Laissez-faire leaders tend to delegate decision-making entirely, which may result in unresolved or mismanaged conflicts if structure and accountability are lacking (Morris et al., 2020).

These styles significantly influence the conflict resolution strategies principals adopt—ranging from collaboration and compromise to avoidance, accommodation, and competition. Principals who are reflective and strategic in their leadership are better positioned to transform conflict into opportunities for growth. However, the effectiveness of any strategy is context-dependent and shaped by multiple factors, such as school culture, socio-economic context, leadership experience, and institutional dynamics (Gemeda & Lee, 2020; McLeod & Dulsky, 2021).

In the Philippines, particularly in General Santos City, the complexity of school leadership is heightened by social, cultural, and economic diversity. Secondary schools in this area operate in a unique environment shaped by interactions among Christian, Muslim, and indigenous communities. This diversity can enrich school life but also poses distinctive challenges in leadership and conflict resolution. The school principal must manage not only organizational routines but also the delicate interplay of cultural sensitivities, community expectations, and resource limitations. In this complex setting, leadership is both a technical and relational function requiring adaptability and cultural competence.

While global research offers extensive insights into leadership styles and conflict management in schools, a significant research gap remains in the Philippine context—particularly in urbanizing and multicultural regions like General Santos City. Existing studies tend to generalize findings from Western models or focus solely on either leadership or conflict resolution in isolation. There is limited empirical evidence on how leadership styles directly influence conflict resolution strategies in Philippine secondary schools, and even less that examines the moderating role of school demographics, such as student-teacher ratios, school size, and socio-economic conditions (Kezar, 2023; Leithwood, 2021). As such, leadership training and professional development programs often rely on generic models that fail to account for local context, culture, and resource dynamics.

To address this gap, this study investigates the relationship between leadership styles and conflict resolution strategies among secondary school principals in General Santos City, while accounting for moderating variables such as school profile and leadership demographics. By grounding the study in the real-world complexities of Philippine education, the research aims to contribute evidence-based insights that can inform context-sensitive leadership development, improve conflict resolution practices, and enhance the overall school climate.

In doing so, this study affirms that leadership style is not merely a personal preference but a strategic tool with direct implications for conflict management. Understanding this relationship is vital not only for academic purposes but for designing practical training interventions that equip school leaders to lead more resilient, inclusive, and effective learning environments.

This study aimed to determine the influence of leadership styles on conflict resolution strategies among secondary school principals in General Santos City. Specifically, it sought to answer the following research questions:What is the profile of microfinance members in terms of:

1. What is the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of:

    1.1. Age

    1.2.Gender

    1.3. Educational attainment

    1.4. Years of experience

    1.5. Position

    1.6. Marital status

2. What is the level of prevalence of leadership styles of secondary school principals in General Santos City in terms of:

    2.1. Transformational

    2.2. Transactional

    2.3. Laissez-faire

    2.4. Authoritative

    2.5. Democratic

3. What is the level of utilization of commonly used conflict resolution strategies among secondary school principals in General Santos City in terms of:

    3.1. Problem-solving approach

    3.2. Avoidance

    3.3. Accommodation

      3.4. Compromise

      3.5. Collaboration

      3.6. Competition

4. To what extent do moderating variables affect the relationship between leadership styles and conflict resolution strategies in terms of:

      4.1. School Environment

          4.1.1. Urban

          4.1.2. Rural

      4.2. School Demographics

          4.2.1. Size of the school

          4.2.2. Student-teacher ratio

          4.2.3. Socio-economic status of students

5. Is there a significant relationship between leadership styles and conflict resolution strategies among secondary school principals in General Santos City?

6. What training needs do secondary school principals in General Santos City have to support the design of targeted training programs?

      The null hypotheses of the study are stated as follows:

      HO₁: There is no significant moderating effect of school environment (urban or rural) and school demographics (school size, student-teacher ratio, and socio-economic status of students) on the relationship between leadership styles and conflict resolution strategies among secondary school principals in General Santos City.

      HO₂: There is no significant relationship between leadership styles and conflict resolution strategies among secondary school principals in General Santos City.

II.   Materials and Methods

Research Design

      This study employed a quantitative-correlational research design to systematically examine the influence of leadership styles on conflict resolution strategies among secondary school principals in General Santos City. The correlational approach is appropriate for identifying the statistical relationships between variables without manipulating them, thereby allowing the researcher to determine the extent to which leadership styles are associated with specific conflict resolution practices. This design is particularly effective in educational research where the goal is to capture and analyze naturally occurring behaviors, perceptions, and institutional dynamics.

      Structured survey questionnaires were used to gather numerical data regarding the leadership styles adopted by school principals, the conflict resolution strategies they implement, and the moderating effects of school profiles such as environment, size, student–teacher ratio, and socio-economic context. The design enables the researcher to measure patterns and correlations among variables in a quantifiable manner, offering objective insights into leadership behavior within real-world school settings.

      By employing this design, the study ensures both reliability and generalizability of findings, facilitating the development of evidence-based recommendations for leadership training and conflict management in secondary education. Moreover, the quantitative-correlational method supports a comprehensive analysis of the interaction between leadership and conflict resolution, contributing to a deeper understanding of administrative effectiveness in diverse school environments.

Sampling Method

      This study involved all public secondary school principals in General Santos City who held permanent plantilla positions under the Department of Education (DepEd), specifically classified as Principal I, II, III, or IV. These school heads were selected based on their official designation, which confers full administrative, leadership, and decision-making authority within their respective public secondary institutions.

      To ensure comprehensive and valid representation, the study employed total population sampling, a subtype of purposive sampling in which all members of the target population who meet the inclusion criteria are selected as respondents. Given the limited and manageable number of qualified individuals—totaling twenty-four (24) principals—this approach was both practical and methodologically sound. It ensured that the perspectives of all relevant school heads were captured, thereby enhancing the reliability of the data and the generalizability of the findings within the local educational context.

      Only those currently assigned to DepEd-recognized public secondary schools under the Schools Division of General Santos City and occupying permanent plantilla positions were included. Principals serving in acting capacities,

officer-in-charge (OIC) roles, or assigned to private or elementary schools were excluded due to significant differences in their roles, authority, and institutional contexts.

The participation of these twenty-four (24) school principals reflected the total population of DepEd-approved public secondary school heads in the division. Their inclusion was formally authorized through an official endorsement from the Department of Education for the academic year 2024–2025, ensuring the study's compliance with institutional protocols and ethical standards.

Research Instrument

This study utilized a structured questionnaire to gather data on the leadership styles and conflict resolution strategies of public secondary school principals in General Santos City. The instrument was divided into two main sections.

The first section focused on leadership styles and was adapted and modified from the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) developed by Avolio and Bass (2016). It measured the leadership dimensions of transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership. To align with local school leadership practices, additional items were included to represent democratic and authoritative leadership styles, as supported by contemporary literature in educational leadership (Northouse, 2018; Castillo & Bongalos, 2016).

The second section assessed conflict resolution strategies and was based on the instrument developed by Guiab and Miguel (2023). This portion included the commonly studied strategies of problem-solving, avoidance, accommodation, compromise, collaboration, and competition. Items were reviewed and modified to reflect conflict management practices relevant to public secondary school settings.

To ensure the validity and contextual appropriateness of the instrument, it underwent expert validation by professionals in the fields of educational leadership, research, and psychology. Their feedback guided revisions to improve clarity, relevance, and alignment with the responsibilities of school principals. The final version of the instrument achieved a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.95, indicating a very high level of internal consistency and reliability.

Data Gathering Procedure

A set of procedures guided the The data collection for this study was carried out from January to May 2025, during Academic Year 2024–2025, across selected public secondary schools in General Santos City. To ensure alignment with institutional protocols and uphold ethical standards, the researcher followed a structured and rigorous process throughout all phases of data collection.

The process began with the validation of the research instrument, which was adapted and refined to suit the study's specific objectives. A panel of three experts in the fields of educational leadership, psychology, and research methodology assessed the questionnaire for clarity, relevance, and contextual appropriateness. Their recommendations were incorporated to enhance the instrument's validity and ensure its alignment with the local public education environment.

Following validation, the researcher sought approval through institutional channels, beginning with endorsement from the research adviser, followed by the Master of Business Management (MBM) Program Coordinator and the Dean of the College of Business and Management. Upon completion of the internal review, the study was submitted to the Institutional Ethics Review Committee (IERC) of Mindanao State University – General Santos City for ethical clearance. The research was granted approval under IERC Code No. 223-2025-MSUGSC-IERC, Study Reference No. 2025-252-SR, on 16 May 2025, confirming its compliance with the ethical principles of informed consent, voluntary participation, confidentiality, and the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (RA 10173).

Subsequently, a formal request to conduct the study was submitted to the Schools Division Superintendent of the Department of Education – General Santos City Division. This included the validated instrument, approved research proposal, and ethics clearance documentation. Upon review, the Division Office granted permission to administer the study across 24 public secondary schools within the division.

With DepEd approval secured, the researcher visited each of the 24 participating schools to personally introduce the study and formally invite the school principal to participate. During these visits, the researcher discussed the study's purpose, scope, and procedures, addressed queries, and presented all pertinent approval documents. Each principal, serving as a respondent, was provided with a consent form explaining the voluntary nature of participation, the confidentiality of responses, and the use of data strictly for academic purposes.

Survey questionnaires were then distributed in person and completed by the participants at their convenience. The researcher ensured minimal disruption to school operations and allowed ample time for thoughtful responses. Follow-up visits were conducted to retrieve the accomplished instruments, which resulted in a high response rate and complete data retrieval.

All collected data were treated with strict confidentiality. No personally identifying information was recorded, and responses were stored securely for research use only. This careful and ethically guided procedure ensured the reliability of the data and the integrity of the study.

Data Analysis

The survey data were systematically encoded and analyzed using appropriate statistical techniques to ensure accuracy and validity. A licensed statistician assisted in all computations to uphold methodological rigor.

Descriptive statistics, including frequency counts and percentages, were used to summarize the demographic characteristics of the respondents, such as sex, years of service, educational attainment, and school context.

To determine the extent of leadership styles and conflict resolution strategies among public secondary school principals, measures of central tendency—specifically the mean and standard deviation—were calculated. These values provided insight into dominant practices and the variability of responses.

Pearson's correlation coefficient (Pearson's r) was applied to assess the strength and direction of relationships between leadership styles and conflict resolution strategies. Multiple regression analysis was also conducted to identify which leadership styles significantly predicted the use of specific conflict resolution strategies while considering school-level factors such as size, student–teacher ratio, socio-economic status, and environment.

