

FACTORS AFFECTING ADMINISTRATORS' CULTURAL LEADERSHIP OF UNIVERSITIES IN CHUXIONG REGION, YUNNAN PROVINCE: A MODERATION EFFECT OF TEACHER CHARACTERISTICS*

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ABSTRACT

The objectives of this study were (1) To study the effect of organizational culture on cultural leadership; (2) To study the effect of work-related on cultural leadership; (3) To study the moderation effect of teacher characteristics on the relationship between organizational culture and cultural leadership; (4) To study the moderation effect of teacher characteristics on the relationship between work-related and cultural leadership. The population was teachers who were full-time teaching and administrative staff in the universities in Chuxiong region in the academic year 2024. The sample was randomly selected by using the proportional stratified random sampling technique, 558 teachers were employed as samples. 5-points Likert scale questionnaires were using as data collection. The descriptive statistics was used for describing the characteristics of samples, and the multi-group SEM was use for hypothesis testing.

The findings revealed that both organizational culture and work-related factors had a significant influence on the administrators' cultural leadership of universities in the Chuxiong region. However, teacher characteristics did not moderate the relationship between organizational culture and cultural leadership, nor between work-related factors and cultural leadership. Specifically, the effects of organizational culture and work-related factors on cultural leadership were consistent across gender, age, ethnicity, and education level, indicating that there were no significant differences among these demographic groups. According to the above-mentioned significance and problem, the researcher wants to study the relationship between organizational culture and cultural leadership in Chuxiong's universities to better understand how university presidents can foster inclusivity and institutional success in ethnically diverse regions, given the surprising lack of moderating effects from teacher characteristics and the need for culturally responsive leadership strategies.

Keywords : 1. Cultural Leadership 2. Organizational Culture 3. Work-related 4. Teacher Characteristics

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1. Background and Problem Statement

Universities played a crucial role in regional socio-economic development, and effective leadership was essential for ensuring institutional success in a rapidly changing educational environment (Bush, 2018). In the context of the Chuxiong Region, Yunnan Province, the cultural leadership of university presidents was particularly significant due to the region's ethnic diversity and socio-cultural complexity. Cultural leadership, which involved the ability to integrate organizational values, traditions, and cultural sensitivities into strategic decision-making, had been recognized as a vital factor for fostering inclusivity, innovation, and institutional harmony (House et al., 2004; Schein, 2017).

Previous research had shown that organizational culture strongly influenced leadership behaviors and styles, particularly in educational settings (Al-Ali et al., 2017; Yukl & Gardner, 2020). However, there had been limited empirical evidence on how these relationships manifested in multi-ethnic Chinese higher education contexts. Specifically, the interplay between organizational culture, work-related factors, and cultural leadership had not been adequately explored in Yunnan's vocational and higher education institutions.

Moreover, although teacher characteristics such as age, gender, ethnicity, and years of experience had often been considered potential moderators in leadership studies (Northouse, 2022), evidence from the Chuxiong Region indicated that these demographic factors did not significantly alter the relationship between organizational culture and cultural leadership. This presented an important theoretical and practical gap: why did teacher characteristics appear to have no moderating effect, despite the cultural and demographic diversity of the teaching workforce?

The lack of comprehensive understanding in this area limited the ability of university administrators to design leadership development strategies and organizational policies that were culturally responsive. Addressing this research gap was critical for enhancing governance and leadership capacity in universities in ethnically diverse regions of China.

2. Research Objectives

The research objectives were as the followings:

- 2.1 To study the effect of organizational culture on cultural leadership.
- 2.2 To study the effect of work-related on cultural leadership.

2.3 To study the moderation effect of teacher characteristics on the relationship between organizational culture and cultural leadership.

2.4 To study the moderation effect of teacher characteristics on the relationship between work-related and cultural leadership.

3. Research Benefits

3.1 This study expands the existing body of knowledge regarding higher education administration by clarifying how organizational culture and work-related factors directly shape the cultural leadership of university administrators. It provides an empirical model specific to regional universities in Yunnan Province, China.

