Intercultural Perspectives on Managing Organizational Change in Response to Government Policy Reform: A Case Study on the Leadership of New Oriental Education

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INTERCULTURAL PERSPECTIVES ON MANAGING ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE IN RESPONSE TO GOVERNMENT POLICY REFORM: A CASE STUDY ON THE LEADERSHIP OF NEW ORIENTAL EDUCATION

by

Yihe Yang

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

May 2024

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TITLE OF DISSERTATION: INTERCULTURAL PERSPECTIVES ON MANAGING ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE IN RESPONSE TO GOVERNMENT POLICY REFORM: A CASE STUDY ON THE LEADERSHIP OF NEW ORIENTAL EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

In 2021, a policy aimed at addressing educational inequality triggered a significant upheaval in the private tutoring sector of China by fundamentally transforming prevailing business models and financial viability within the industry. New Oriental Education & Technology Group Inc. (New Oriental Education), one of the preeminent private tutoring enterprises in China, attracted considerable attention for its subsequent organizational change. This study explored the leadership dynamics and organizational change efforts implemented by New Oriental after the policy enactment.

The theoretical framework synthesized organizational change theory, organizational culture, and transformative leadership approaches from both Western and Chinese perspectives. It elucidated effective practices for guiding organizational change under external shocks and examined how the interplay between Chinese and Western leadership philosophies shapes leaders’ strategies for change management. The study employed a mixed-method parallel convergent design as a case study methodology, comprising a survey of employees and interviews with the leaders at New Oriental Education Xi’an School.

The study yielded five key findings: 1) The overarching impact of policy as external shocks; 2) The pivotal role of organizational culture and collective identity during the change process; 3) A comparative assessment of Chinese leadership vis-à-vis Western leadership paradigms; 4) Chinese conceptualizations of leadership; 5) Practices of the Chinese leadership and its features. These findings highlighted contextual factors, organizational culture, and collective identity in organizational development and leadership and offered an overview of leadership concepts in diverse epistemologies.
The study contributed to leadership studies by emphasizing that organizational culture is the foundation when navigating external disruptions, while collective identity reinforces employees’ sense of belonging, commitment, and adaptability. An organizational culture prioritizing communication, trust-building, authorization, and perceiving leadership as an ongoing process bolsters its resilience, vitality, and organizational change.

Furthermore, this study highlights that cultural integration facilitates innovation and creativity. Reflecting on indigenous Chinese leadership through an intercultural lens contributed to a general understanding of organizational change and leadership development within global contexts and cultural intersections. Crossing cultural boundaries of the mind empowers leaders to meet personal and collective leadership expectations, rise to a diversified leadership style, adapt to various cultures and foster collective success.

*Keywords:* organizational change, organizational culture, collective identity, intercultural leadership, Chinese indigenous leadership, leadership as a process
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CHAPTER ONE. INTRODUCTION

Organizational change is a complex and dynamic phenomenon shaped by multiple factors and procedures. Organizations face one of the most challenging situations when confronted with external shocks. These external shocks come from unanticipated, low-likelihood events that can bring disruptive changes and threaten the organization’s survival (Taleb, 2007). Such external shocks can lead to significant organizational crises, which cannot be fully predicted. However, external shocks leading to crises also present opportunities (Trkman & McCormack, 2009). In Chinese, the word Wei Ji [crisis] encapsulates both Wei [danger] and Ji [opportunity], highlighting the potential positive aspects. During such crises, leadership takes on an elevated role because routinized actions are disrupted. Leaders have to make decisions about any adjustments to transform danger into an opportunity (S. Li & Tallman, 2011).

New Oriental Education & Technology Group Inc., more commonly New Oriental Education, is a prominent private tutoring company in China. In 2021, the company faced a significant challenge due to a government policy change aimed at addressing the problems of excessive academic pressure on students and educational inequality. This policy introduced a ban on for-profit tutoring in core school subjects during the K-9 stage, which corresponds to the compulsory education stage in China, and restricted foreign investment in the industry, threatening the business model and profitability of New Oriental Education and other similar companies.