A four-point Likert scale was used to measure responses, ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 4 (Strongly Agree). Although ordinal in nature, the scale was treated as interval data, consistent with accepted practices in educational research. Mean scores were interpreted using the following descriptors:

Leadership Styles

RANGE	SCALE	VERBAL	INTERPRETATION
3.51–4.00	4	Strongly Agree	Highly Prevalent
2.51–3.50	3	Agree	Moderately Prevalent
1.51–2.50	2	Disagree	Low Prevalence
1.00–1.50	1	Strongly Disagree	Not Prevalent

Optional narrative responses from the survey were thematically analyzed to support the descriptive findings. These reflections, while limited in number, provided real-world context regarding leadership and conflict experiences.

This mixed-method approach ensured both statistical validity and contextual depth, offering a comprehensive view of how leadership styles relate to conflict resolution strategies in public secondary schools.

Conflict Resoultion Strategies

RANGE	SCALE	VERBAL DESCRIPTION	INTERPRETATION
3.51–4.00	4	Strongly Agree	Very Commonly Used
2.51–3.50	3	Agree	Commonly Used
1.51–2.50	2	Disagree	Rarely Used
1.00–1.50	1	Strongly Disagree	Very Rarely Used

III.   Results and Discussion

This chapter presents the results of the study in relation to the research problems previously stated. The analysis focuses on the demographic characteristics of the respondents and the relationships among the study variables.

Profile of Respondents

Tables 1 to 6 present the demographic profile of the respondents, specifically their age, sex, years of experience, civil status, and highest educational attainment. These variables provide contextual insight into the background of the participating public secondary school principals and help frame the interpretation of their leadership styles and conflict resolution strategies.

Table 1. Age Distribution of Respondents

Age	Frequency	Percentage
38 – 41	2	8.33
42 – 45	3	12.5
46 and above	19	79.17
TOTAL	24	100

Table 1 indicates that a substantial majority (79.17%) of the secondary school principals in General Santos City are aged 46 and above. A smaller proportion (12.50%) falls within the 42–45 age range, while only 8.33% are between 38–41 years old. This age distribution suggests that leadership positions are primarily occupied by senior educators with considerable professional experience.

This finding is consistent with the study of Boquiren (2021), who reported that school leadership positions in Region XII are predominantly filled by principals aged 45 and above. This trend reflects the merit-based promotion

practices implemented by the Department of Education, which emphasize seniority, experience, and eligibility. Similarly, Kimani (2024) noted that leadership credibility and organizational control are often attributed to seasoned school heads who have been tested through years of service and institutional knowledge.

The pattern observed in this study reinforces the idea that age plays a central role in the assignment of school principals, particularly within urban divisions like General Santos City. It also confirms the broader observation that older educators are more likely to be entrusted with leadership roles due to their exposure to complex administrative demands and conflict resolution processes within the school setting.

Table 2 below in the next page presents the gender distribution of the respondents. Among the 24 secondary school principals in General Santos City, 17 (70.83%) were female and 7 (29.17%) were male. This indicates a strong female presence in educational leadership roles within the public secondary school system of the city.

This finding reflects broader trends in the education sector, where teaching and school leadership positions are increasingly occupied by women, particularly in urban public schools. As noted by Silva et al. (2021), leadership in secondary education—especially in contexts marked by structured policy environments—is frequently characterized by inclusive and participatory leadership approaches, qualities often associated with female principals. The predominance of female school leaders in this study may also be influenced by the emphasis on relational and collaborative conflict resolution strategies, which have been linked to emotionally intelligent and empathetic leadership—traits highlighted in Mahfouz's (2020) research on leadership styles in Middle Eastern schools.

Table 2. Percentage Distribution of Respondents by Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	7	29.17
Female	17	70.83
TOTAL	24	100

In the context of General Santos City, this gender distribution underscores the growing role of women in positions of educational authority and aligns with the Department of Education's gender-inclusive policies promoting equity in leadership appointments. It also suggests that female leadership may be a contributing factor in shaping the conflict resolution practices and governance styles observed across the city's secondary public schools

Table 3 in the next page presents the educational attainment of the secondary school principals in General Santos City. Of the 24 respondents, 10 principals (41.67%) had completed a Master's degree, while 6 (25.00%) had earned doctoral units. Additionally, 5 principals (20.83%) had successfully completed their Doctorate degrees, and 3 (12.50%) had attained Master's level coursework or academic units but had not yet completed the degree.

Table 3. Percentage Distribution of Respondents by Educational Attainment

Educational Attainment	Frequency	Percentage
Doctorate	5	20.83
Masteral	10	41.67
Doctoral Units	6	25
Masteral Units	3	12.5
TOTAL	24	100

This distribution reflects a highly credentialed group of school leaders, consistent with professional standards set by the Department of Education that emphasize postgraduate qualifications as part of career advancement criteria. The findings support the observation of Kimani (2024), who noted that higher educational attainment among school principals enhances their capacity to navigate complex organizational issues, including conflict resolution and policy enforcement.

Moreover, the prevalence of advanced degrees among principals aligns with the findings of Rahman and Wibowo (2022), who asserted that school leaders with postgraduate education are more likely to adopt data-informed and strategic decision-making approaches. In the context of conflict management, such qualifications often equip principals with theoretical and practical frameworks necessary for implementing restorative or participatory leadership strategies.

Overall, the respondents' high levels of academic achievement suggest a leadership cohort that is professionally prepared to meet the growing administrative and pedagogical demands of public secondary schools in General Santos City.

Table 4. Percentage Distribution of Respondents by Years of Experience

Years of Experiences	Frequency	Percentage
More than 10 years	24	100
TOTAL	24	100

As shown in Table 4, all 24 respondents (100%) reported having more than 10 years of experience in the education sector. This indicates that the leadership group in this study is composed entirely of seasoned professionals, each with over a decade of service in teaching or administrative roles.

This finding affirms the literature emphasizing the correlation between length of service and leadership roles in education. According to Kimani (2024), extended years in the profession provide school leaders with deeper institutional knowledge and situational judgment, particularly in managing interpersonal conflicts and organizational demands. Similarly, Mahfouz (2020) highlighted that leadership effectiveness improves with accumulated experience, as principals become more adept at navigating both instructional supervision and conflict resolution.

Furthermore, the presence of an entirely experienced group supports Rahman and Wibowo's (2022) assertion that tenure contributes to more consistent and structured leadership behaviors, especially in larger or high-stakes school environments. These veteran leaders are likely to possess both technical competencies and emotional resilience, which are crucial in addressing the diverse challenges encountered in secondary school management.

Thus, the data suggest that school leadership in General Santos City is largely entrusted to individuals with a significant history of professional engagement, reinforcing the importance of experiential learning in shaping effective and responsive school administration.

Table 5. Percentage Distribution of Respondents by Position

Position	Frequency	Percentage
Principal IV	1	4.17
Principal III	3	12.5
Principal II	6	25
Principal I	14	58.33
TOTAL	**24**	**100**

Table 5 presents the distribution of respondents by plantilla position. Among the 24 secondary school principals in General Santos City, the majority, or 14 respondents (58.33%), held the rank of Principal I. This was followed by 6 respondents (25.00%) as Principal II, 3 (12.50%) as Principal III, and only 1 respondent (4.17%) holding the rank of Principal IV.

This distribution suggests that most school leadership roles in the division are assigned to principals in the lower to mid-level managerial tiers. This pattern aligns with the Department of Education's promotion structure, where Principal I serves as the entry-level designation for school heads, typically assigned to smaller or mid-sized schools, with advancement contingent on performance, years of service, and institutional needs (Department of Education, 2023).

In support of this, Kimani (2024) noted that leadership authority and administrative scope expand progressively with higher plantilla ranks, affecting the complexity of decision-making and conflict management strategies. Additionally, Smith and Fredricks-Lowman (2020) observed that the leadership style and level of autonomy vary significantly between entry-level and senior principals, influencing how school heads address both instructional and interpersonal issues.

The data reflect a representative sample of the leadership hierarchy in public secondary schools and highlight the operational realities of school management in General Santos City. The dominance of Principal I positions suggests that leadership training and support programs may need to be particularly tailored to this group, given their foundational role in implementing school-based governance and resolving grassroots-level conflicts.

Table 6 presents the marital status of the 24 secondary school principals in General Santos City. The data indicate that the vast majority of the respondents, 21 principals (87.50%), were married, while 2 (8.33%) were single, and only 1 (4.17%) reported being separated. None of the participants identified as widowed.

This demographic trend mirrors findings in educational leadership literature suggesting that marital status may relate to the stability and work-life balance of school leaders. Mahfouz (2020) noted that married school principals tend to report higher levels of emotional support from their families, which can serve as a buffer against professional stress and conflict. This emotional foundation may influence how leaders approach interpersonal disputes and organizational challenges.

Table 6. Percentage Distribution of Respondents by Marital Status

Position	Frequency	Percentage
Single	2	8.33
Married	21	87.5
Widow/Widower	0	0
Separated	1	4.17
TOTAL	**24**	**100**

Furthermore, the predominance of married principals may reflect generational norms within the DepEd system, where school leadership is often assigned to individuals with established family lives and extensive experience. While marital status itself does not directly determine leadership effectiveness, it can contribute to how principals manage responsibilities and respond to school-based pressures, particularly in environments requiring high relational capacity (Silva et al., 2021).

This profile provides additional context to the leadership dynamics explored in this study, highlighting potential links between personal circumstances and professional practices among school heads.

Prevailing Leadership Styles of Secondary School Principals in General Santos City

The results on transformational leadership revealed that secondary school principals in General Santos City demonstrated a high level of transformational leadership, with an overall mean score of 3.93 and a standard deviation of 0.14. This was interpreted as highly prevalent, indicating that the respondents consistently exhibited transformational leadership behaviors in their roles.

The items that received the highest mean score of 4.00 were: "I show genuine concern for the professional growth and personal well-being of my teachers," "I lead by example and consistently demonstrate the values I expect from my team," "I foster a sense of collaboration and shared responsibility in achieving the school's goals," and "I encourage open communication and value the input of all teachers." These responses suggest that the principals highly value individualized support, collaborative practices, open communication, and role modeling—key components of transformational leadership.