3.2 By introducing teacher characteristics as a moderating variable, this research enriches contingency leadership theories. It explains under what conditions and for which groups of teachers the influence of organizational culture and work-related factors on cultural leadership becomes stronger or weaker.

3.3 University leaders can use the findings as a practical guide to identify which specific cultural traits and work environments within their institutions actively foster effective cultural leadership, allowing them to proactively modify the institutional climate.

3.4 The results provide actionable insights for HR department heads to understand that a "one-size-fits-all" leadership approach may not work. Since teacher characteristics moderate the outcomes, administrators can tailor their communication, workload distribution, and support systems to align with the diverse profiles of their teaching staff (e.g., teaching experience, academic rank, or age groups).

4. Research Methodology

4.1 The population was teachers who were full-time teaching and administrative staff in the universities of Chuxiong region in the academic year 2024. The sample was randomly selected by using the proportional stratified random sampling technique; 558 teachers were employed as samples. The respondents' general information was summarized as follows:

4.2 Sample

The study employed a proportional stratified random sampling technique, using universities in the Chuxiong region as the sampling frame. In this method, the population was divided into subgroups (strata) according to each university, and samples were drawn so that the proportion of participants from each university reflected its share of the total population. Specifically, Chuxiong Normal

University, with a population of 808, contributed a sample of 225 participants, while Chuxiong Vocational Technician College, with a population of 1,202, contributed a sample of 333 participants, resulting in a total population of 2,010 and a total sample size of 558

4.3 Research instrument. The instrument for this study was developed as a structured questionnaire based on the conceptual framework, using a 5-point Likert rating scale. It consisted of three main parts: organizational culture types, cultural leadership styles, and control variables. The organizational culture section measured four types Clan, Adhocracy, Market, and Hierarchical cultures focusing on perceptions of communication, collaboration, and innovation support. The cultural leadership section assessed six styles: self-protective, team-oriented, humane-oriented, charismatic/value-based, autonomous, and participative leadership. The control variables section covered work-related factors (such as job factors, work duration, number of staff, cultural atmosphere, educational policy, and socio-economic development) and teacher characteristics (including age, gender, education level, and ethnic group).

To ensure quality, reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, with a value of 0.70 or higher considered acceptable, and internal consistency checked across items measuring the same construct. Validity testing included content validity through IOC and construct validity through Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). The combination of expert review, pilot testing, statistical reliability analysis, and validity testing ensured that the questionnaire was both accurate in measuring the intended constructs and reliable for consistent use in the study.

4.4 Research Hypothesis

H1: Organizational culture had a significant influence on cultural leadership.

H2: Work-related factors had a significant influence on cultural leadership.

H3: Teacher characteristics moderated the relationship between organizational culture and cultural leadership.

H4: Teacher characteristics moderated the relationship between work-related factors and cultural leadership.

4.5 Hypothesis testing

To test these hypotheses, the study would first validate the measurement model through confirmatory factor analysis, reliability, and validity checks, followed by data cleaning and assumption testing. Hypotheses H1 and H2 could be examined using structural equation modeling (SEM) or multiple regression by assessing the direct effects of organizational culture and work-related factors on cultural leadership.

Hypotheses H3 and H4, which involve moderation by teacher characteristics, could be tested through moderated regression with interaction terms for continuous moderators or multi-group SEM for categorical moderators. In all cases, significance testing, effect size evaluation, and model fit assessment (for SEM) would determine support for the hypotheses, with moderation effects probed further using simple slopes or group comparisons.

5. Research Results

5.1 Model fit evaluation

Table 1 Model fit evaluation.