This study employed a theoretical framework that integrated concepts from organizational change under external shock, organizational culture, transformational approaches to leadership from the Western leadership lens, and indigenous Chinese leadership perspectives to provide the foundation for the research. Previous literature has explored the significance of
organizational culture, change management, and the interplay between Chinese and Western leadership paradigms, highlighting how contemporary Chinese business leaders’ ideas and actions were influenced by ancient philosophy and ethical considerations while incorporating efficient methods from Western leadership and management practices (King & Wei, 2014).

To explore how New Oriental Education responded to the external shock, what factors influenced its organizational change strategy, and how interculturally integrated theoretical underpinnings behind leadership practices influenced this change process, this study utilized a mixed-method case study analysis based on multiple data sources, including documents, interviews, and survey questionnaires.

The study delineated the broader context of government policies and their impact on organizational change, elucidating how organizations cultivated resilience and adaptability to instigate change during challenging circumstances. In the realm of scholarly inquiry concerning organizational change and intercultural leadership, this study delved into the pivotal role of organizational culture and collective identity. Specifically, it investigated how these factors shape the decision-making processes and actions undertaken by Chinese business leaders, as well as their perspectives on leadership development. The study focused on the integration and synthesis of diverse leadership capacities and organizational development methodologies by these leaders, while also addressing the dynamic interplay between leaders and their followers. Additionally, the study deliberated on the confluence of Western and Chinese leadership ideologies within globalization, endeavoring to unearth effective leadership practices applicable in diverse and evolving business environments. This research further augmented comprehension of tailoring and adapting leadership practices to effectively tackle the challenges and opportunities in today’s
globalized world. The findings benefited leaders, organizations, and researchers seeking to enhance their grasp and application of intercultural leadership in varied business contexts.

This study specifically addressed two core research questions:

1. What are the practices and concepts for the leadership process in implementing organizational change in response to external shocks?

2. How did the interplay of Western and Chinese leadership concepts shape their leadership approach to organizational change?

To address these inquiries, this paper commenced by establishing a narrative of the change process, delineating the critical financial and organizational changes occurring before and after the external shock impacting New Oriental Education’s business model.

Background

*The Prosperity and Shadow Behind the Tutoring Industry*

Education has historically held a significant role in Chinese society, revered as a noble pursuit and a fundamental avenue for social class upward mobility since ancient times (W. Lu et al., 2022). For many Chinese students, the initial stride toward a promising future revolves around securing admission to a prestigious university through higher education. Consequently, attaining success in the National College Entrance Exam (NCEE) and admission to a reputable university often epitomize the ultimate goal of most young people. This intense competition has spurred a surge in demand for tutoring services across China over recent decades as parents and students seek avenues to augment academic performance and secure future prospects.

Studies have indicated that private tutoring positively affects students’ academic performance, particularly in subject knowledge and test-taking proficiency. Notably, this positive impact is more pronounced among female students, low-achieving students, and students from
households with better-educated and wealthier parents (Guo et al., 2020). Families of higher socioeconomic status are more inclined to invest in private tutoring services for their children, with their expenditure on such services also being higher (Zhang & Xie, 2016). Consequently, children from families with higher socioeconomic status may have an advantage in academic competitions (Zhang & Xie, 2016).

Nonetheless, it is imperative to acknowledge the adverse ramifications of the burgeoning tutoring industry, particularly its exacerbation of educational inequality. As per a UNESCO report (2020), despite China’s commendable strides in broadening access to education, educational inequality remains a persistent hurdle. The equitable dissemination of quality primary education across regions, social strata, and income brackets continues to pose a formidable challenge. Children from low-income families residing in both urban and rural areas encounter substantial disadvantages in terms of educational opportunities, quality, and outcomes (UNESCO, 2020). Students from economically and culturally advantaged backgrounds tend to enjoy greater access to high-quality tutoring services, thereby perpetuating stratification among both secondary and high school students (Goh et al., 2014; Q. Liu, 2018).