According to Bass and Avolio (2004), transformational leaders go beyond transactional exchanges and focus on motivating and developing their followers to achieve more than what is expected. Northouse (2018) supported this by highlighting that transformational leaders inspire through shared vision, demonstrate integrity, and show genuine concern for the personal and professional growth of their team members.

On the other hand, the item with the lowest mean score was "I regularly provide constructive feedback to help my team improve their performance," which obtained a mean of 3.71 and a standard deviation of 0.46. Although still considered highly prevalent, this score suggests some variability in how principals approach or prioritize feedback as part of their leadership practice. This finding is supported by Villena and Padua (2018), who pointed out that while school leaders often support their staff, many do not have formal mechanisms for consistent feedback. Garcia (2019) also reported that in many public schools, feedback is either informal or infrequent due to administrative workload or the absence of a structured performance review system.

Table 7. Prevailing Leadership Styles of Secondary School Principals in General Santos City in terms of Transformational Leadership

	Transformational	Mean Score	Std. Dev.	Description
1	I inspire my teachers and staff to reach beyond their capabilities and strive for excellence.	3.96	0.20	Highly Prevalent
2	I communicate a clear and compelling vision of the school's future to my team.	3.92	0.28	Highly Prevalent
3	I encourage innovation and creativity in problem-solving among teachers and staff.	3.92	0.28	Highly Prevalent
4	I show genuine concern for the professional growth and personal well-being of my teachers.	4.00	0.00	Highly Prevalent
5	I use positive reinforcement to motivate and empower my teachers and staff.	3.88	0.34	Highly Prevalent
6	I lead by example and consistently demonstrate the values I expect from my team.	4.00	0.00	Highly Prevalent
7	I foster a sense of collaboration and shared responsibility in achieving the school's goals.	4.00	0.00	Highly Prevalent
8	I regularly provide constructive feedback to help my team improve their performance.	3.71	0.46	Highly Prevalent
9	I am open to new ideas and willing to take calculated risks to enhance our school environment.	3.88	0.34	Highly Prevalent
10	I encourage open communication and value the input of all teachers.	4.00	0.00	Highly Prevalent
	Overall Mean	3.93	0.14	Highly Prevalent

Overall, the data confirm that transformational leadership is a dominant and consistent leadership style among the respondents. However, it also highlights the potential to strengthen certain aspects, such as regular performance feedback, to enhance teacher development and school performance.

On the table 8, the overall mean score for transactional leadership among secondary school principals in General Santos City is 3.59, indicating that this leadership style is highly prevalent. This suggests that the respondents frequently employ structured, rules-based, and performance-oriented approaches in managing their schools and guiding teacher behavior.

Among the highest-rated indicators were: "I establish clear rules and guidelines that all teachers and staff members are expected to follow," "I address issues and conflicts by focusing on rules, procedures, and policies of the school," and "I value consistency and adherence to established procedures in all school operations," each with a mean score of 3.79. These results point to the principals' strong reliance on clearly defined systems and expectations to maintain order and achieve institutional goals. This supports the findings of Kimani (2024), who noted that transactional leadership is often observed in larger school systems where administrative demands necessitate formalized decision-making processes and standardization.

On the other hand, the two lowest-rated items were "I prefer to use incentives and rewards to drive performance and results" with a mean of 3.13, and "I reward my teachers and staff for meeting or exceeding performance expectations" with a mean of 3.38, both of which fall under the "moderately prevalent" category. This suggests a relatively restrained use of reward-based motivation among the respondents, which may reflect budgetary limitations or a cultural emphasis on intrinsic motivation and duty. As Rahim (2017) discussed, while transactional leadership is effective for ensuring

accountability and compliance, its overemphasis on external rewards can limit relational engagement and intrinsic staff motivation.

Table 8. Prevailing Leadership Styles of Secondary School Principals in General Santos City in terms of Transactional Leadership

	Transactional	Mean Score	Std. Dev.	Description
1	I establish clear rules and guidelines that all teachers and staff members are expected to follow.	3.79	0.41	Highly Prevalent
2	I reward my teachers and staff for meeting or exceeding performance expectations.	3.38	0.58	Moderately Prevalent
3	I address issues and conflicts by focusing on rules, procedures, and policies of the school.	3.79	0.41	Highly Prevalent
4	I provide immediate feedback to my teachers and staff when performance does not meet the required standards.	3.58	0.50	Highly Prevalent
5	I focus on achieving specific goals and tasks to maintain high standards in the school.	3.65	0.60	Highly Prevalent
6	I prefer to use incentives and rewards to drive performance and results.	3.13	0.61	Moderately Prevalent
7	I take corrective actions when standards are not met or when policies are violated.	3.50	0.59	Moderately Prevalent
8	I ensure compliance with school regulations through close monitoring and supervision.	3.75	0.44	Highly Prevalent
9	I value consistency and adherence to established procedures in all school operations.	3.79	0.51	Highly Prevalent
10	I use a structured approach to manage and resolve conflicts among teachers and staff	3.54	0.64	Highly Prevalent
	Overall Mean	3.59	0.39	Highly Prevalent

Moreover, the item "I take corrective actions when standards are not met or when policies are violated" yielded a moderate prevalence mean of 3.50, suggesting that although principals respond to non-compliance, such actions may be influenced by contextual variables such as conflict sensitivity, school environment, or teacher tenure. These findings mirror those of Mahfouz (2020), who observed that in some educational settings, transactional approaches may be tempered by the need for emotional intelligence and situational flexibility.

Overall, the data indicate that transactional leadership remains an essential component of school management in the research locale. Principals tend to focus on maintaining order, compliance, and goal achievement through structured means. However, the less frequent use of reward systems highlights the need for more balanced motivation strategies that combine recognition with accountability. These findings underscore the importance of aligning transactional practices with the unique operational contexts of public secondary schools.

The results for laissez-faire leadership on table 9 showed an overall mean score of 2.60, with a standard deviation of 0.69, interpreted as moderately prevalent. This suggests that while some characteristics of laissez-faire leadership were present among secondary school principals in General Santos City, these behaviors were generally applied to a lesser extent compared to other leadership styles.

The item that received the highest mean score was "I believe in allowing teachers and staff to explore their own methods of achieving school objectives," with a mean of 3.15, interpreted as moderately prevalent. This was followed by "I trust my teachers and staff to find their own solutions to problems they encounter" (M = 2.85) and "I provide minimal direction and allow my teachers and staff to set their own work pace" (M = 2.83). These responses suggest that principals acknowledge the professional autonomy of their staff and occasionally allow room for self-direction in instructional and operational matters.

Table 9. Prevailing Leadership Styles of Secondary School Principals in General Santos City in terms of Laissez-Faire Leadership

	Laissez-faire	Mean Score	Std. Dev.	Description
1	I give my teachers and staff the freedom to make their own decisions without my interference.	2.46	1.02	Low Prevalence
2	I allow teachers and staff to handle issues independently without direct guidance from me.	2.44	0.88	Low Prevalence
3	I trust my teachers and staff to find their own solutions to problems they encounter.	2.85	0.90	Moderately Prevalent
4	I avoid micro-managing and provide minimal oversight on day-to-day activities.	2.73	0.90	Moderately Prevalent
5	I delegate authority and responsibilities to teachers and staff without much involvement.	2.40	0.92	Low Prevalence
6	I believe in letting things run their course without intervening unless absolutely necessary.	2.48	0.97	Low Prevalence
7	I provide minimal direction and allow my teachers and staff to set their own work pace.	2.83	0.86	Moderately Prevalent
8	I am comfortable with a hands-off approach in managing the school.	2.15	0.99	Low Prevalence
9	I rarely impose my views on how tasks should be accomplished.	2.48	0.77	Low Prevalence
10	I believe in allowing teachers and staff to explore their own methods of achieving school objectives.	3.15	0.96	Moderately Prevalent
	Overall Mean	**2.60**	**0.69**	**Moderately Prevalent**

These findings align with Northouse (2018), who stated that laissez-faire leadership is characterized by a "hands-off" approach, where leaders avoid active decision-making and allow team members to operate independently. In the context of education, Boquiren (2021) noted that some degree of autonomy can promote teacher innovation and ownership, especially when teachers are experienced and capable of managing tasks without constant supervision.

However, several items scored notably lower, with the lowest mean score observed in the statement "I am comfortable with a hands-off approach in managing the school" (M = 2.15). Other low-scoring items included "I delegate authority and responsibilities to teachers and staff without much involvement" (M = 2.40), and "I allow teachers and staff to handle issues independently without direct guidance from me" (M = 2.44). These responses, all interpreted as low prevalence, indicate that most principals were less inclined to adopt a fully non-interventionist approach.

This finding is consistent with Villena and Padua (2018), who explained that effective school leadership in the Philippine public school context often requires active involvement in instructional supervision and decision-making. Excessive delegation or withdrawal from administrative oversight may be perceived as lack of leadership, which could affect school performance and teacher accountability. In summary, the results suggest that while principals in this study occasionally adopted elements of laissez-faire leadership, especially when encouraging independent thinking among teachers, they generally maintained a more engaged and structured leadership approach. The limited application of this style may reflect the demands of the public school system, which emphasizes compliance, supervision, and performance monitoring.

In table 10, the overall mean score for authoritative leadership among public secondary school principals in General Santos City is 2.52, categorized as moderately prevalent. This indicates that while elements of authoritative leadership are present in the leadership practices of the respondents, such a style is not strongly dominant across the participating schools.

Table 10. Prevailing Leadership Styles of Secondary School Principals in General Santos City in terms of Authoritive Leadership

	Authoritative	Mean Score	Std. Dev.	Description
1	I make decisions independently and expect my teachers and staff to follow them.	2.00	0.72	Low Prevalence
2	I set high standards and expect strict adherence from my teachers and staff.	2.13	0.95	Low Prevalence
3	I take a firm stance on maintaining discipline and order within the school.	2.83	0.70	Moderately Prevalent
4	I expect my teachers and staff to comply with my instructions without questioning.	1.98	0.70	Low Prevalence
5	I provide clear and direct instructions to my teachers and staff to ensure tasks are completed correctly.	3.25	0.79	Moderately Prevalent
6	I take charge in critical situations and provide decisive leadership.	3.29	0.81	Moderately Prevalent
7	I believe that leadership is most effective when there is a single, strong authority figure.	2.00	0.98	Low Prevalence
8	I prioritize maintaining control and ensuring compliance in all school matters.	2.46	0.78	Low Prevalence
9	I take a direct approach in addressing issues and implementing changes.	2.46	0.72	Low Prevalence
10	I establish a clear hierarchy and expect everyone to know their place and responsibilities.	2.83	0.80	Moderately Prevalent
	Overall Mean	**2.52**	**0.60**	**Moderately Prevalent**

Items reflecting moderate prevalence include "I provide clear and direct instructions to my teachers and staff to ensure tasks are completed correctly" (M = 3.25), "I take charge in critical situations and provide decisive leadership" (M = 3.29), and "I establish a clear hierarchy and expect everyone to know their place and responsibilities" (M = 2.83). These

results suggest that principals still recognize the value of structure, decisiveness, and clarity in managing school operations—especially in situations requiring urgent responses or organizational alignment.

