

Principals' Value Orientations in General Education Schools: An Analysis Based on the "One Person's Values and Their Triad" Model

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ABSTRACT

Leadership values play a critical role in shaping organizational culture, ethical decision-making, professional collaboration, and institutional effectiveness in schools. Despite increasing international interest in value-based educational leadership, limited empirical research has examined leadership values within culturally grounded and Non-Western educational contexts. This study investigated the value orientations of principals in Mongolian general secondary schools using the "One Person's Values and Their Triad" model as a conceptual framework. In this study, we used a quantitative cross-sectional design to illustrate characteristics of principals' value orientations in Mongolian secondary schools. Data were collected from 140 school principals representing six regions of Mongolia using a structured value-selection questionnaire developed by the authors based on the Triadic Model of Values. Participants selected and prioritized nine values from a predefined list of 27 value indicators. Internal consistency of the instrument demonstrated high reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.89$). Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, generalized estimating equations (GEE), lift analysis, and Ward's hierarchical cluster analysis with squared Euclidean distance. The findings identified four distinct leadership value profiles: (1) health and security-oriented leadership, (2) knowledge and competence-oriented leadership, (3) homeland-oriented leadership, and (4) tradition and social integration-oriented leadership. Cluster analysis demonstrated stable structural differentiation among leadership value orientations. In addition, regional context and professional experience significantly influenced leadership value patterns ($\chi^2 = 12.457$, $P = 0.014$; $\chi^2 = 9.933$, $P = 0.019$), whereas age differences were not statistically significant ($P > 0.05$). The findings suggest that leadership values in Mongolian schools constitute a multidimensional and culturally embedded system integrating professional, ethical, and socio-cultural dimensions.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In the context of rapid global transformation and continuing educational reform, educational leadership has become increasingly complex and value-driven. School

principals are no longer limited to administrative functions; rather, they play a central role in shaping institutional vision, fostering organizational culture, and guiding teaching and learning processes. Within this expanded role, principals' value orientations have become a critical factor influencing decision-making, professional relationships, and overall school climate (Hallinger, 2018, p.8). A growing body of research demonstrates that leadership effectiveness is closely associated with values such as trust, ethical responsibility, collaboration, and commitment to professional development (Day et al., 2016, p.17). From the perspective of organizational culture theory, values function as deep structural elements shaping behavior, interaction patterns, and institutional decision-making processes (Schein, 2010, p.26). Furthermore, value-based leadership has been shown to strengthen teacher collaboration, job satisfaction, and student outcomes, thereby contributing to sustainable and positive school environments (Hallinger, 2018, p.13).

Although international scholarship has extensively examined leadership values, comparatively limited attention has been given to how these values are structured within culturally specific and non-Western educational contexts. In Mongolia, ongoing educational reforms increasingly emphasize school leadership quality, organizational culture, and management effectiveness; however, empirical studies examining principals' value orientations and their structural patterns remain scarce. To address this gap, the present study adopts the "One Person's Values and Their Triad" Approach (Triadic Model of Individual Values) developed by Sukhbold (2021, p.106) as its theoretical framework. This approach conceptualizes human values as a dynamically integrated system emerging through the interaction of interconnected dimensions rather than as isolated psychological traits. The framework is grounded in a triadic epistemological perspective that rejects binary oppositions and instead conceptualizes human existence as an integrated and multidimensional whole.

Within Mongolian philosophical discourse, this perspective is reflected in Naaganbuu (2005, p.49) "Triad Theory" and further developed through Jadamba (2019, p.78) concept of "life consciousness." These perspectives conceptualize human existence through three interrelated dimensions: material conditions, consciousness, and integrative existence. The material dimension refers to structural and environmental conditions influencing human life. The consciousness dimension encompasses ethical, cognitive, and intellectual processes guiding judgment and decision-making. The third dimension—integrative or existential life—functions as a unifying system synthesizing material and cognitive processes

into coherent lived experience (Sukhbold, 2021, p.108). From this perspective, values are understood as dynamic and emergent patterns produced through continuous interaction among structural conditions, cognitive processes, and lived socio-cultural experience. This framework enables multidimensional analysis linking individual value systems with organizational and cultural contexts, making it particularly suitable for educational leadership research.