The burgeoning demand for private tutoring primarily stems from families’ aspirations for a significant return on their educational investments. Recognizing this phenomenon, policymakers comprehend that addressing this demand necessitates systemic interventions such as ameliorating income disparities and fortifying social security frameworks (W. Lu et al., 2022). To this end, the Ministry of Education has instituted various reform policies to rectify critical issues of educational equity and foster universal access to high-quality educational resources for all (Eryong et al., 2022).
**Challenges from Education Reform**

Since the 1980s, the Chinese government has actively pursued education reform to mitigate social disparities stemming from educational inequality, responding to these concerns. Initiatives have been launched to enhance the quality of education in rural areas, including investments in teacher training and school infrastructure improvement. Additionally, policies have been enacted to regulate the private tutoring industry, aimed at preventing the exacerbation of existing inequalities in public education and curtailing social inequality (Zhan, 2021). Another significant rationale behind these policies is recognizing the adverse impact of excessive competition in education on students’ physical and mental well-being during their formative years (X. Chen, 2021). These innovative policy interventions can influence the attention and actions of influential stakeholders, potentially prompting the adoption of new goal dimensions or abandoning outdated ones (Shinkle et al., 2021).

However, education system reform is intricate, necessitating policymakers to consider multiple factors when implementing such changes (Zhao & Qiu, 2012). Research has underscored that policies to equalize learning opportunities may inadvertently yield unintended consequences. For instance, the policy in 2013 named *Ten Regulations to Reduce Academic Burden For Primary School Students* aimed to alleviate academic pressure on students by easing the difficulty and volume of public school curricula. Nonetheless, this policy inadvertently spurred a surge in demand for private tutoring services, exacerbating equity concerns (W. Lu et al., 2022). Furthermore, although the government has taken action to address educational inequalities resulting from the marketization and privatization of education, NCEE and competition in the labor market may still drive urban parents to purchase educational advantages for their children in the marketized education sector (Mok et al., 2009). Policies that seek to equalize learning
opportunities need to be carefully implemented, and comprehensive solutions must be explored to address the underlying factors driving demand for private tutoring and promoting educational equity.

**Problem Statement**

*Organizational Changes Under External Shock*

One of the most critical policy changes was introduced in 2021 (Ministry of Education, 2021), *Double Reduction*, which limited the hours and subjects that tutoring companies could teach and introduced new requirements for registration and qualifications. These policy changes have significantly impacted private tutoring agencies, such as New Oriental Education, which has had to adapt its organizational structure and strategies to comply with the new regulations while maintaining its business operations and competitive advantage.

As one of the beneficiaries of the tutoring industry, New Oriental, which initially started as a support service for studying abroad, has ushered in the transformation of its core business for the first time in 2011. In the fiscal year 2011, the K-12 business surpassed the study abroad exam business in total revenue to become New Oriental’s largest source of revenue. In the same period of the fiscal year 2020, New Oriental’s K-12 enrollment was about 5.5 million, an increase of 36% yearly. K-12 became the absolute mainstay of New Oriental’s client base (T. Chen, 2020). According to the financial report for the third quarter of fiscal year 2021, net revenue exceeded $1.19 billion, up 29% year-on-year. It was mainly due to the full recovery of the K12 primary and secondary all-subjects after-school tutoring business, which is the company’s growth engine, starting from the pandemic response, with secondary school business revenue up 35% year-on-year and elementary school business revenue up about 40% year-on-year (Anonymous, 2022).
However, the *Double Reduction* policy then caused New Oriental Education’s secondary school business to show a precipitous decline. In September 2021, New Oriental discontinued its elementary and middle school subject business after the fall session. The company planned to redirect its focus toward expanding its domestic and international higher education business and adult training programs, such as computer grade exams and judicial exams, in the future (China Education Online, 2021). While this shift may alter the company’s overall business focus to prioritize college and study abroad services, the K-12 division, which constitutes a substantial portion of the company’s business volume and workforce, cannot avoid undergoing organizational changes.