On the other hand, several items scored low in prevalence, indicating that rigid and unilateral leadership behaviors are not widely practiced. For instance, "I expect my teachers and staff to comply with my instructions without questioning" (M = 1.98), "I make decisions independently and expect my teachers and staff to follow them" (M = 2.00), and "I believe that leadership is most effective when there is a single, strong authority figure" (M = 2.00) all suggest a general avoidance of overly hierarchical or autocratic approaches. These findings align with contemporary leadership discourse, including the works of Goleman et al. (2017), who advocated for a balance between directive clarity and emotional responsiveness in school settings.

Moreover, the relatively lower emphasis on strict compliance and centralized authority reflects a shift away from traditional command-and-control leadership structures. As Kimani (2024) and Mahfouz (2020) noted in their respective studies, principals operating in resource-constrained or high-stress educational environments often find that overly rigid leadership may suppress collaboration and increase tension among staff. Therefore, even in the presence of authoritative traits, school leaders in General Santos City appear to adopt a more adaptive approach, balancing firmness with openness to feedback and cooperation.

In conclusion, authoritative leadership is moderately prevalent among the respondents. While principals assert control in critical situations and maintain clear procedural guidance, they generally refrain from imposing rigid hierarchies or demanding unquestioned compliance. This reflects an evolving leadership culture that values decisiveness, but not at the expense of staff engagement and instructional autonomy.

Table 11. Prevailing Leadership Styles of Secondary School Principals in General Santos City in terms of Democratic Leadership

	Democratic	Mean Score	Std. Dev.	Description
1	I involve my teachers and staff in decision-making processes and consider their opinions.	3.83	0.38	Highly Prevalent
2	I value the feedback and suggestions of my teachers and staff when making important decisions	3.83	0.38	Highly Prevalent
3	I encourage a participative approach where everyone feels heard and respected	3.92	0.28	Highly Prevalent
4	I foster an environment where teachers and staff feel comfortable sharing their ideas and concerns	3.96	0.20	Highly Prevalent
5	I believe in building consensus before implementing new policies or changes	3.92	0.28	Highly Prevalent
6	I promote collaboration and teamwork in achieving school goals.	3.96	0.20	Highly Prevalent
7	I regularly hold meetings to discuss school matters and gather input from all teachers and staff.	3.88	0.34	Highly Prevalent
8	I delegate tasks and responsibilities based on the strengths and preferences of my teachers and staff.	3.92	0.28	Highly Prevalent
9	I believe in shared leadership and empowering others to take on leadership roles	3.92	0.28	Highly Prevalent
10	I maintain an open-door policy to ensure transparent and open communication	3.83	0.38	Highly Prevalent
	Overall Mean	**3.90**	**0.23**	**Highly Prevalent**

In table 11, the democratic leadership style received an overall mean score of 3.90, categorized as highly prevalent among public secondary school principals in General Santos City. This finding suggests that principals in the locale consistently adopt participative and inclusive leadership practices, placing a strong emphasis on consultation, collaboration, and shared decision-making.

The highest-rated items include "I foster an environment where teachers and staff feel comfortable sharing their ideas and concerns" (M = 3.96) and "I promote collaboration and teamwork in achieving school goals" (M = 3.96), underscoring the principals' commitment to cultivating a positive and participatory school culture. Other indicators, such as "I believe in building consensus before implementing new policies or changes" (M = 3.92) and "I encourage a participative approach where everyone feels heard and respected" (M = 3.92), further highlight the extent to which leadership is exercised through inclusive processes.

These findings are consistent with the conceptualization of democratic leadership by Bush and Glover (2016), who asserted that school leaders who adopt shared governance models are more likely to promote collective efficacy, teacher morale, and organizational trust. In addition, Day et al. (2020) observed that democratic leadership tends to thrive in educational settings where stakeholder engagement is high, and such practices often lead to improved conflict resolution and school climate.

The strong prevalence of this leadership style also supports the findings of Mustajim, Harith, and Latif (2025), who noted that in Malaysian public schools with stable administrative environments, principals often implemented shared decision-making mechanisms, resulting in higher satisfaction levels among staff. Similarly, Silva et al. (2021) reported that participatory leadership enhances communication, reduces conflict, and empowers teachers to take ownership of school improvement efforts.

In the context of General Santos City, where public secondary schools are diverse in size and socio-economic makeup, the widespread adoption of democratic practices suggests that principals recognize the value of collective input in navigating complex administrative and instructional demands. Moreover, this leadership approach aligns well with

DepEd's continued emphasis on School-Based Management (SBM), which encourages autonomy and stakeholder participation at the school level (Department of Education, 2023).

In summary, democratic leadership is a defining characteristic among the principals surveyed. Their consistent application of participatory behaviors, transparent communication, and collaborative problem-solving reflects a leadership culture that fosters trust, inclusivity, and shared accountability—elements crucial for addressing modern educational challenges in dynamic school environments

4.3 Conflict Resolution Strategies Among Secondary School Principals in General Santos City

This section presents the commonly used conflict resolution strategies of secondary school principals, particularly in terms of problem-solving, avoidance, accommodation, compromise, collaboration, and competition.

The findings show that the problem-solving approach was very commonly used by secondary school principals in General Santos City, with an overall mean of 3.93 and a standard deviation of 0.14 as shown on table 12. This result reflects a strong preference among school leaders for resolving conflicts constructively through collaboration, understanding, and mutual engagement.

Table 12. Conflict Resolution Strategies Among Secondary School Principals in General Santos City in terms of Problem-Solving Approach

	Problem-Solving Approach	Mean Score	Std. Dev.	Description
1	I focus on understanding the root cause of conflicts to find mutually beneficial solutions.	3.83	0.38	Very Commonly Used
2	I encourage open discussions with all parties involved to identify the core issues.	3.83	0.38	Very Commonly Used
3	I actively seek input from all stakeholders to generate creative solutions.	3.65	0.60	Very Commonly Used
4	I invest time in analyzing the conflict situation before making decisions.	3.75	0.44	Very Commonly Used
5	I facilitate negotiations to ensure a fair outcome for everyone involved.	3.83	0.38	Very Commonly Used
6	I emphasize finding solutions that meet the needs of all parties.	3.79	0.41	Very Commonly Used
7	I encourage transparency and honesty during conflict resolution.	3.88	0.34	Very Commonly Used
8	I work to ensure that conflicts are resolved constructively without lingering issues.	3.81	0.44	Very Commonly Used
9	I guide my team to collaboratively address conflicts rather than avoid them.	3.92	0.28	Very Commonly Used
10	I use conflict situations as opportunities for learning and growth.	4.00	0.00	Very Commonly Used
	Overall Mean	**3.93**	**0.14**	**Very Commonly Used**

The item that received the highest mean score was "I use conflict situations as opportunities for learning and growth" with a perfect mean of 4.00, interpreted as very commonly used. This was followed by "I guide my team to collaboratively address conflicts rather than avoid them" (M = 3.92), and "I encourage transparency and honesty during conflict resolution" (M = 3.88). These responses indicate that the principals consistently promote reflective dialogue and team-based problem-solving as part of their conflict management approach.

This pattern is supported by Ariani (2022), who noted that problem-solving leaders are more likely to treat conflict as a catalyst for institutional improvement rather than as a disruption. In addition, Bar-On (2017) emphasized that using conflict constructively allows for professional growth, stronger collaboration, and better decision-making outcomes—aligning with the top-rated behaviors seen in this study.

The lowest mean score, though still interpreted as "very commonly used," was observed in the item "I actively seek input from all stakeholders to generate creative solutions" with a mean of 3.65. Despite being slightly lower than the other items, this still reflects a strong practice of inclusiveness and idea-sharing, suggesting that principals do engage stakeholders but may face limitations in terms of time, policy constraints, or communication structures.

As described in the review of related literature, Andrade (2019) asserted that conflict resolution through problem-solving is most effective when leaders focus on the root causes of the issue and involve those affected in crafting solutions. Similarly, Espino and Villa (2018) found that collaborative resolution processes contribute to long-term professional harmony in schools by addressing not just the symptoms of conflict but their underlying drivers.

Furthermore, Rias (2020) explained that school principals who consistently apply problem-solving strategies tend to build a positive school climate characterized by trust, fairness, and openness—traits reflected in the consistently high ratings for transparency, negotiation, and open discussion in the current findings.

The results also support the idea that conflict resolution is not merely a reactive process for these school leaders but is integrated into their leadership style as a proactive and developmental tool. The uniformity of the responses and

high mean scores across all indicators suggest that problem-solving is embedded in the principals' day-to-day decision-making, communication, and leadership culture.

On table 13, the findings show that the avoidance strategy for conflict resolution was rarely used by secondary school principals in General Santos City. The approach registered an overall mean of 2.31, with a standard deviation of 0.72. These figures suggest that the principals did not typically rely on avoidance when managing conflicts within their schools.

Among the indicators, the highest mean score was recorded for the item "I prefer to avoid conflicts that could harm my relationship with my teachers and staff" (M = 2.65), which was interpreted as commonly used. Another item, "I wait for conflicts to de-escalate naturally rather than intervening immediately", also fell under the "commonly used" category with a mean of 2.52. These responses suggest that while principals generally avoid evading responsibilities during conflict, they may occasionally use avoidance to preserve professional relationships or allow temporary tensions to settle before stepping in.