Accordingly, this study aims to identify the dominant value orientations of principals in Mongolian general secondary schools and to analyze their structural patterns through cluster analysis. The study further examines whether these value orientations vary according to demographic factors such as age, professional experience, and regional context. The findings are expected to contribute both to the theoretical advancement of culturally grounded educational leadership research and to the practical development of value-based leadership in Mongolian schools.

Leadership Values in Educational Contexts: Leadership values have become a central focus in contemporary educational leadership research as schools increasingly operate within complex and rapidly changing social and institutional environments. In such contexts, school principals are expected not only to manage administrative responsibilities but also to provide ethical direction, foster collaborative organizational cultures, and sustain instructional improvement. Accordingly, leadership effectiveness is widely understood to be grounded in the value systems that guide principals' decisions, professional interactions, and institutional practices.

Empirical research consistently demonstrates that principals' values significantly influence school climate, teacher collaboration, organizational trust, and student outcomes (Hallinger, 2018, p.14). Values function as normative frameworks shaping both formal governance structures and informal interpersonal relationships within schools. From an organizational perspective, they operate as deep cultural structures that guide interpretation, behavior, communication, and institutional decision-making processes (Schein, 2010, p.23).

The international literature identifies several dominant value-oriented leadership approaches. Ethical leadership emphasizes integrity, fairness, and moral responsibility while highlighting the importance of trust and accountability in school governance (Brown et al., 2005, p.121). Collaborative leadership focuses on participatory decision-making and shared professional practices that contribute to collective efficacy and professional community building (Fullan, 2001, p.58). Instructional leadership prioritizes teaching and learning processes, reinforcing the principal's role in improving educational quality and instructional effectiveness

(Leithwood et al., 2004, p.19). Transformational leadership, meanwhile, emphasizes vision-building, motivation, and organizational change, positioning leadership values as central drivers of long-term institutional development (Bush and Glover, 2014, p.562; Begley, 2006, p.570).

Although these approaches differ in emphasis, they converge on the idea that leadership is inherently value-based and context-dependent. The effectiveness of leadership practices is closely associated with how values are interpreted and enacted within specific cultural and institutional settings. Nevertheless, much of the existing literature has been developed within Western educational contexts, with comparatively limited attention given to how leadership values are structured and expressed in culturally distinct or non-Western environments.

Leadership Values in the Mongolian Educational Context: Within the Mongolian educational context, recent reforms have increasingly emphasized leadership quality, organizational culture, and school effectiveness. Despite these policy developments, empirical studies examining the value orientations of school principals remain limited. In particular, there is a lack of research integrating culturally grounded theoretical frameworks with empirical investigation of leadership values. This gap highlights the need for context-sensitive approaches capable of capturing the multidimensional and culturally embedded nature of educational leadership values in Mongolia.

The Triadic Model of Individual Values: To address the existing gap in culturally grounded leadership research, the present study adopts the *Triadic Model of Individual Values* developed by Sukhbold (2021, p.101) as its conceptual framework. The model provides an integrative perspective by conceptualizing values as a dynamic and interdependent system rather than as isolated or hierarchical constructs. From this perspective, values are understood as continuously interacting dimensions that collectively shape human perception, behavior, and social practice.

The triadic approach is rooted in Mongolian philosophical discourse, particularly in Naaganbuu (2005, p.47) “Triad Theory” and Jadamba (2019, p.81) concept of “life consciousness.” These perspectives argue that human existence cannot be adequately interpreted through binary distinctions such as material versus ideal or individual versus collective. Instead, they emphasize a holistic ontology in which reality emerges through the interaction of multiple interconnected dimensions. Within this framework, values are organized across three interrelated dimensions. The first dimension, referred to as *fundamental* or *material-structural values*, encompasses external and institutional conditions of existence, including economic

resources, environmental conditions, and attachment to homeland. The second dimension, *existential* or *social-ethical values*, reflects moral principles, interpersonal relationships, and collective orientations such as dignity, responsibility, solidarity, and social cohesion. The third dimension, *essential* or *intrinsic-cognitive values*, includes internal capacities associated with knowledge, competence, health, education, and personal development.