Policy changes forced New Oriental Education to adapt and reinvent itself. Following these changes, the company experienced remarkable success and popularity by introducing bilingual live courses, which proved to be a resonating learning approach for students across China (GT Staff reporters, 2022). Additionally, the organization underwent restructuring by discontinuing its K-9 tutoring services while expanding its business to international study tours and camp education (Hu, 2021). New Oriental further diversified its business by starting to sell groceries through *Douyin* [TikTok], using a portion of the revenue generated from its live-streaming grocery sales to fund educational programs for underprivileged students and partnering with local governments to help impoverished farmers sell their goods for more profit. On the other hand, to respond positively to the national educational strategy, New Oriental Education has also been running a teaching campaign under the name *Candlelight Operation* since 2008 and has trained more than 40,000 teachers from rural primary and secondary schools until 2022, benefiting tens of thousands of students from rural areas (New Oriental Education and Technology Group Inc., 2022). These innovative approaches exemplify how the private tutoring
industry can address certain inequalities in public education and support the Chinese government’s ongoing efforts in poverty eradication, ultimately fostering social progress (S. Lu, 2022; Reuters, 2022)

*New Oriental Education’s Efforts on Organizational Change*

Amidst policy changes and ethical considerations driving a transformative shift in China’s tutoring industry, companies endeavor to strike a balance between providing students with education, improving educational equity, and maintaining profitability. This evolving landscape underscores the necessity of exploring novel approaches to meet these multifaceted objectives. While technology and innovation undoubtedly play pivotal roles, effective leadership remains paramount in navigating critical decisions and achieving favorable outcomes.

Nevertheless, assessing the efficacy of New Oriental’s organizational changes and business transformation at this juncture proves intricate and contingent upon diverse perspectives and criteria.

From the standpoint of adapting to policy imperatives and ensuring compliance, New Oriental’s organizational changes and business transformation can be construed as imperative and favorable. These strategies shifted to align with the revised policy directives and bolstered the Chinese government’s overarching agenda to foster equitable education. Moreover, they underscored a forward-thinking approach to capitalizing on emerging market opportunities and catering to diverse educational demands.

However, the effectiveness of New Oriental’s organizational changes and business transformation in bolstering profitability and reinstating growth hinged on various determinants. Factors such as execution, competitiveness, market responsiveness, and customer reception have all significantly influenced the success of these initiatives.
Nevertheless, New Oriental confronts formidable challenges following the enactment of the Double Reduction policy. Revenue data reflects a substantial downturn, evidenced by a year-over-year decline of 56.8% in fourth-quarter fiscal 2022 revenue, amounting to $524 million. Fiscal 2022 net revenue stood at $3.105 billion, marking a 27.4% year-over-year decrease. These revenue setbacks predominantly stem from discontinuing the K-9 tutoring segment in compliance with the policy (New Oriental Education and Technology Group Inc., 2023; Sina Technology, 2022).

From a profitability standpoint, New Oriental recorded an operating loss of $105.6 million in the fourth quarter of fiscal 2022, representing a 3.2% year-over-year increase. Furthermore, there was a substantial 316.4% year-over-year surge in net loss attributable to shareholders, reaching $189.3 million. The fiscal 2022 financials unveiled a net loss attributable to shareholders of $1,188 million, starkly contrasting with a profit of $334 million in 2021. These losses were primarily attributable to additional expenses incurred for lease terminations and workforce reductions associated with learning center closures (New Oriental Education and Technology Group Inc., 2023; Sina Technology, 2022).

New Oriental Education’s exploration into new domains also posed numerous challenges and risks, including policy uncertainty, intense market competition, resistance to altering user behaviors, and the imperative to uphold product quality. Hence, allocating sufficient time and collecting data was imperative to assess the efficacy of its organizational adjustments and business metamorphosis. Notwithstanding these challenges, opportunities emerged from market integration and innovation. Implementing the Double Reduction policy engendered prospects for market consolidation, which New Oriental Education, as a frontrunner in the industry, could leverage. Smaller or non-compliant educational entities might have struggled to survive, whereas
New Oriental possessed the potential to expand its market share owing to its financial resources and robust standing.

Furthermore, the Double Reduction policy propelled New Oriental to expedite its pace of innovation. The corporation diversified its portfolio by delving into quality education, international study excursions, and camp educational services (Hu, 2021). These endeavors aimed to explore fresh avenues for growth and profit models. By embracing these transformations, New Oriental could adapt to the evolving policy milieu, address diverse educational requisites, and fortify its competitiveness and resilience. In addition to striving to sustain its original training business, New Oriental Education ventured into new business domains following the implementation of the Double Reduction policy. Particularly notable progress and accomplishments were witnessed in *East Buy* and *New Oriental Tourism*.