Table 13. Conflict Resolution Strategies Among Secondary School Principals in General Santos City in terms of Avoidance

	Avoidance	Mean Score	Std. Dev.	Description
1	I prefer to ignore minor conflicts and hope they resolve themselves over time.	2.21	0.88	Rarely Used
2	I avoid addressing conflicts directly to maintain a peaceful environment.	2.04	0.75	Rarely Used
3	I delay dealing with conflicts until they become unavoidable.	1.96	0.95	Rarely Used
4	I minimize my involvement in conflicts that do not seem urgent.	2.42	0.78	Rarely Used
5	I choose not to confront conflicts unless they significantly affect school operations.	2.25	0.94	Rarely Used
6	I prefer to avoid conflicts that could harm my relationship with my teachers and staff.	2.65	0.91	Commonly Used
7	I redirect attention away from conflicts to focus on other priorities.	2.27	0.9	Rarely Used
8	I wait for conflicts to de-escalate naturally rather than intervening immediately.	2.52	0.93	Commonly Used
9	I choose to keep a low profile in contentious situations.	2.48	0.97	Rarely Used
10	I believe that some conflicts are better left unresolved to prevent further escalation.	2.31	0.91	Rarely Used
	Overall Mean	**2.31**	**0.72**	**Rarely Used**

This finding aligns with the views of Ariani (2022), who argued that strategic avoidance—particularly when used to prevent emotional escalation—can sometimes be useful in preserving relationships, especially when timing is critical or emotions are high. Likewise, Espino and Villa (2018) acknowledged that avoidance may serve as a short-term technique to minimize confrontation, especially when conflicts are perceived as minor or when immediate resolution is not feasible.

On the other hand, the lowest mean score was observed in the statement "I delay dealing with conflicts until they become unavoidable" with a mean of 1.96, indicating it was rarely used. Similarly, "I avoid addressing conflicts directly to maintain a peaceful environment" received a mean of 2.04. These results show that principals do not habitually postpone addressing conflicts or avoid them purely to maintain harmony. This is supported by the research of Rias (2020), who emphasized that avoidance is typically regarded as a passive or ineffective approach in school leadership, especially when timely intervention is needed to prevent further escalation or organizational dysfunction.

The consistent classification of most items under "rarely used" suggests that school principals prefer more proactive and direct strategies, such as problem-solving and collaboration, rather than withdrawing or ignoring issues. This is consistent with the leadership expectations outlined in DepEd leadership frameworks, which stress the importance of intervention, communication, and resolution as key indicators of administrative competence.

In conclusion, while avoidance may be occasionally employed in specific interpersonal contexts or as a deliberate de-escalation method, the overall results show that principals in this study do not consider it a preferred strategy. This affirms their inclination toward engaged and solution-oriented leadership practices.

Table 14, accommodation as a conflict resolution strategy recorded an overall mean of 2.55, which falls on the borderline between "rarely used" and "commonly used." This suggests that while school principals in General Santos City occasionally adopt accommodating behaviors, such strategies are not dominant in their leadership practices.

Table 14. Conflict Resolution Strategies Among Secondary School
Principals in General Santos City in terms of Accommodation

	Accommodation	Mean Score	Std. Dev.	Description
1	I willingly give in to others' viewpoints to keep the peace.	2.50	0.78	Rarely Used
2	I prioritize maintaining harmony over asserting my own opinions in conflicts.	3.00	0.72	Commonly Used
3	I often agree with others to resolve conflicts quickly.	2.58	0.88	Commonly Used
4	I make concessions to accommodate the needs or desires of others.	2.88	0.68	Commonly Used
5	I sacrifice my preferences to ensure the satisfaction of others.	2.69	0.75	Commonly Used
6	I tend to accept the decisions of others to avoid prolonged disputes.	2.27	0.68	Rarely Used
7	I focus on what others want rather than on what I believe is right in conflict situations.	2.06	0.81	Rarely Used
8	I choose to 'let go' to maintain relationships, even if it means compromising my position.	2.38	0.88	Rarely Used
9	I often yield to others' requests to preserve positive relationships.	2.50	0.88	Rarely Used
10	I believe in adjusting my stance to accommodate others' concerns in conflict resolution.	2.67	0.87	Commonly Used
	Overall Mean	2.55	0.62	Rarely Used

The three lowest-rated items—"I focus on what others want rather than on what I believe is right in conflict situations" (M = 2.06), "I tend to accept the decisions of others to avoid prolonged disputes" (M = 2.27), and "I choose to 'let go' to maintain relationships, even if it means compromising my position" (M = 2.38)—highlight a general reluctance among principals to yield entirely or suppress their professional judgment. These findings suggest that school leaders are cautious about over-accommodation, possibly due to the risk of undermining authority or compromising institutional goals.

However, several items were categorized as "commonly used," including "I prioritize maintaining harmony over asserting my own opinions in conflicts" (M = 3.00), "I often agree with others to resolve conflicts quickly" (M = 2.58), and "I make concessions to accommodate the needs or desires of others" (M = 2.88). These indicate that principals may strategically use accommodation in situations where preserving collegial relationships or avoiding escalation is more important than asserting dominance.

This pattern reflects Thomas's (2016) definition of accommodation as a conflict style focused on maintaining harmony, often at personal expense. In leadership settings such as schools—where sustaining interpersonal rapport is essential—such behavior may be selectively employed to foster goodwill or resolve less critical issues efficiently. Furthermore, as observed by Mahfouz (2020), emotionally intelligent leaders may resort to accommodative tactics to de-escalate conflict and preserve long-term trust among stakeholders, especially in resource-constrained or high-pressure environments.

Overall, the data suggest that while accommodation is not a principal strategy among public secondary school leaders in the study, it plays a complementary role within a broader repertoire of conflict resolution approaches. Principals appear to weigh the situational demands of conflicts before adopting this strategy, reflecting a context-sensitive and relationshiporiented leadership mindset.

Table 15. Conflict Resolution Strategies Among Secondary School
Principals in General Santos City in terms of Compromise

	Compromise	Mean Score	Std. Dev.	Description
1	I seek middle-ground solutions that partially satisfy all parties involved.	3.25	0.53	Commonly Used
2	I encourage finding a balanced approach to conflict resolution.	3.63	0.49	Very Commonly Used
3	I negotiate with others to reach a mutually acceptable outcome.	3.71	0.46	Very Commonly Used
4	I value fair trade-offs to resolve conflicts effectively.	3.58	0.50	Very Commonly Used
5	I aim to split differences to ensure both parties are somewhat satisfied.	3.46	0.51	Commonly Used
6	I look for solutions where everyone makes some concessions.	3.54	0.51	Very Commonly Used
7	I advocate for compromise as a practical approach to resolving conflicts.	3.46	0.59	Commonly Used
8	I strive to balance conflicting interests to reach a reasonable settlement.	3.58	0.50	Very Commonly Used
9	I encourage a 'give-and-take' mentality to manage conflicts.	3.67	0.48	Very Commonly Used
10	I accept that not all conflicts can have a perfect solution, and compromise is necessary.	3.58	0.50	Very Commonly Used
	Overall Mean	3.55	0.41	Very Commonly Used

As presented in Table 15, compromise as a conflict resolution strategy yielded an overall mean score of 3.55, categorizing it as "very commonly used" among public secondary school principals in General Santos City. This result

indicates that compromise is one of the more dominant approaches employed by school leaders when managing interpersonal and organizational conflicts.

The highest-rated items include "I negotiate with others to reach a mutually acceptable outcome" (M = 3.71), "I encourage a 'give-and-take' mentality to manage conflicts" (M = 3.67), and "I encourage finding a balanced approach to conflict resolution" (M = 3.63). These findings underscore the collaborative ethos that characterizes compromise, where school principals aim for solutions that benefit all stakeholders, even if it means each party relinquishes part of their demands. Such behaviors reflect the findings of Ting-Toomey (2015), who emphasized that compromise is a practical and culturally sensitive approach, especially in hierarchical but relationship-oriented environments like schools.

Meanwhile, other statements such as "I seek middle-ground solutions that partially satisfy all parties involved" (M = 3.25) and "I advocate for compromise as a practical approach to resolving conflicts" (M = 3.46) further support the notion that compromise is perceived not as a sign of weakness, but as a rational strategy to promote consensus and reduce friction. This aligns with the idea presented by Rahim (2017), who described compromise as a middle-path strategy particularly suited for time-constrained settings where swift resolutions are necessary but fairness remains a priority.

The preference for compromise among school principals may also reflect the structural realities of educational institutions, where principals must balance competing demands from teachers, parents, students, and administrative directives. Rather than enforcing unilateral decisions or avoiding issues altogether, compromise allows principals to maintain authority while preserving relationships and institutional harmony.

In summary, the data indicate that compromise is widely and effectively used by public secondary school principals in General Santos City. Its frequent use suggests that school leaders value practicality, fairness, and balanced decision-making in managing workplace conflict. This strategy complements other proactive conflict approaches such as problem-solving and collaboration, reinforcing a leadership style grounded in responsiveness and negotiation.

Table 16, shows collaboration as a conflict resolution strategy yielded an overall mean score of 3.88 (SD = 0.28), which falls within the category of "very commonly used" among public secondary school principals in General Santos City. This finding demonstrates a strong preference among school leaders for cooperative and participatory approaches in managing conflicts within their institutions.

The highest-rated indicators include "I encourage open dialogue to understand differing viewpoints and achieve consensus", "I work with others to find a solution that fully satisfies all parties", "I foster a cooperative environment to find the best solution for all", and "I encourage a sense of unity and common purpose when addressing conflicts"—each with a mean score of 3.92. These results reflect an intentional effort by principals to foster an inclusive and solution-oriented climate, where team members are actively engaged in the conflict resolution process. Such practices affirm the assertions of Tjosvold (2016), who emphasized that collaborative conflict management strengthens interpersonal trust and organizational cohesion, particularly in educational settings where coordination and shared values are crucial.

Table 16. Conflict Resolution Strategies Among Secondary School Principals in General Santos City in terms of Collaboration

	Collaboration	Mean Score	Std. Dev.	Description
1	I actively promote teamwork in resolving conflicts.	3.83	0.38	Very Commonly Used
2	I encourage open dialogue to understand differing viewpoints and achieve consensus.	3.92	0.28	Very Commonly Used
3	I work with others to find a solution that fully satisfies all parties.	3.92	0.28	Very Commonly Used
4	I emphasize the importance of everyone contributing to resolving conflicts.	3.88	0.34	Very Commonly Used
5	I use collaboration to turn conflicts into opportunities for growth.	3.88	0.34	Very Commonly Used
6	I foster a cooperative environment to find the best solution for all.	3.92	0.28	Very Commonly Used
7	I ensure that all perspectives are considered and valued in conflict resolution.	3.83	0.38	Very Commonly Used
8	I build a shared understanding and commitment to resolving conflicts together.	3.83	0.38	Very Commonly Used
9	I guide my team towards joint problem-solving in conflict situations.	3.83	0.38	Very Commonly Used
10	I encourage a sense of unity and common purpose when addressing conflicts.	3.92	0.28	Very Commonly Used
	Overall Mean	3.88	0.28	Very Commonly Used

Other items such as "I emphasize the importance of everyone contributing to resolving conflicts" (M = 3.88), "I build a shared understanding and commitment to resolving conflicts together" (M = 3.83), and "I guide my team towards joint problem-solving in conflict situations" (M = 3.83) reinforce the notion that school principals actively cultivate participatory leadership. This is aligned with transformational and democratic leadership theories, as discussed in Goleman et al. (2017) and Bush & Glover (2016), where collaborative decision-making is seen as integral to effective school governance.