A distinctive feature of the triadic framework is its emphasis on systemic interdependence. Rather than treating values as independent variables operating in isolation, the model conceptualizes them as emergent patterns produced through continuous interaction among structural conditions, social relationships, and cognitive meaning systems. This perspective allows for a more nuanced understanding of how values simultaneously operate at individual, organizational, and cultural levels. Within the Mongolian cultural context, values such as homeland, tradition, and independence possess historically embedded meanings extending beyond individual preference. These values are closely associated with national identity, collective memory, and socio-cultural continuity. Consequently, their inclusion in empirical analysis requires careful conceptual and linguistic standardization to ensure interpretive consistency across respondents. The analytical strength of the Triadic Model of Individual Values lies in its capacity to integrate structural, social, and cognitive dimensions into a unified explanatory framework. This makes the model particularly suitable for educational leadership research, where principals' decisions are shaped not only by institutional conditions but also by ethical responsibilities and culturally embedded value systems. By applying this framework, the present study seeks to move beyond fragmented or reductionist interpretations of leadership values and to provide a more comprehensive understanding of educational leadership within the Mongolian context.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Questions

This study is guided by the following research questions: What values are most highly prioritized by principals of general secondary schools in Mongolia?, To what extent do demographic factors such as age, region, and professional experience influence principals' value orientations?, What typologies of leadership value orientations can be identified among school principals through cluster analysis?

Research design and Data collection

This study employed a quantitative cross-sectional research design to examine leadership value orientations among principals of Mongolian general secondary schools. The study analyzed a structured categorical multi-response dataset in which participants selected and prioritized nine

values from a predefined list of 27 value indicators derived from the Triadic Model of Individual Values.

Because multiple responses were nested within individual participants, the dataset exhibited a non-independent structure requiring statistical procedures capable of accounting for intra-individual correlation. Accordingly, the study integrated descriptive, inferential, and multivariate statistical techniques to examine dominant leadership value orientations and their underlying structural patterns.

Theoretical Framework and Instrument Design

The study adopted the Triadic Model of Individual Values as the conceptual framework for categorizing leadership values. Based on this framework, 27 value indicators were organized into three interrelated dimensions: Fundamental Values, Existential Values, and Essential Values, as presented in Table 1. The classification framework provided the conceptual basis for examining leadership value orientations among school principals.

Table 1. Triadic Classification of Leadership Values

Fundamental Values	Existential Values	Essential Values
Environmental protection	Respect	Health
Homeland and land	Faith	Work and labor
Humanism and civil society	Compassion	Life skills
Economy	Morality	Knowledge and competence
History	Moral character	Family security
Independence	Collectivism	Intelligence and education
Traditions	Native language	Sustainable development
Time	Social status	Harmony
Human rights and equality	Interpersonal relationships	Freedom

Note. Morality refers to socially shared normative principles distinguishing appropriate from inappropriate behavior, whereas moral character refers to internalized ethical dispositions such as honesty, responsibility, and integrity.

Participants selected and prioritized nine values from the predefined list according to their perceived importance in leadership practice. The value selection procedure was designed to capture dominant leadership orientations and underlying structural relationships among value dimensions.

Data collection: The sample consisted of 140 school principals representing six geographical regions of Mongolia, including Ulaanbaatar, the Khangai region, Northern region, Western region, Gobi region, and Central region (Table 2). The Eastern region was excluded because of accessibility limitations during the data collection process. A stratified regional sampling approach was employed to capture variation across geographical and socio-cultural contexts. Although the final sample reflects uneven regional representation, with a greater proportion of participants drawn from urban areas, the distribution reflects practical conditions associated with nationwide educational data collection in Mongolia. While the uneven regional distribution limits statistical generalizability, the sample nevertheless provides meaningful contextual representation for examining leadership value orientations within diverse educational environments.

Table 2. Sample Distribution of School Principals by Region, Age, and Professional Experience

Region	Total	25–35	36–45	46–55	56+	≤5 years	5–10 years	10–20 years	20+ years
Capital City (Ulaanbaatar)	78	10	23	37	14	28	22	20	7
Northern Region	32	2	9	19	2	12	7	9	4
Gobi Region	13	1	6	6	0	10	2	1	0
Khangai Region	11	3	5	3	0	4	3	4	0
Western Region	6	0	2	3	1	0	0	4	2
Central Region	2	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	0
Total	140	16	45	70	9	54	34	38	13

Note. The sample included 140 school principals representing six geographical regions of Mongolia. The largest proportion of participants was drawn from Ulaanbaatar ($n = 78$), followed by the Northern region ($n = 32$), whereas the Central region demonstrated the lowest representation ($n = 2$). Most respondents belonged to the 46–55 age group ($n = 70$), followed by the 36–45 age group ($n = 45$), indicating a predominantly experienced mid-to-late career leadership cohort. In terms of professional experience, most principals reported either 5–10 years ($n = 34$) or 10–20 years ($n = 38$) of leadership experience.