Significant advancements were observed within the domain of *East Buy*, as evidenced by the mid-term report for the 2023 fiscal year. By November 30, 2022, total revenue for *East Buy* had soared to 20.8 billion yuan, marking a remarkable 265% year-on-year increase. A net profit of 585 million yuan was recorded, starkly contrasting the 544 million yuan loss incurred in the preceding year’s corresponding period. *East Buy* emerged as a focal point of New Oriental’s successful transformation, particularly notable for its breakthrough achievements in live e-commerce (New Oriental Education and Technology Group Inc, 2023). By 2023, the online retail aspect of East Buy had matured, exemplifying a prototypical instance of successful transformation within the education and training industry.

Regarding *New Oriental Tourism*, since the inception of the New Oriental Culture & Tourism Group in July 2023, it facilitated over a hundred cultural and tourism itineraries spanning 23 provinces in China. Additionally, the New Oriental Tourism Group articulated its
aspirations to expand and invest in realms such as cultural and creative intellectual property, hotel enterprises, collaborations with scenic locales, rural rejuvenation initiatives, and health and wellness tourism. Amidst the swift expansion of the enterprise and a steadfast organizational transformation, by the end of March 2024, Yu Minhong, the founder of New Oriental Education, formally declared that training and tutoring, live-streaming sales, and the cultural tourism business had officially consolidated as the three primary business sectors of New Oriental Education.

These transformations and accomplishments underscore New Oriental Education’s adaptability and ingenuity in addressing policy challenges while concurrently paving the way for fresh avenues of growth beyond the confines of the education sector. Consequently, it is essential to examine how leaders navigated organizational change in the face of external shocks, such as policy shifts, to understand the strategies, approaches, decision-making processes, and relationship maintenance involved in such transformations. The case of New Oriental Education serves as an exemplar of how effective leadership and its social impact are instrumental in guiding an organization through policy changes and market challenges. Moreover, taking an intercultural lens to fully appreciate the intricate interplay between Chinese and Western leadership theories and their impact on organizational change adds further depth to our understanding.

**Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this study is to comprehensively analyze the organizational change process and the theoretical underpinnings behind leadership practices, utilizing New Oriental Education as a case study of a private company that responded to government policy changes in China. By delving into these factors, the study aimed to deepen our understanding of
organizational change in China and its relationship with leadership theories and traditions from both Western and Chinese perspectives. This study explored how these factors facilitated effective navigation and successful outcomes during the organizational change process. Specifically, the study investigated the organizational transformation exploration, practices, and reflections of leaders and employees at New Oriental Education Xi’an School during the two years following the policy enactment from 2021 to 2023. The investigation included examining the company’s change management in response to the new policy landscape, leadership strategies for managing transformation, organizational culture development, interaction with stakeholders, and reflections on the motivation throughout the change process.

Furthermore, the study explored the intercultural impact of integrating indigenous Chinese leadership perspectives with Western leadership paradigms among Chinese leaders. It focused on organizational change and analyzed the influence of these factors on group culture, leadership developments and styles, and leader-follower relationships within New Oriental Education from both Chinese and Western lenses.

To accomplish these aims, the study employed a mixed-methods case study research approach, with New Oriental Education Xi’an School as the analysis unit. Surveys were utilized to gather employee opinions, while interviews were conducted with leadership team members. Through triangulation of the collected data, the study identified points of convergence and divergence, thereby providing valuable insights into the dynamics of organizational change.

**Significance of The Study**

This study investigated the organizational change process and the underlying theoretical foundations of leadership practices at New Oriental Education, a prominent private tutoring
company in China that faced a significant upheaval due to a government policy change in 2021. This research topic was highly relevant and timely, as it examined the challenges and opportunities confronted by the private tutoring industry in China amidst evolving policies and ethical considerations driving a transformative shift in education. Moreover, this study emphasized the role of intercultural leadership by employing a mixed-method case study approach that incorporated both Western and Chinese leadership concepts and theories.