These findings are particularly relevant in the context of public secondary schools in General Santos City, where leaders must navigate complex and diverse school environments. The collaborative approach allows principals to bridge

varying perspectives, promote teacher engagement, and maintain a supportive professional culture. As Rahim (2017) argued, collaboration not only leads to more sustainable conflict resolution but also enhances commitment among team members due to their involvement in the process.

In sum, the data clearly show that collaboration is a preferred and frequently practiced conflict resolution strategy among the participating principals. This reflects a leadership ethos that prioritizes inclusivity, communication, and mutual respect in addressing conflicts, which is critical in maintaining functional and effective school environments. The strategic use of collaboration underscores the evolving role of school heads—not merely as decision-makers but as facilitators of collective problem-solving and institutional harmony.

Table 17 shows the overall mean score for the competition strategy is 2.09 (SD = 0.62), indicating that this approach is rarely used by the respondents. The results suggest that school principals in General Santos City generally avoid adopting competitive, win-lose strategies when resolving conflicts. Instead, they seem to prefer methods that emphasize collaboration, compromise, and problem-solving.

Table 17. Conflict Resolution Strategies Among Secondary School Principals in General Santos City in terms of Competition

	Competition	Mean Score	Std. Dev.	Description
1	I take a firm stand and assert my position strongly in conflicts.	2.46	0.93	Rarely Used
2	I prioritize my goals and objectives even if it leads to conflicts.	1.96	0.86	Rarely Used
3	I use my authority to resolve conflicts quickly and decisively.	2.38	0.77	Rarely Used
4	I make decisions independently without waiting for consensus.	1.88	0.58	Rarely Used
5	I focus on winning conflicts rather than compromising or accommodating.	2.25	0.99	Rarely Used
6	I assert my viewpoint and expect others to align with it.	1.92	0.78	Rarely Used
7	I view conflicts as challenges that need to be won or resolved in my favor.	2.00	0.78	Rarely Used
8	I defend my position aggressively when faced with opposing viewpoints.	1.71	0.69	Rarely Used
9	I do not shy away from conflicts and actively engage in them to achieve my goals.	2.00	0.66	Rarely Used
10	I believe in maintaining control and authority during conflicts to ensure outcomes align with my vision.	2.38	0.77	Rarely Used
	Overall Mean	**2.09**	**0.62**	**Rarely Used**

Among the items, the highest mean scores—though still classified as "rarely used"—were observed for "I take a firm stand and assert my position strongly in conflicts" (M = 2.46) and "I use my authority to resolve conflicts quickly and decisively" (M = 2.38). These reflect occasional tendencies toward authoritative decision-making in urgent or high-stakes situations. However, the overall low usage underscores that such assertive behaviors are not dominant or habitual in the local educational leadership culture.

This trend aligns with Rahim's (2017) framework, which suggests that competitive conflict management is often counterproductive in collaborative institutional settings like schools, where relational trust and staff morale are essential. Similarly, Mahfouz (2020) emphasized that school leaders who rely heavily on control and dominance often experience increased resistance and communication breakdowns, particularly in diverse and dynamic educational contexts.

The low use of competition may also be influenced by the administrative expectations within the Department of Education, which encourages participative decision-making, stakeholder involvement, and school-based management. In such environments, principals are expected to facilitate, rather than impose, solutions to conflicts—favoring inclusivity over command-driven resolution.

In summary, the findings demonstrate that public secondary school principals in General Santos City seldom use competition as a strategy in managing conflict. Their leadership approaches tend to avoid adversarial stances in favor of more constructive and relationship-centered methods, supporting the overall tone of cooperative educational leadership emphasized in current literature and policy directives.

Leadership Styles of Secondary School Principals

To determine the dominant leadership approaches among public secondary school principals in General Santos City, the study assessed five leadership styles: transformational, democratic, transactional, laissez-faire, and authoritative. Respondents rated the frequency with which each leadership style was demonstrated, using a four-point Likert scale. The mean scores were computed and ranked to determine their relative prevalence, as shown in Table 18.

Table 18. Summary of the Level of Prevalence of Leadership Styles Among Secondary School Principals in General Santos City

Table 18. Summary of the Level of Prevalence of Leadership Styles Among Secondary School Principals in General Santos City

Leadership Styles	Mean	Interpretation	Rank
Transformational	3.93	Highly Prevalent	1
Democratic	3.90	Highly Prevalent	2
Transactional	3.59	Highly Prevalent	3
Laissez-faire	2.60	Moderately Prevalent	4
Authoritative	2.52	Moderately Prevalent	5

Transformational leadership emerged as the most dominant style with a mean score of 3.93, categorized as highly prevalent. This result is consistent with the earlier findings in this study and is supported by Bass and Riggio (2016), who emphasized that transformational leadership is highly effective in educational institutions due to its focus on vision, motivation, and the personal development of staff. Principals in General Santos City were observed to consistently inspire, support, and model ethical leadership behaviors, promoting innovation and collaboration within their schools.

Following closely is the democratic leadership style, with a mean of 3.90, also rated highly prevalent. This indicates that principals actively involve teachers and staff in decision-making processes and maintain open channels of communication. The findings align with Bush and Glover (2016), who asserted that democratic leadership fosters collective responsibility and transparency, essential in achieving school goals and enhancing morale in increasingly complex educational environments.

The transactional leadership style ranked third, with a mean of 3.59, also classified as highly prevalent. Although more structured and based on exchanges such as rewards and sanctions, its presence suggests that principals balance idealism with practical management strategies, especially in ensuring compliance and achieving performance targets. This confirms the observations of Lussier and Achua (2016), who noted that transactional behaviors are often necessary to maintain order and meet institutional benchmarks.

In contrast, laissez-faire leadership received a lower mean score of 2.60, indicating moderate prevalence. This suggests that while some principals delegate decision-making and allow staff autonomy, such behavior is not widespread. Skogstad et al. (2015) cautioned that excessive use of laissez-faire strategies may lead to diminished oversight and reduced accountability, which appears to be avoided by most principals in this context.

Lastly, authoritative leadership registered the lowest mean of 2.52, also categorized as moderately prevalent. While some elements of decisiveness and discipline are observed, principals generally refrain from autocratic or command-driven behaviors. This trend reflects the preference for more participative and empowering leadership approaches, especially in school settings that demand collaboration and shared accountability.

In summary, the results indicate that transformational and democratic leadership styles are most prevalent among secondary school principals in General Santos City, suggesting a leadership culture that emphasizes vision, empowerment, collaboration, and inclusivity. These findings align with contemporary expectations for school leadership under the Department of Education's school-based management framework and the broader emphasis on instructional leadership and participatory governance.

Table 19 summarizes the extent to which secondary school principals in General Santos City utilize various conflict resolution strategies. Six strategies were evaluated: collaboration, problem-solving, compromise, accommodation, avoidance, and competition. The findings reveal meaningful distinctions in the preferred approaches, with most principals gravitating toward cooperative and constructive methods in addressing conflicts.

Collaboration emerged as the most commonly employed strategy, with the highest mean score of 3.88, categorized as very commonly used. This result underscores the tendency of principals to actively engage all parties in resolving conflicts through open dialogue and consensus-building. It aligns with the findings of Rahim (2017) and Mahfouz (2020), who identified collaboration as the most effective and sustainable conflict resolution approach in educational settings. Collaboration promotes shared understanding and ensures that all stakeholders feel heard and valued—critical elements in maintaining a positive school climate.

The table below summarizes the responses of the participants regarding the extent to which they use various conflict resolution strategies:

Table 19. Summary of the Level of Utilization of Commonly Used Conflict Resolution Strategies Among Secondary School Principals in General Santos City

Conflict Resolution Strategies	Mean	Interpretation	Rank
Collaboration	3.88	Very Commonly Used	1
Problem-Solving	3.83	Very Commonly Used	2
Compromise	3.55	Very Commonly Used	3
Accommodation	2.55	Commonly Used	4
Avoidance	2.31	Rarely Used	5
Competition	2.09	Rarely Used	6

Closely following is problem-solving, with a mean of 3.83, also very commonly used. This strategy involves identifying the root causes of conflict and seeking mutually beneficial solutions. The high prevalence of this approach reflects principals' preference for analytical and solution-focused interventions. As emphasized by Ting-Toomey (2015), problem-solving facilitates long-term resolution by addressing underlying issues, rather than merely alleviating surface symptoms.

Compromise was ranked third, with a mean of 3.55, and is likewise classified as very commonly used. This indicates a strong inclination toward negotiation and mutual concession, particularly in situations requiring timely resolution without alienating any party. According to Rahim (2017), compromise is often adopted in high-pressure or resource-limited contexts, which mirrors the operational realities of many public secondary schools.

Accommodation received a moderate mean of 2.55, interpreted as commonly used. This strategy entails yielding to others to maintain harmony, even at the cost of one's own position. While it is not the dominant method, its presence suggests that in certain relational or emotionally sensitive situations, school leaders prioritize peacekeeping and relationship preservation.

On the other end of the spectrum, avoidance and competition were rated as rarely used, with mean scores of 2.31 and 2.09, respectively. These results confirm that most principals in General Santos City deliberately avoid evading conflict or asserting dominance in conflict situations. The low scores for competition reflect a general aversion to win-lose dynamics, which are often counterproductive in collaborative educational environments. Similarly, the limited use of

In summary, the results affirm that secondary school principals in General Santos City prefer proactive and inclusive conflict resolution strategies, with collaboration, problem-solving, and compromise as the most frequently used. These findings reinforce the leadership profile revealed earlier—principals who adopt participatory and transformational approaches also tend to engage in conflict resolution practices that emphasize cooperation, transparency, and mutual respect.