Reliability Assessment

Although the instrument was not designed as a conventional psychometric scale, internal consistency analysis was conducted to evaluate the systemic coherence of the value structure. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated at $\alpha = 0.89$, indicating a high level of internal consistency among the value indicators.

Within the context of the present study, this coefficient is interpreted as evidence of structural coherence across interconnected value dimensions rather than strict unidimensional reliability. The result therefore supports the suitability of the dataset for subsequent multivariate and cluster-based statistical analyses.

Statistical analysis

Given the categorical multi-response structure of the dataset, a multi-method statistical framework was employed using IBM SPSS Statistics (Version XX). Because each participant selected multiple value indicators simultaneously, the responses were statistically non-independent and required analytical procedures capable of examining both frequency distributions and structural relationships among value selections.

The analytical process proceeded in three sequential stages: descriptive analysis, relational analysis, and structural analysis.

First, descriptive frequency analysis was conducted to identify the most frequently prioritized leadership values among school principals. Frequency distributions and percentage analyses were used to determine the relative prominence of each value category across the full sample.

Second, chi-square tests of independence were conducted to determine whether value selection patterns significantly differed according to region, age group, and professional experience. Because both demographic variables and value selections were categorical, chi-square analysis was considered appropriate for examining subgroup associations.

To strengthen subgroup interpretation, lift analysis was additionally applied to evaluate the relative overrepresentation of specific values within demographic categories. Lift values greater than 1.00

indicated that a particular value appeared more frequently within a subgroup than expected based on the overall sample distribution.

Finally, hierarchical cluster analysis was conducted to identify latent typologies of leadership value orientations based on response similarity patterns. Ward's minimum variance method with squared Euclidean distance was employed to maximize within-cluster homogeneity and between-cluster differentiation. The optimal cluster solution was determined through dendrogram interpretation, agglomeration coefficient examination, and conceptual interpretability of the resulting clusters. The four-cluster solution demonstrated the strongest statistical stability and theoretical coherence. Overall, this analytical framework enhanced both statistical rigor and interpretive depth by integrating descriptive, relational, and structural analyses and enabled a multidimensional examination of leadership values as context-dependent and culturally embedded phenomena.

3. RESULT

Value Structure of Leadership Orientations (RQ1)

Frequency analysis revealed that the most highly prioritized leadership values among school principals were homeland and land, traditions and cultural heritage, independence, humanism and civil society, environmental protection, human rights and equality, ethics and morality, family security, and humanity and moral character. These nine values were identified as the most frequently selected indicators across the full sample and therefore represent the dominant leadership value orientations within the study population.

The selection of these nine values was based on their consistently high frequency across respondents within the categorical multi-response dataset. Because participants were instructed to select and prioritize nine values from the predefined list of 27 value indicators, the reported values represent those with the highest aggregate selection frequencies across the sample. Consequently, the figure presents the most salient and collectively prioritized leadership values rather than theoretically predetermined categories. Collectively, these values reflect four interconnected domains: individual well-being, national identity, cultural continuity, and socio-ethical responsibility. The distribution pattern indicates that leadership values among Mongolian school principals constitute a multidimensional and structurally integrated system rather than isolated personal preferences.

The findings indicate that principals place strong emphasis not only on health and personal well-being but also on socio-cultural and collective values, including homeland, traditions, independence, environmental protection, human rights, and family security. This pattern suggests that leadership values within the Mongolian educational context are closely associated with broader social responsibility and collective identity. The observed value structure further reflects the interconnected

relationship among security, prosperity, and social well-being described in broader socio-political literature (Brouwer, 2021, p.48). From this perspective, social stability and collective well-being function as mutually reinforcing dimensions supporting sustainable institutional and societal development.