By comprehensively analyzing the leadership practices and dynamics within New Oriental Education during organizational change, this study aimed to understand better how Western leadership theories were localized and integrated with traditional perceptions in China (Kwan, 2012). It explored how New Oriental Education responded to the external shock, examined the factors that influenced its organizational change strategy, and analyzed the impact of Western and Chinese leadership on this transformation process. Additionally, it delved into how Chinese business leaders made decisions and took actions that integrated and synthesized various concepts and skills, effectively incorporating Western and Chinese leadership ideologies within the context of globalization.

The study’s beneficiaries encompassed New Oriental Education, its leaders and employees, private tutoring companies, policymakers, intercultural leadership practitioners, and scholars interested in organizational change, culture study, and intercultural leadership. The insights and implications derived from this research provided valuable guidance to these stakeholders for effectively navigating organizational change and leadership while considering ethical considerations. Additionally, the study shed light on intercultural leadership practices and offered overseas investors a reference point to understand the impact of Chinese government policies on the transformation of public companies and industrial development.
Finally, this study has contributed to future research in the leadership studies field by proposing potential areas or topics for further exploration. Future studies could investigate organizational change and intercultural leadership cases in various cultural backgrounds or industries, particularly emphasizing leadership concepts and practices within diverse indigenous cultures. Moreover, it would be valuable to compare and contrast different leadership models or methods across different social norms or to develop new frameworks or tools for measuring and evaluating leadership effectiveness or influence in complex and diverse environments. These studies can not only help advance research on indigenous leadership but also offer insights into global leadership, assisting in addressing various challenges in complex situations.

**Methodology**

Considering the study’s primary purpose—to explore factors influencing organizational responses to external shocks, implement changes, and ensure adaptability in educational reforms while uncovering the intricate interplay between Western and Chinese leadership perspectives—a mixed-methods concurrent design was employed. This approach facilitated the conduct of interviews and surveys with employees and leadership at New Oriental Education Xi’an School to comprehend their experiences, perspectives, and reflections.

An iceberg conceptual framework was employed to steer the investigation, scrutinizing surface-level leadership processes and practices, exploring the interaction between Western and Chinese leadership perspectives at the deeper cognitive level, and identifying contextual factors surrounding the leadership process to offer valuable insights into the leadership strategies, actions, and awareness required to drive organizational change in complex environments.
**Research Design**

A multi-stage mixed-methods case study approach was applied, encompassing a pre-step thematic analysis and a parallel convergent design. The pre-step thematic analysis laid the theoretical foundation and hypotheses for subsequent convergent steps, while the parallel convergent design encompassed both quantitative and qualitative components, capturing different viewpoints and insights from various data sources (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). A comprehensive understanding of the scenario was attained by comparing and merging different yet complementary data sources on the same theme (Morse, 1991).

Surveys were conducted with current employees of New Oriental Education Xi’an School, and in-depth interviews were carried out with selected members of the leadership team. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and thematic analysis. Triangulation of findings from both strands of inquiry enabled the identification of any discrepancies, convergence, or corroboration in the theoretical aspects of the dataset.

Constraints of time and philosophical considerations influenced the choice of convergent design. As policy changes, organizational changes, and preliminary investigation results occurred within two years, I chose a pragmatic and applied research philosophy and adopted a convergent design to align with this paradigm and effectively advance the research goals (Creswell & Clark, 2017).

According to Yin (1981), case studies involve empirical research on contemporary phenomena in real-life contexts, significantly when the boundaries between the phenomenon and its context are blurred. Researchers in social science disciplines use case studies to observe events within a specific time frame, providing detailed and comprehensive explanations of specific social phenomena, exploring potential principles or causes, and testing or generating
hypotheses. Additionally, case studies directly demonstrate how theory is applied to practice and extrapolated from practice (Nohria, 2021; Priya, 2021; Yin, 1981). New Oriental Education Xi’an School, being a typical case, underwent a reorganization and renewal across various aspects and levels during organizational change. This transformation reflected organizations’ challenges and opportunities in response to external shocks. Additionally, it illustrated the impact of China’s educational reforms on the tutoring industry, rendering it highly suitable for case study analysis.

Multiple sources of evidence were employed to establish a case study with validity, reliability, and generalizability (Labaree, 2023), including documents, interviews, and surveys. These sources offered valuable insights into the case’s organizational background and historical context, facilitating a profound interpretation of leaders’ phenomena and reflections. Moreover, they were combined with quantitative data from employees to conduct triangulation, further enhancing the survey results’ reliability. Triangulating various forms of evidence to address the same research questions helped alleviate concerns about potential biases resulting from reliance on a single data collection method (Yin, 2009).