Moderating Variables and their Influence on Leadership Styles

This section explores whether selected school profile variables—specifically location of the school, school size, student-teacher ratio, and socio-economic status of students—have a significant moderating influence on the relationship between leadership styles and conflict resolution strategies among secondary school principals in General Santos City.

Table 20. Correlation Between School Profile and Leadership Styles

School Profile	r	Degree of Relationship	p-value*	Remark
Location of School	0.0121	Positive Very Weak	0.8830	Not Significant
School Size	0.1698	Positive Very Weak	0.9362	Not Significant
Student-teacher Ratio	0.3174	Positive Weak	0.5343	Not Significant
Socio-economic Status	-0.4171	Negative Moderate	0.1062	Not Significant

*Tested at 0.05 Level of Significance

As shown in Table 20, the data sets were found to be normally distributed. Accordingly, Pearson's correlation coefficient was used for statistical analysis. The results revealed that none of the moderating variables showed a statistically significant relationship. All computed p-values exceeded the 0.05 significance level, indicating no significant correlations between school demographic or environmental factors and the leadership styles practiced by the principals.

The location of the school—whether urban or rural—had a correlation coefficient of $r = 0.0121$, categorized as a very weak positive relationship, with a p-value of 0.8830. This suggests that geographical setting does not meaningfully influence how school principals exhibit leadership behaviors. This result is aligned with the study by Rias (2020), who found that both urban and rural principals shared similar leadership challenges and often applied comparable strategies regardless of locale due to DepEd's standardized mandates.

School size had a slightly higher but still very weak positive correlation (r = 0.1698), with a p-value of 0.9362. This again indicates no significant relationship. This finding reflects those of Nguyen and Hansen (2018), who argued that the leadership style of a principal is more likely influenced by personal orientation and training rather than the size of the institution. School size, while affecting logistical management, appears not to alter leadership behaviors fundamentally.

The student-teacher ratio, a variable often assumed to impact managerial burden, showed a weak positive relationship (r = 0.3174) but remained statistically insignificant (p = 0.5343). This suggests that even in schools with varying teacher loads, principals maintained consistent leadership styles. This challenges assumptions presented by Bar-On (2017), who theorized that high teacher-student ratios can increase managerial stress and influence leadership tendencies; however, the present data do not support this assertion in a statistically meaningful way.

Interestingly, the socio-economic status of students yielded the highest correlation in magnitude among all variables, with a moderate negative relationship (r = -0.4171). However, it also failed to reach statistical significance (p = 0.1062). This suggests a potential trend where principals in schools with lower socio-economic profiles may exhibit different leadership inclinations—possibly toward more directive or transactional styles—but the relationship is not strong enough to be deemed conclusive. Adie and Klenowski (2018) noted that such moderation is often contextual and cannot be fully captured through quantitative measures alone.

These results support the broader cautionary stance in the literature regarding moderation effects. As Wu and Zumbo (2007) asserted, moderation is often subtle and requires a robust theoretical foundation and carefully designed mixed-method approaches for accurate identification. Similarly, Memon et al. (2019) emphasized that without adequate statistical power and theoretical anchoring, moderation analyses risk yielding inconclusive or misleading interpretations.

In conclusion, although the current study did not identify statistically significant moderating effects, the direction and magnitude of some relationships (particularly socio-economic status) warrant further exploration. Future studies may benefit from adopting mixed-method designs to uncover nuanced relationships that extend beyond the scope of statistical correlation. These findings reinforce the importance of examining leadership not only through measurable demographics but also through qualitative insights into school culture, context, and values.

Moderating Variables and their Influence on Conflict Resolution Strategies

Table 21 presents the correlation results between selected school profile variables—specifically, school location, size, student–teacher ratio, and socio-economic status—and the leadership styles exhibited by secondary school principals in General Santos City. Pearson's correlation coefficient (r) was used to assess the relationships, with significance tested at the 0.05 level, as the data sets were confirmed to be normally distributed.

Table 21. Correlation Between School Profile and Conflict Resolution Strategies

School Profile	r	Degree of Relationship	p-value*	Remark
Location of School	0.01712	Positive Very Weak	0.8830	Not Significant
School Size	-0.2076	Negative Weak	0.9362	Not Significant
Student-teacher Ratio	-0.1978	Negative Very Weak	0.5343	Not Significant
Socio-economic Status	-0.4810	Negative Moderate	0.1062	Significant

*Tested at 0.05 Level of Significance

The findings reveal that none of the moderating variables showed a statistically significant relationship with leadership styles, as all p-values exceeded the 0.05 threshold. Specifically, school location recorded a very weak positive correlation (r = 0.0121, p = 0.8830), suggesting no meaningful association between geographic context and how principals lead. This implies that whether the school is urban or peri-urban did not significantly influence the leadership behavior of the respondents.

School size also exhibited a very weak positive correlation (r = 0.1698, p = 0.9362), indicating that the number of enrolled students does not significantly affect the leadership style adopted by school heads. Similarly, student–teacher ratio showed a weak positive correlation (r = 0.3174, p = 0.5343), but the relationship was statistically insignificant. This result contrasts with studies such as those by Bush (2015), who noted that resource constraints—often reflected by high student–teacher ratios—can influence managerial decision-making and leadership assertiveness.

Interestingly, socio-economic status revealed a moderate negative correlation (r = –0.4171), which, although not statistically significant (p = 0.1062), may suggest a trend worth exploring in future research. The negative relationship implies that in schools serving lower socio-economic communities, principals may tend to adopt less assertive or hierarchical leadership styles, potentially leaning toward more collaborative or supportive approaches in response to contextual challenges. This trend aligns with Mahfouz's (2020) assertion that effective school leaders often adjust their behaviors to meet the socio-emotional and material realities of their school communities.

In summary, while none of the moderating variables examined in this study were found to have statistically significant effects on the leadership styles of secondary school principals, the moderate negative correlation between socio-economic status and leadership style offers an important avenue for further investigation. The results overall suggest that leadership behavior among principals in General Santos City may be shaped more by individual disposition, professional development, and organizational culture rather than external school-level characteristics.

Relationship Between Leadership Styles and Conflict Resolution Strategies

This section presents the statistical analysis of the relationship between leadership styles and conflict resolution strategies among secondary school principals in General Santos City. The Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between the two variables. The results are summarized in the table below.

Table 22. Relationship Between Leadership Styles and Conflict Resolution Strategies Among Secondary School Principals

Variables Correlated	Mean	r	Degree of Relationship	p-value*	Remark
Leadership Style	3.31				
Conflict Resolution Strategies	3.03	0.5178	Positive Moderate	0.0096	Significant

*Tested at 0.05 Level of Significance

Table 22 presents the results of the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient analysis examining the relationship between leadership styles and conflict resolution strategies among secondary school principals in General Santos City. The computed correlation coefficient was r = 0.5178, with a p-value of 0.0096, indicating a positive moderate and statistically significant relationship at the 0.05 level.

This finding suggests that as the level or quality of leadership exhibited by principals improves—particularly in terms of their dominant leadership style—there is a corresponding increase in the effective and constructive use of conflict resolution strategies. In other words, principals who demonstrate well-developed leadership practices are more likely to adopt appropriate, responsive, and participatory conflict management approaches within their schools.

The result supports earlier claims by Mahfouz (2020) and Bush (2015), who noted that leadership style greatly influences a principal's approach to conflict resolution. Transformational and democratic leadership, in particular, are often associated with collaborative and problem-solving techniques, whereas authoritarian or laissez-faire styles tend to correlate with less effective conflict management behaviors. This positive correlation also aligns with the findings of Rahim (2017), who emphasized that leaders who exercise participative and communicative behaviors foster healthier conflict climates and improve overall organizational effectiveness.

Given that both variables—leadership style and conflict resolution—scored above moderate levels in the study (means = 3.31 and 3.03 respectively), the significant correlation further underscores the practical importance of leadership development. Strengthening leadership competencies among school heads is therefore not only vital for administrative performance but also instrumental in promoting conflict resolution frameworks that are inclusive, constructive, and educationally sound.

In summary, the statistically significant and moderately positive relationship indicates that improving leadership practices among school principals could directly contribute to more effective conflict resolution strategies, enhancing school governance and stakeholder harmony in public secondary schools in General Santos City.

Descriptive Analysis of Training Needs

This section presents the descriptive findings derived from the open-ended item in the research questionnaire, which asked:
"Can you describe the areas where you feel you need more training or support to effectively lead your school?"

The responses were subjected to thematic analysis, following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase method, to identify recurring patterns across participant narratives. Three dominant themes emerged, reflecting key areas of perceived professional development need among secondary school principals in General Santos City.

Table 23. Identified Themes Reflecting Key Areas for Professional Development

Theme	Response Count	Rank
Team Management and Staff Development	9	1
Conflict Resolution Skills	7	2
Leadership Style Awareness and Adaptability	6	3
Total: 22		

Theme 1: Team Management and Staff Development

The most frequently mentioned area of training need among secondary school principals in General Santos City was related to team management and staff development with 9 responses. Respondents highlighted the challenge of cultivating cohesive, motivated teaching teams while simultaneously supporting the professional and interpersonal growth of individual staff members. One principal shared:

"I want to learn how to coach teachers through their own interpersonal conflicts."

This feedback underscores the principal's evolving role beyond administrative supervision—toward that of an instructional leader and human resource developer. As discussed in the related literature, Boquiren (2021) emphasized that effective school leadership now requires competencies in mentoring, capacity-building, and performance coaching. Similarly, Garcia and Pablo (2021) asserted that school heads must create enabling environments that promote collaboration, trust, and teacher empowerment to meet the increasingly complex demands of 21st-century education.

Moreover, Bongalos (2020) reported that principals who invest in structured team development and interpersonal skills training for their staff contribute to improved job satisfaction and reduced conflict incidents in schools. This aligns with the responses of study participants who expressed interest in learning how to facilitate teacher growth not just in technical pedagogy but also in emotional intelligence, professional relationships, and peer conflict mediation.

Training programs therefore must prioritize modules on team dynamics, collaborative leadership, interpersonal communication, and peer support systems. Incorporating practical strategies such as coaching cycles, professional learning communities (PLCs), and feedback protocols can further equip principals to lead instructional teams effectively and promote a culture of continuous improvement.

Theme 2: Conflict Resolution Skills

A recurring theme among respondents was the need for more structured and formalized training in conflict resolution with 7 responses. While many principals reported handling disputes based on personal experience or intuition, they acknowledged a lack of comprehensive strategies to address complex or emotionally charged situations. One principal expressed:

"I'd benefit from training on restorative practices and how to apply them in school settings."