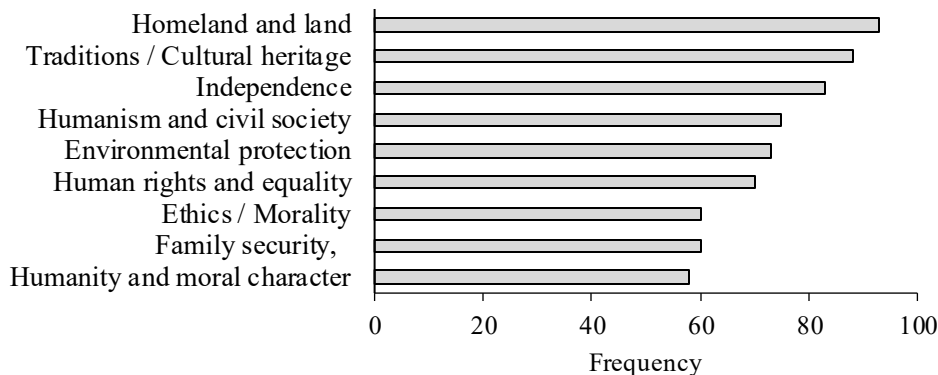


Figure 1. Core Leadership Values Distribution

Figure 1 presents the distribution of the most highly prioritized leadership values among Mongolian school principals. These nine values were identified as the most frequently selected indicators across the full sample and therefore represent the dominant leadership value orientations within the study population.

Demographic Effects on Leadership Value Orientations (RQ2)

Generalized estimating equation (GEE) analysis demonstrated that regional context significantly influenced leadership value selection patterns ($\chi^2 = 12.457$, $df = 4$, $P = 0.014$; $QIC = 4265.546$). A statistically significant difference was particularly observed between principals from Ulaanbaatar and those from the Western region ($B = -0.053$, $P = 0.002$), indicating distinct regional variations in leadership value orientations (Table 3).

Descriptive regional analysis further revealed substantial contextual differences in value prioritization. Principals from Ulaanbaatar demonstrated a relatively balanced integration of institutional and societal values. In contrast, principals from the Northern region more strongly emphasized cultural heritage and human rights, whereas principals from the Khangai region prioritized health, family security, and environmental protection. The Gobi region demonstrated a health-centered orientation combined with ecological concerns, while the Western region placed greater emphasis on independence and cultural identity. The Central region

exhibited comparatively heterogeneous value patterns. Overall, these findings suggest that leadership values are strongly shaped by socio-cultural and geographical contexts within the Mongolian educational system. Age did not demonstrate a statistically significant effect on leadership value selection ($\chi^2 = 3.363$, $df = 3$, $P = 0.339$; $QIC = 4265.297$), indicating that generational differences were not a major determinant of leadership value orientations within the present sample. Nevertheless, descriptive age-based analysis revealed observable developmental tendencies. Younger principals (25–35 years) demonstrated stronger orientation toward work-related and competence-based values. Principals in the mid-career groups (36–45 and 46–55 years) more frequently emphasized ethical responsibility, independence, health, and human dignity. Among principals aged 56 years and older, values associated with cultural continuity, morality, and social cohesion remained relatively stable, although their overall frequency was lower because of smaller subgroup representation.

Professional experience demonstrated a statistically significant relationship with leadership value orientations ($\chi^2 = 9.933$, $df = 3$, $P = 0.019$; $QIC = 4229.6$), suggesting that leadership values are more strongly associated with professional socialization and career development than with chronological age. Lift analysis further revealed a developmental progression in leadership value priorities across career stages. Early-career principals (≤ 5 years of experience) demonstrated higher lift ratios for competence, freedom, work orientation, and time efficiency, reflecting a performance-oriented and self-development-focused leadership profile. Mid-career principals (5–10 years) placed greater emphasis on compassion, respect, competence, and belief, indicating stronger relational and ethical orientations.

Principals with 10–20 years of professional experience demonstrated stronger emphasis on collectivism, economy, and native language, suggesting increased orientation toward collaboration and cultural identity. Senior principals with more than 20 years of experience more strongly prioritized social status, compassion, historical heritage, native language, and harmony, reflecting broader socio-cultural and integrative leadership orientations. Overall, the findings indicate a progressive transition in leadership values from individual performance-oriented priorities toward relational ethics and ultimately toward collective socio-cultural responsibility across professional career stages.