The sample for this study comprised current employees, including members of the New Oriental Xi’an School leadership team directly involved in or affected by the organizational change process. During the survey participants’ recruitment process, I applied stratified random sampling techniques to ensure the selection of representative and unbiased samples. Careful consideration was given to determine sample sizes and sampling methods for each employee stratum, considering factors such as gender, position, and tenure. In selecting interviewees for the qualitative strand, participants were chosen from current and former members of the New Oriental Xi’an School leadership team who had directly participated in the organizational change process. Purposive and convenient sampling techniques were employed to ensure participants
possessed knowledge and experience most relevant to change management at New Oriental Xi’an School, thereby minimizing time and cost requirements (Etikan, 2016).

**Data Collection**

During the preparatory phase, I employed thematic analysis to explore the leadership principles and practices of New Oriental Education, as well as its organizational culture, values, and ethos. This qualitative method was used to identify, analyze, and report themes within the collected dataset, representing patterns or categories encapsulating the essence or significance of the data (Creswell & Clark, 2017). These themes and patterns ultimately shaped research questions, designed interview guides, and formulated questionnaire items.

Subsequently, in July 2023, a carefully designed survey was administered to assess the effectiveness of leadership in managing organizational change amidst policy shifts. The survey targeted employees of New Oriental Education Xi’an School and ran until October 2023. The questionnaire comprehensively covered various themes such as leadership styles, communication strategies, the effectiveness of change management processes, and the overall impact of change on organizational performance. It balanced closed-ended and open-ended questions to elicit diverse insights.

Simultaneously, interviews proceeded methodically. All interviews adhered to an interview guide comprising a semi-structured set of questions to elicit comprehensive and insightful responses from participants. This guide consisted of open-ended questions and specific probes to explore various aspects of the research topic. Follow-up questions were strategically employed to delve deeper into participants’ viewpoints and experiences, fostering rich and meaningful dialogue during the interviews.
Careful attention was paid to ethical considerations in both data collection strands to maintain ethical integrity throughout the research process. The primary focus was on obtaining informed consent from all relevant participants, ensuring they fully understood the nature of the study and its implications for their participation. Clear explanations were provided regarding how their identifiable personal information would be handled, managed, and disseminated.

**Data Analysis**

I utilized statistical tools from the survey platform and Microsoft Excel to validate the integrity, accuracy, consistency, and effectiveness of the data collected from the questionnaire survey, ensuring data quality. Descriptive statistical data, such as mean, median, mode, standard deviation, and frequency, provided a comprehensive overview of the main characteristics of the collected data. Comparative analysis methods were also employed to identify patterns and trends in the data, comparing and contrasting themes among participants and different groups. Throughout the process, alternative explanations were carefully explored, and hidden insights in the data were discovered. All interviews and questionnaire surveys were conducted in Chinese to ensure the authenticity and accuracy of participants’ meanings, metaphors, and emotions.

The processing of interview texts was another focus of the data analysis process. In-vivo coding was used during the transcription process to select keywords and phrases. After conducting a comprehensive analysis of all themes before drafting the survey results, translation into English commenced. NVivo was used to assign initial codes to elucidate the content of the collected data, with carefully selected comments annotated with codes representing various themes and ideas. The analysis involved identifying patterns or themes in different interview and survey responses. I used NVivo to group and organize codes into broader themes, summarizing the main aspects of the research topics. Throughout the process, every effort was made to ensure
the accurate conveyance of original language viewpoints and emotions. This approach considered cultural differences in conceptual explanations, extensively addressed in the analysis.

In the final step, the triangulation method, combining quantitative and qualitative data, was employed when determining areas of convergence and divergence. I applied comparative analysis methods to reveal patterns and trends in the data. The results of the two stages of the study were then integrated into a joint presentation to provide a comprehensive analysis. Considering that survey participants were primarily employees, while interviews targeted individuals in leadership roles, comparing the results of these two groups was deemed crucial. This comparative analysis enabled examining new relationships and different viewpoints reflected in the data.