Index	Reference Criteria	Measured Result	Interpret
χ^2/df	1-3 is excellent, 3-5 is good	4.62	good
RMSEA	<0.05 is excellent, <0.08 is good	0.081	acceptable
CFI	>0.9 is excellent, >0.8 is good	0.958	excellent
NFI	>0.9 is excellent, >0.8 is good	0.947	excellent
RFI	>0.9 is excellent, >0.8 is good	0.937	excellent
TLI	>0.9 is excellent, >0.8 is good	0.95	excellent

The model fit evaluation indicated that the χ^2/df value of 4.62 fell within the range considered good, while the RMSEA value of 0.081 was within the acceptable range. The CFI (0.958), NFI (0.947), RFI (0.937), and TLI (0.950) all exceeded the 0.9 threshold, demonstrating excellent fit. Overall, the results suggested that the model demonstrated a good to excellent fit to the data.

5.2 Direct Effects hypothesis testing (Hypothesis 1 and Hypothesis 2)

To further validate the hypotheses proposed in this study, structural equation modeling (SEM) was employed to estimate and test the path relationships among variables. Path coefficients, significance levels, and standard errors were used to assess the strength and significance of the effects. The results were presented in the table 2:

Table 2 The Direct Effects Result.

Hypothesis	DV	IV	Estimate	SE	β	z	p
H1	F2	F1	0.57	0.04	0.57	12.85	< .001
H2	F2	F3	0.28	0.04	0.29	7.82	< .001

Table 2 presents the results of the structural equation modeling used to test the direct effects hypothesized in H1 and H2.

H1 posited that organizational culture significantly influences administrators' cultural leadership. The standardized path coefficient from F1 (Organizational Culture) to F2 (Cultural Leadership) was $\beta = 0.57$ (SE = 0.04, $z = 12.85$, $p < 0.001$), indicating a strong and statistically significant positive effect. This result provides robust empirical support for H1.

H2 proposed that work-related factors significantly affect cultural leadership. The standardized path coefficient from F3 (Work-Related Factors) to F2 (Cultural Leadership) was $\beta = 0.29$ (SE = 0.04, $z = 7.82$, $p < 0.001$), demonstrating a moderate but statistically significant positive influence, thereby supporting H2.

In Summary, the structural model confirmed both hypotheses with high levels of statistical significance. Organizational culture exhibited a stronger effect on cultural leadership ($\beta = 0.57$) than work-related factors ($\beta = 0.29$). These findings underscore the critical role of both organizational culture and work-related conditions in shaping the cultural leadership of university administrators in the Chuxiong region, with organizational culture emerging as the more influential factor.

5.3 Multigroup Analysis (Hypothesis 3 and Hypothesis 4)

To explore whether teacher characteristics moderate the relationships between organizational culture, work-related, and cultural leadership, multi-group analyses were conducted based on gender, age, education level, and ethnic group using JAMOVI. The results were summarized below.

Table 3 Hypothesis Testing for multigroup analysis

Groups	Models	χ^2	df	p
Gender	Unconstrained	659.810	202.000	< .001
	Constrained	660.540	204.000	< .001
	Difference	0.730	2.000	0.694
Age	Unconstrained	566.860	202.000	< .001
	Constrained	566.870	204.000	< .001
	Difference	0.010	2.000	0.996
Education	Unconstrained	579.080	202.000	< .001
	Constrained	580.750	204.000	< .001
	Difference	1.650	2.000	0.438
Ethnic	Unconstrained	611.380	202.000	< .001
	Constrained	613.150	204.000	< .001
	Difference	1.650	2.000	0.414

Hypothesis 3 and 4 testing

Hypothesis Testing of Gender as a Moderator (H3A and H4A). The analysis showed that both organizational culture and work-related factors had significant and positive effects on cultural leadership across gender and age groups, with only minimal differences in effect sizes. For gender (H3A and H4A), males and females demonstrated similar coefficients, suggesting no meaningful moderating role. Likewise, for age (H3B and H4B), younger and older groups displayed nearly identical path coefficients, indicating stable structural relationships regardless of age. In contrast, education level (H3C and H4C) revealed modest moderation: organizational culture had a slightly stronger effect among bachelor's degree holders, while work-related factors had a more pronounced impact among those with a master's degree or higher. Regarding ethnicity (H3D and H4D), both Yi and other ethnic groups showed significant results, with slightly stronger effects in non-Yi groups, reflecting only a weak moderating influence.