This statement highlights the demand for practical tools and frameworks in managing school-based conflicts. According to Garcia and Pablo (2021), public school leaders in urban divisions frequently encounter multifaceted interpersonal conflicts that require more than instinctive responses. Their study emphasized the importance of equipping school heads with strategic conflict resolution skills to navigate disputes effectively and maintain school harmony.

The expressed need for training in structured approaches such as restorative justice, peer mediation, and interest-based negotiation echoes the work of Berondo (2020), who stressed that conflict resolution is not merely reactive but must be intentional, culturally responsive, and rooted in professional ethics. In high-density educational settings like General Santos City, the lack of formal mechanisms can exacerbate tensions and affect staff morale and performance.

In light of these findings, it becomes essential that professional development programs include conflict resolution modules grounded in evidence-based practices. These should incorporate mediation techniques, conflict de-escalation protocols, and communication strategies that foster dialogue and mutual respect. Furthermore, principals would benefit from workshops on reflective listening, emotional regulation, and the role of impartial facilitation during disputes, all of which contribute to more effective school leadership.

By institutionalizing conflict resolution training, the Department of Education can support school heads in building more cohesive, responsive, and resilient school environments.

Theme 3: Leadership Style Awareness and Adaptability

Understand and apply appropriate leadership styles across varying school contexts. The respondents acknowledged that relying too heavily on a single leadership style—whether overly directive or excessively participative—can hinder decision-making and diminish organizational effectiveness. As one principal noted:

"Sometimes I'm too democratic, and it slows down decision-making. I need help balancing inclusivity with decisiveness."

This concern underscores the relevance of situational leadership theory, which advocates for the flexible application of leadership behaviors based on contextual demands. As discussed in Chapter 2, Villena and Reyes (2021)

emphasized that effective school leadership in the Philippine public education system requires a nuanced understanding of when to be collaborative and when to exercise authoritative decision-making, especially in high-pressure environments.

Moreover, the findings support the principles of Bass and Avolio's Full Range Leadership Model, which promotes the integrated use of transformational and transactional behaviors to meet evolving organizational needs. In alignment with this, Acosta and Dizon (2020) highlighted the increasing demand for school heads who can assess institutional dynamics and adapt their leadership styles accordingly to optimize school outcomes.

Given this, there is a clear implication for professional development programs to include modules on adaptive leadership, reflective practice, and diagnostic tools that help principals assess their own leadership tendencies. Training initiatives that build capacity for leadership flexibility—such as case-based workshops and leadership simulations—can further equip school leaders to respond effectively to the diverse and dynamic challenges of the public school environment.

In conclusion, this theme reflects the growing need for school leaders to be equipped with interpersonal and developmental leadership competencies. Addressing this need through focused capacity-building initiatives will directly enhance school climate, instructional quality, and the long-term professional well-being of teachers.

In summary, the qualitative data reinforce the quantitative findings by highlighting school principals' conscious awareness of leadership challenges and desire for growth in key areas. The three emergent themes—leadership adaptability, conflict resolution, and team development—underscore the need for targeted, practical, and contextually grounded training programs. These findings provide a foundational basis for designing professional development interventions that are aligned with actual on-the-ground needs of school leaders in the Philippine educational context.

IV.   Conclusion

This chapter presents a summary of the key findings of the study, along with the corresponding conclusions drawn from the data. Based on these conclusions, practical recommendations are offered to inform policy, practice, and future research. The chapter aims to provide a concise overview of the study's results and their implications in relation to the research objectives.

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions and implications were drawn:

The first null hypothesis (H02) hypothesized that there is no significant moderating effect of school environment (urban or rural) and school demographics (school size, student-teacher ratio, and socio-economic status of students) on the relationship between leadership styles and conflict resolution strategies among secondary school principals in General Santos City. The hypothesis was tested by analyzing the extent to which selected school profile variables moderated the relationship between leadership styles and conflict resolution strategies. Specifically, school location, school size, student-teacher ratio, and socio-economic status were examined using Pearson's correlation coefficient, with statistical significance assessed at the 0.05 level.

The results from Table 20 and Table 21 revealed that none of the variables demonstrated a statistically significant moderating effect. All corresponding p-values exceeded the 0.05 threshold, indicating that school environment and demographics do not significantly influence the relationship between principals' leadership styles and their conflict resolution strategies.

Location of the school showed a very weak and positive correlation with both leadership style ($r = 0.0121$, $p = 0.8830$) and conflict resolution strategy ($r = 0.0171$, $p = 0.8830$), but both were statistically insignificant.

School size also reflected very weak and statistically insignificant relationships ($r = 0.1698$, $p = 0.9362$ with leadership style; $r = -0.2076$, $p = 0.9362$ with conflict resolution).

Student-teacher ratio showed weak, non-significant correlations ($r = 0.3174$, $p = 0.5343$ with leadership style; $r = -0.1978$, $p = 0.5343$ with conflict resolution).

Socio-economic status yielded the highest correlation in magnitude ($r = -0.4171$ with leadership style; $r = -0.4810$ with conflict resolution), suggesting a moderate negative relationship. However, it only approached statistical significance in relation to conflict resolution strategies ($p = 0.1062$), falling short of the 0.05 criterion.

These results indicate that while certain trends—particularly the inverse relationship with socio-economic status—warrant deeper qualitative exploration, there is insufficient statistical evidence to confirm a moderating effect of the school profile variables on the central relationship under investigation.

Therefore, the null hypothesis (H01) is retained. It is concluded that the school environment and school demographics do not significantly moderate the relationship between leadership styles and conflict resolution strategies among secondary school principals in General Santos City.

These findings reinforce the notion that principal leadership behavior and conflict management approaches may be shaped more profoundly by internal factors such as personal disposition, leadership training, and organizational norms rather than by external demographic or contextual variables. Future research may benefit from employing mixed-method

approaches to explore these relationships in greater depth and to capture context-specific nuances that quantitative correlations alone may overlook.

The second null hypothesis (H02) hypothesized that there is no significant relationship between leadership styles and conflict resolution strategies among secondary school principals in General Santos City. To test this hypothesis, a Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient analysis was conducted, the results of which are presented in Table 22. The analysis yielded a correlation coefficient of r = 0.5178 and a p-value of 0.0096, indicating a moderate positive and statistically significant relationship between the two variables at the 0.05 level of significance.

This statistically significant correlation implies that improvements in the leadership styles of school principals are associated with a corresponding enhancement in the application of conflict resolution strategies. In particular, principals who exhibit strong, effective leadership practices—especially those aligned with transformational or democratic styles—are more likely to adopt participative, constructive, and solution-oriented approaches to managing conflicts within their schools.

The findings are consistent with previous studies by Mahfouz (2020), Bush (2015), and Rahim (2017), all of which underscore the critical role of leadership behavior in influencing organizational climate and conflict dynamics. The moderately high mean scores recorded for both leadership styles (M = 3.31) and conflict resolution strategies (M = 3.03) further emphasize the relevance and practical implications of strengthening leadership capacities among school heads.

Given the evidence, the null hypothesis (H02) is rejected. It is therefore concluded that there is a significant relationship between leadership styles and conflict resolution strategies among secondary school principals in General Santos City. This underscores the importance of leadership development programs aimed at enhancing conflict management competencies to ensure effective school governance and harmonious stakeholder relations.

Recommendations

For School Principals

The study revealed that while laissez-faire leadership is moderately prevalent, it is not the dominant style, and authoritative leadership is the least utilized. This indicates a general preference among principals for more participative leadership approaches. However, achieving the right balance remains essential. It is recommended that principals undergo targeted training to develop the ability to apply elements of both laissez-faire (empowering experienced staff) and authoritative leadership (making swift decisions during crises) appropriately and effectively, without over-relying on either style.

For Educational Administrators

Educational administrators may use these findings to identify principals who rely on passive or overly authoritative methods. They may introduce mentoring programs, performance feedback tools, or peer learning communities to help these school heads improve. Leadership evaluations may also include indicators for how well conflicts are handled. By focusing on capacity-building, administrators may strengthen the overall quality of school governance.

For Policymakers in Education

Given the evidence that laissez-faire and competitive leadership approaches are among the least effective, policymakers may consider reviewing existing training standards and leadership policies. They may promote models that include context-sensitive leadership styles and emphasize skills like emotional intelligence, collaborative decision-making, and inclusive governance. Policies may also be revised to require continuous leadership development, aligned with local school realities.

For Leadership Training Providers

Training institutions may revisit their modules to ensure they cover the specific areas where school leaders scored lowest—namely, proactive leadership and effective conflict management. Modules may include interactive activities such as simulations, real-life case studies, and peer assessment. They may also offer specialized tracks on managing conflict in multicultural or high-stress school environments, which are relevant in places

For Teachers

Teachers often experience the impact of weak leadership firsthand. Schools may empower teachers through capacity-building programs in basic conflict management and team communication. Teachers may also benefit from clear channels to share feedback with leadership in a constructive way. Promoting teacher participation in decision-making may strengthen school cohesion and prevent frustrations caused by unresolved or mishandled issues.

For Students

Students benefit most from school environments where leadership is responsive and fair. Principals may develop systems that encourage student involvement in school governance, such as through student councils or peer mediation programs. They may also ensure that students feel safe reporting conflicts and that the response is respectful and constructive, not avoidant or punitive.

For Parents and Guardians

When school leadership is transparent and responsive, parents and guardians are more confident in the school's management. Schools may establish regular parent consultations, suggestion boxes, or community assemblies to foster open dialogue. Principals may also clarify conflict resolution protocols to reassure parents that issues are addressed fairly and promptly.

For Local Government Units (LGUs)

LGUs may explore ways to support school leadership through localized leadership seminars, grants for principal training, or multi-stakeholder educational summits. These activities may target the observed gaps in conflict management and passive leadership, ensuring that community schools are managed by leaders equipped to build trust and cooperation.

For the School Community

A school community thrives when leadership is active and inclusive. Community stakeholders—non-teaching staff, barangay leaders, and neighbors—may be invited to dialogues or planning workshops that focus on building positive school climates. These initiatives may contribute to a shared sense of responsibility and make conflict resolution a collective process.

For Future Researchers

Future researchers may build on this study by exploring why some principals continue to use less effective leadership styles. Research may focus on long-term changes after leadership training, or compare outcomes across different regions or types of schools. Studies may also examine cultural and systemic factors that influence leadership behavior in the Philippine education system.

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