Table 3. Regional Distribution of Eight Most Prevalent Core Values

Values	Western	Gobi	Capital City	Khangai	Northern
Health	4	10	53	8	25
Homeland and land	4	7	53	6	23

Customs and traditions (cultural heritage)	4	9	44	6	25
Independence	6	8	42	8	19
Human dignity and moral character	3	7	42	6	17
Environmental protection	4	8	36	7	18
Human rights and equality	3	6	35	3	23
Ethics and morality	4	6	36	2	12

The regional distribution of leadership values demonstrates substantial contextual variation across geographical areas of Mongolia. Principals from Ulaanbaatar showed a relatively balanced value structure integrating institutional, ethical, and socio-cultural dimensions. In contrast, principals from the Northern region placed stronger emphasis on cultural traditions, homeland, and human rights, indicating a leadership orientation closely connected to cultural continuity and collective identity.

Principals from the Khangai region more frequently prioritized health, environmental protection, and independence, reflecting stronger orientation toward community well-being and ecological responsibility. The Gobi region demonstrated similarly strong emphasis on health and cultural traditions, suggesting the importance of environmental and social stability within geographically demanding contexts. Principals from the Western region placed comparatively greater emphasis on independence and cultural identity, reflecting stronger orientation toward sovereignty, tradition, and socio-cultural cohesion. Overall, the findings indicate that leadership value orientations are strongly shaped by regional socio-cultural environments and geographical contexts. Although several core values remained consistently important across regions, the relative intensity of particular values varied according to local cultural and environmental conditions. These results support the argument that educational leadership values within Mongolia are context-dependent and culturally embedded rather than uniformly distributed across regions.

Table 4. Age-Based Patterns of Leadership Value Orientations Among Principals

Values	25–35	36–45	46–55	56+
Customs and traditions (cultural heritage)	14	6.4	6.8	5
Ethics and morality	7	21	29	3
Work and labor	5	9	8	0
Life skills and adaptability	4	8	14	1
Environmental protection	6	24	38	5
Family safety and security	7	26	24	3
Beliefs and religiosity	4	8	9	0
Social status	0	2	5	0
Friendship and social relationships	2	10	6	1

Intelligence, knowledge, and education	5	13	22	4
Independence (sovereignty)	6	26	43	8
Collectivism	4	11	19	2
Humanism and civil society	7	22	28	1
Human dignity and moral character	8	24	37	7.4
Respect (honor)	4	11	16	1
Human rights and equality	4	23	36	7
Development (sustainable development)	6	9	24	4
Time	9	17	21	1
Harmony (peace and solidarity)	3	15	11	2
Economy (wealth and material assets)	1	6	9	1
Compassion and kindness	0	5	10	3
Talent and competence	3	6	10	0
Freedom	3	13	14	2
Health	15	25	55	5
Homeland and land	10	22	52	9
Historical heritage (nomadic culture, pastoralism)	4	9	17	2
Native language (use and cultural value)	4	14	30	5

Age-based descriptive analysis demonstrated observable differences in leadership value priorities across career stages. Younger principals (25–35 years) more frequently emphasized work-related, competence-oriented, and time-efficiency values, suggesting stronger orientation toward professional achievement, self-development, and performance-based leadership practices during early career stages. Principals in the mid-career groups (36–45 and 46–55 years) demonstrated stronger emphasis on ethical responsibility, independence, health, human dignity, and environmental protection. This pattern indicates increasing orientation toward relational, ethical, and socially responsible leadership practices as professional experience accumulates (Table 4 and Figure 2).

Among principals aged 56 years and older, values associated with cultural continuity, morality, harmony, and social cohesion remained comparatively stable, although their overall frequencies were lower because of smaller subgroup representation. This tendency suggests that senior principals place greater importance on cultural preservation, collective identity, and institutional harmony. Despite these descriptive tendencies, inferential statistical analysis indicated that age did not significantly predict leadership value orientation. This finding suggests that generational differences in leadership values are not structurally strong within the present sample and that leadership value formation is more strongly influenced by contextual and professional socialization processes than by chronological age alone.