Overall, teacher characteristics such as gender, age, education level, and ethnic group contributed only minor variations in the relationships examined. The structural links between organizational culture, work-related factors, and cultural leadership remained consistent and robust across demographic subgroups, indicating strong generalizability of the model in the Chuxiong region. However, the modest differences observed for education level and ethnicity suggest that contextual and cultural nuances may subtly shape how these factors influence leadership perceptions, warranting further qualitative investigation.

5.4 Model Comparison

Table 4 Model testing between constrained and unconstrained model

Groups	Models	χ^2	df	p
Gender	Unconstrained	659.810	202.000	< .001
	Constrained	660.540	204.000	< .001
	Difference	0.730	2.000	0.694
Age	Unconstrained	566.860	202.000	< .001
	Constrained	566.870	204.000	< .001
	Difference	0.010	2.000	0.996
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	Difference	1.650	2.000	0.438

Groups	Models	χ^2	df	p
Ethnic	Unconstrained	611.380	202.000	< .001
	Constrained	613.150	204.000	< .001
	Difference	1.650	2.000	0.414

Table 4 presents a comparison between constrained and unconstrained models across different demographic groups, including Gender, Age, Education, and Ethnic. For all groups, the p-values for the unconstrained and constrained models were less than 0.001, indicating that neither model perfectly fit the data independently. However, the crucial aspect is the "Difference" row, which assesses whether imposing constraints significantly impacted the model fit. Across all groups Gender ($p=0.69$), Age ($p=1.00$), Education ($p=0.44$), and Ethnic ($p=0.41$) the p-values for the difference between the constrained and unconstrained models were all greater than 0.05. This suggests that there is no statistically significant difference in model fit between the constrained and unconstrained models for any of these demographic variables. Therefore, the data supports the hypothesis that the parameters constrained in the model are invariant across these demographic groups. In conclusion: The chi-square difference tests indicated that constraining the model across groups for gender ($\chi^2 = 0.73$, $df = 2$, $p = 0.694$), age ($\chi^2 = 0.01$, $df = 2$, $p = 0.996$), education ($\chi^2 = 1.65$, $df = 2$, $p = 0.438$), and ethnicity ($\chi^2 = 1.65$, $df = 2$, $p = 0.414$) did not produce statistically significant differences. This suggests that the structural model was invariant across all demographic groups, indicating that gender, age, education level, and ethnicity did not moderate the relationships in the model.

6. Research Discussions

6.1 Discussion for Research Objective 1

The results provided robust empirical support for Hypothesis 1, indicating that organizational culture had a significant positive impact on the cultural leadership of university administrators in the Chuxiong region ($\beta = 0.571$, $p < 0.001$). This suggested that a cohesive and supportive organizational culture enhanced administrators' ability to lead culturally, reinforced institutional values, and guided development. The findings aligned with Schein and Schein's (2017) view that leaders both shape and are shaped by organizational culture, and supported Denison et al.'s (2012) argument that cultural alignment enables effective leadership. While some scholars have emphasized contextual variability in cultural leadership, the consistent and

significant effect observed here suggested that, in the case of Chuxiong region, organizational culture plays a decisive role. These results underscored the critical importance of fostering a strong organizational culture to enhance leadership effectiveness in higher education institutions.