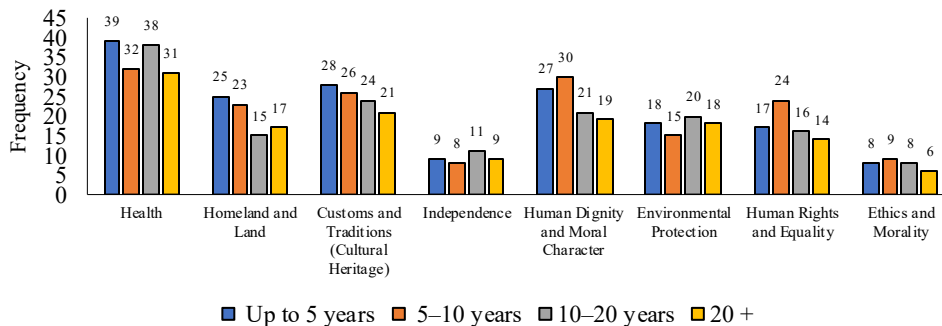


Figure 2. Distribution of the eight most prevalent core values by years of administrative experience

Cluster Analysis of Leadership Values (RQ3)

Cluster analysis identified four distinct leadership value profiles among principals of Mongolian general secondary schools. The resulting cluster structure demonstrated meaningful differentiation in leadership value orientations and reflected varying emphases across professional, socio-cultural, and ethical dimensions.

The *Health and Family Security-Oriented* cluster (21%) was characterized by strong prioritization of health, environmental protection, family security, and independence. This profile was most commonly observed among principals in the mid-career stage and reflected leadership orientations associated with personal well-being and institutional stability.

The *Knowledge and Human Values-Oriented* cluster (21%) emphasized education, human dignity, health, and interpersonal relationships. This cluster appeared more frequently among principals working in urban educational contexts and reflected stronger orientation toward professional competence and human-centered leadership practices.

The *Homeland-Oriented* cluster (25%) demonstrated balanced integration of national identity, independence, and professional responsibility. Principals within this cluster emphasized values associated with collective identity and institutional commitment.

The *Tradition and Social Integration-Oriented* cluster (34%), representing the largest proportion of participants, emphasized cultural traditions, homeland, independence, human rights, and socio-cultural cohesion. This profile reflected a

strongly culturally embedded leadership orientation grounded in collective identity and social responsibility.

Overall, the cluster structure suggests that leadership values among Mongolian school principals are organized around three interconnected domains: individual well-being, national identity, and socio-ethical responsibility. These findings support the multidimensional and culturally embedded nature of educational leadership values within the Mongolian context.

4. Discussion

This study provides empirical evidence regarding leadership value orientations among school principals in Mongolia and contributes to international scholarship on value-based educational leadership within non-Western educational contexts. The findings demonstrate that leadership values are not isolated personal preferences but structurally interconnected systems shaped by cultural context, professional experience, and institutional environment.

A major finding of the study is the strong prominence of ethical, socio-cultural, and national identity-related values, including human dignity, morality, cultural traditions, homeland, and independence. These findings are consistent with international research emphasizing moral purpose, ethical responsibility, and relational leadership as central dimensions of effective educational leadership (Hallinger, 2018, p.12). However, compared with many Western leadership frameworks that primarily emphasize accountability, managerial efficiency, and instructional performance, the Mongolian educational context demonstrates stronger integration of collective identity, cultural continuity, and socio-cultural responsibility within leadership practice.

The findings also demonstrate partial alignment with international leadership theories emphasizing competence, professional learning, and relational leadership (Leithwood et al., 2008, p.235). Nevertheless, within the present study, competence-oriented values were embedded within broader ethical and cultural systems rather than functioning as isolated professional constructs. This suggests contextual adaptation of global leadership models within the Mongolian educational environment. A particularly distinctive finding is the strong emphasis placed on homeland, independence, and cultural heritage. These values reflect the importance of historical continuity, collective identity, and socio-cultural preservation in shaping leadership orientations. Although similar tendencies have been identified in other collectivist and post-socialist contexts, the Mongolian case demonstrates deeper integration of cultural identity into everyday leadership practice.

The cluster analysis further supports Schein's (2010, p.23) argument that deeply embedded cultural assumptions significantly influence organizational leadership behavior. The dominance of the tradition and social integration-oriented leadership profile indicates that educational leadership within Mongolia is strongly culturally grounded and socially contextualized.

The findings additionally reveal a developmental pattern in leadership values across professional career stages. Early-career principals demonstrated stronger orientation toward competence, efficiency, and self-development, whereas mid-career principals emphasized relational and ethical values. More experienced principals increasingly prioritized cultural preservation, harmony, and collective social responsibility. These findings support international evidence suggesting that leadership values evolve through professional socialization and accumulated leadership experience (Day et al., 2016, p.21). At the same time, the strong socio-cultural orientation observed among senior principals appears particularly distinctive within the Mongolian context. The absence of statistically significant age effects, combined with the significant influence of professional experience, further suggests that leadership values are shaped more strongly through professional and organizational socialization than through generational differences alone (Harris, 2004, p.12).

From a theoretical perspective, the findings support the applicability of the Triadic Model of Individual Values. Across multiple analytical procedures, three consistent domains—individual well-being, national identity, and socio-ethical responsibility—emerged repeatedly. This finding supports the argument that leadership values operate as integrated and multidimensional systems rather than independent categories. Overall, the study demonstrates that educational leadership within the Mongolian context reflects both convergence with international leadership theories and distinctive culturally embedded characteristics. These findings highlight the importance of culturally sensitive leadership frameworks capable of addressing contextual diversity in educational leadership research and practice.

Conclusion: This study examined the leadership value orientations of secondary school principals in Mongolia and analyzed their implications for educational leadership and organizational culture. The findings demonstrate that leadership values constitute a coherent and multidimensional system primarily structured around individual well-being, national identity, cultural continuity, and socio-ethical responsibility.

The results further indicate that leadership value orientations vary according to professional experience and regional context, whereas age differences were not statistically significant. Early-career principals demonstrated stronger orientation toward competence, efficiency, and self-development, while more experienced principals emphasized cultural identity, ethical responsibility, harmony, and collective social cohesion. Regional differences additionally confirmed that leadership values are strongly shaped by socio-cultural and contextual environments. The identification of four distinct leadership value clusters provides a useful typological framework for understanding diversity in educational leadership orientations. The health and security-oriented, knowledge and competence-oriented, homeland-oriented, and tradition and social integration-oriented clusters illustrate the multidimensional nature of leadership values within the Mongolian educational context.

Overall, the findings suggest that leadership values function as important determinants of organizational culture, institutional relationships, and leadership practice within schools. Values associated with ethics, human dignity, collaboration, and cultural identity contribute to positive institutional climates and support sustainable educational development. From a practical perspective, the findings provide important implications for leadership development programs, educational policy design, and professional training in the education sector. The study also highlights the importance of integrating culturally grounded value systems into leadership frameworks in order to support context-sensitive and sustainable educational improvement.

Limitations and Future Research: Despite its contributions, the present study has several limitations. First, the sample size ($n = 140$) and uneven regional representation limit the generalizability of the findings. Future studies should employ larger and more regionally balanced samples to strengthen external validity and improve representativeness across educational contexts.

Second, the study focused primarily on leadership value orientations rather than their direct relationship with educational outcomes such as school effectiveness, teacher performance, or student achievement. Future research could examine the predictive relationship between leadership values and organizational effectiveness within schools.

Third, the study relied exclusively on quantitative methods, which limited deeper exploration of how leadership values are interpreted and enacted within everyday professional practice. Future research would benefit from qualitative or mixed-

method approaches capable of capturing principals' lived experiences and the contextual translation of values into leadership behavior and organizational culture. Finally, future comparative studies across different cultural and educational systems may contribute to broader theoretical understanding of culturally grounded educational leadership and the contextual diversity of leadership value systems.

Final Statement: The findings of this study demonstrate that leadership values among Mongolian school principals are deeply embedded within cultural identity, collective responsibility, and socio-ethical traditions while simultaneously reflecting global professional leadership competencies. This integrated structure highlights the importance of culturally sensitive and context-responsive leadership development frameworks capable of supporting sustainable educational transformation within diverse educational systems.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION

All authors actively contributed to the development of the research concept and study design. Material preparation, data collection, data processing, and statistical analysis were conducted collaboratively by the authors. The first draft of the manuscript was prepared by the corresponding author, and all authors contributed comments and revisions to the manuscript. All authors read and approved the final version of the manuscript.

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