6.2 Discussion for Research Objective 2

This study confirmed that work-related factors significantly influenced the cultural leadership of university administrators in the Chuxiong region ($\beta = 0.289$, $p < 0.001$), albeit with a more moderate effect than organizational culture. Elements such as administrative structures, working conditions, and institutional supported contribute meaningfully to leadership practices, indicating that enhancing these factors can strengthen cultural leadership capacities. These findings aligned with Schein's (2010) theoretical model, which highlighted the influence of workplace environments on leadership behavior and effectiveness. Likewise, Saine et al. (2023) emphasized that supportive working conditions were essential for sustained and effective leadership, a view substantiated here through statistical evidence. While the impact was not dominant, the results underscored that improving work-related environments provided a viable pathway to reinforcing cultural leadership, complementing broader organizational cultural strategies within higher education settings.

6.3 Discussion for research objective 3

This study tested Hypothesis H3 (including H3A–H3D) to examine whether teacher characteristics moderate the relationship between organizational culture and cultural leadership. The results showed no significant moderating effects, indicating that gender, age, education level and ethnic group did not alter this relationship. For H3A, gender did not significantly moderate the impact of organizational culture on cultural leadership ($\chi^2 = 0.73$, $df = 2$, $p = 0.694$), suggesting that the influence of organizational culture on administrators' cultural leadership was consistent across male and female groups. This finding contrasted with Eagly and Carli (2007), who argued that gender-related barriers shape leadership differently, but it aligned with Gillard and Okonjo-lweala (2015), who noted a growing trend toward gender-neutral leadership outcomes. For H3B, no significant moderating effect of age was found ($\chi^2 = 0.01$, $df = 2$, $p = 0.996$), indicating that organizational culture impacted cultural leadership similarly across different age groups. This challenged Tulgan's (2002) argument that generational cohorts perceived and responded to culture differently but supported Robins (2023), who suggested that modern organizational cultures were bridging generational gaps in leadership practices.

Regarding H3C, education level also showed no significant moderating effect ($\chi^2 = 1.65$, $df = 2$, $p = 0.438$), although a weak trend was observed. This finding contradicted Schein (2017), who emphasized the role of educational background in shaping cultural understanding, and O'Reilly et al. (2014), who suggested that education influences leaders' cultural values.

H3D tested the moderating role of ethnicity and likewise yielded no significant result ($\chi^2 = 1.65$, $df = 2$, $p = 0.414$). Although Chin (2014) highlighted that ethnic backgrounds can shape leadership behaviors and effectiveness, our results suggested that in the context of universities in Chuxiong, the impact of organizational culture on cultural leadership was consistent across ethnic groups.

Overall, the study provided empirical evidence that teacher characteristics did not significantly moderate the relationship between organizational culture and cultural leadership. These findings refined the theoretical understanding of individual differences and their influence on leadership practices, especially in regional higher education settings.

6.4 Discussion for research objective 4

To address Research Objective 4, Hypothesis H4 (H4A–H4D) examined whether teacher characteristics (gender, age, education level and ethnic group) moderated the relationship between work-related and cultural leadership. The findings consistently indicated no statistically significant moderation effects, suggesting that work-related influenced cultural leadership similarly across all teacher subgroups. For H4A, gender was not a significant moderator ($\chi^2 = 0.73$, $df = 2$, $p = 0.694$). This contrasts with Eagly and Carli (2007), who argued that gendered expectations and barriers led to different leadership outcomes. Sieghart (2021) similarly noted that structural bias can impact how work-related translate into leadership for women. However, our results aligned with Collins and Irby (2011), who found no consistent gender-based variation in academic leadership contexts, indicating that gender may not substantially alter the influence of work-related dynamics in this setting.

H4B assessed age as a moderating variable and found no significant effect ($\chi^2 = 0.01$, $df = 2$, $p = 0.996$). While Ng et al. (2012) and Zemke et al. (2013) emphasized generational differences in workplace behavior and leadership responsiveness, our results supported Burke et al. (2015), who found that standardized institutional practices often mitigated age-based variations. This suggested a stable relationship between work-related factors and cultural leadership regardless of age.

For H4C, education level also failed to show a significant moderating effect ($\chi^2 = 1.65$, $df = 2$, $p = 0.438$). Although Caligiuri (2012) and Ferraro & Briody (2017)

proposed that educational background influenced cultural competence and leadership adaptation, our findings were more consistent with Puckett (2020), who observed minimal differences in leadership outcomes across educational levels in similar institutional environments.

Finally, H4D found no moderating effect of ethnicity ($\chi^2 = 1.65$, $df = 2$, $p = 0.414$). While Chin (2014) and Konrad et al. (2006) underscored the impact of ethnic background on leadership style and organizational behavior, our results indicated that work-related exerted a uniform influence on cultural leadership across ethnic groups, possibly due to contextual or organizational cohesion.

In summary, this study provided empirical evidence that teacher characteristics did not significantly alter the relationship between work-related factors and cultural leadership in the surveyed context, suggesting a robust and consistent effect of work dynamics across demographic subgroups.

7. New Knowledge Gained

The findings indicate that structural and institutional factors such as the prevailing organizational culture and the nature of work-related systems play a more decisive role in shaping cultural leadership in higher education than individual demographic traits. In the studied context, the uniformity of university systems may have overshadowed demographic differences, suggesting that improving cultural leadership should focus on strengthening institutional frameworks rather than depending solely on individual teacher attributes. Future research could investigate psychological or institutional variables as possible moderators to gain a more nuanced understanding of leadership dynamics as showed in Figure 2:

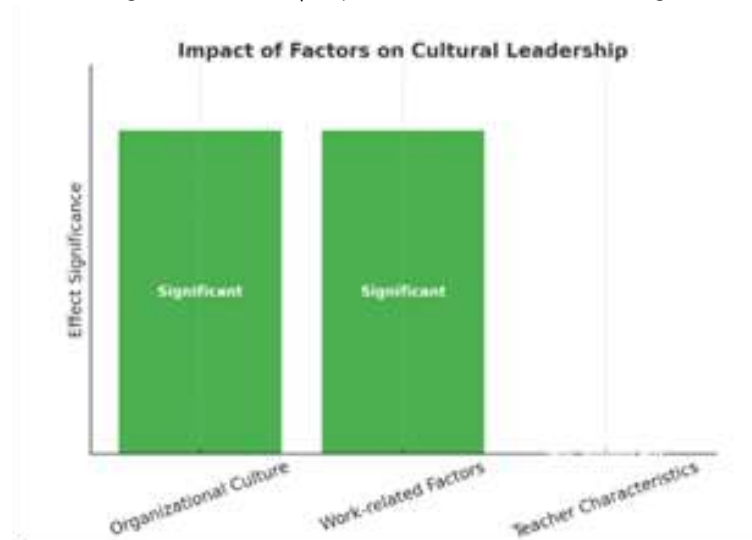


Figure 2 New knowledge

8. Research Recommendation

Based on the study's findings that organizational culture and work-related factors significantly influenced cultural leadership while teacher characteristics such as gender, age, education level and ethnic group, and did not exhibit moderating effects the researcher provided targeted recommendations at the levels of policy, practice and research, with context-specific guidance for the Chuxiong region.

8.1 Policy Recommendations

- 1) Embed cultural leadership goals into university institutional strategies.
- 2) Enhance professional development programs focusing on leadership competencies rather than demographic attributes.
- 3) Integrate ethnic cultural heritage into leadership training and promote partnerships with local cultural institutions in Chuxiong.

8.2 Implementation Suggestions

- 1) Incorporate cultural leadership development into faculty training programs.
- 2) Create mentorship structures to support leadership growth among faculty.
- 3) Adopt inclusive leadership evaluation frameworks and optimize work conditions.

8.3 Suggestions for further research

- 1) Exploring the Impact of Organizational Culture on Cultural Leadership Across Diverse Higher Education Contexts
- 2) Investigating Work-Related Factors That Enhance Cultural Leadership Effectiveness in Multiethnic University Settings
- 3) Examining Additional Moderators Beyond Teacher Characteristics in the Relationship Between Organizational Culture and Cultural Leadership

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