After the data analysis and integration, all results were organized into five key finding clusters. These findings included: 1) The impact of Double Reduction policies as external shocks on organizations; 2) The pivotal role played by organizational culture and collective identity formation in the trajectory of organizational change; 3) The comparative assessment of Chinese leadership perceptions vis-à-vis Western leadership paradigms among Chinese leaders; 4) Chinese Conceptualizations of Leadership; 5) Skills, Characteristics, and Practices of Chinese Leadership. This section was further analyzed in detail in Chapter Four.

**Conceptual Framework of the Study**

Upon organizing the subtopics and pertinent details associated with these findings, the conceptual framework of this study gradually crystallized, depicted in Figure 1. below, highlighting the central role of organizational culture. This includes aspects such as cultural inheritance, unwavering adherence to core values, and a dedication to fostering a learning-oriented organizational environment. The research identified that a key factor contributing to the
successful organizational change at New Oriental Xi’an School was its robust foundation rooted in organizational culture and its inheritance.

**Figure 1.**

Conceptual Framework of New Oriental Education Xi’an School’s Organizational Change Under External Shock

Effective organizational change fosters a sense of belonging and collective identity among members, thereby influencing their resilience, commitment, and adaptability within the organization. The interdependent relationship between these factors not only strengthens organizational resilience and member loyalty but also enhances innovation and development capabilities. Underpinning the organizational culture, Chinese conceptualized leadership skills, traits, and practices provided substantial support for the implementation of these ideas and practices.
The examination of factors influencing ideological perceptions transcended organizational culture and collective identity. Through a comparative assessment of Chinese and Western leadership perspectives, the significance of cultural integration in fostering innovation within leadership studies and practice was underscored. Members of New Oriental Xi’an School exhibited an inclusive and proactive approach towards embracing leadership concepts from diverse sources, welcoming knowledge and practices conducive to personal and organizational advancement with openness.

These three elements converged to form a comprehensive system, delineating the organizational change endeavors of the New Oriental Xi’an School. Characterized by permeability to external influences, this system facilitated internal renewal and growth within the organization. The empirical findings of this case study, coupled with theoretical insights, offered valuable perspectives on the intricate dynamics of organizational change and leadership evolution, especially in the face of global challenges and cultural intersections.
CHAPTER TWO. LITERATURE REVIEW

The theoretical framework of this study delves into three sections that will guide the analysis of the leadership practices at New Oriental Education Xi’an School. These frameworks capture aspects of Leadership and decision-making during organizational transformation, including the influence of traditional Chinese philosophical and ethical concepts alongside Western leadership approaches.

Research indicates that the concept of Leadership in the Chinese workplace has evolved over the past few decades due to overseas education and exposure to Western organizations in China, resulting in the adoption of Western concepts (King & Wei, 2014). This convergence of leadership styles suggests that Chinese and Western approaches to Leadership have evolved and incorporated elements from each other. While the specific elements of Leadership may be interconnected and interdependent, their arrangement may vary (King & Wei, 2014). As Chinese and Western leaders assimilate concepts from their respective cultures, the mosaic of leadership concepts is expected to converge into a universal notion of Leadership in a globalized economy.

Recognizing that effective Leadership requires a fusion of skills and insights from different cultures and philosophies, these frameworks aim to enhance performance and relationships within a globalized, intercultural integration context (King & Wei, 2014).

The theoretical framework of this study is constructed by integrating Western leadership theories, indigenous Chinese leadership, and their intersection. Western leadership theories primarily encompass theories related to 1) Organizational Culture, 2) Organizational Change under External Shocks, and 3) Transformational Approach to Leadership. Meanwhile, indigenous Chinese leadership, as a cultural and contextual influencing factor, focuses on exploring the influence of classical Chinese philosophy on leadership concepts, including 1) The Root of
Chinese Leadership Perspectives and 2) Taoism Leadership. The intersection of these two emphasized the discussions of the leader-follower relationship and seeing leadership as a process. See the theoretical framework visualization in Figure 2.

**Figure 2.**

Theoretical Framework Visualization

The initial phase of this chapter involves a comprehensive literature review on organizational culture, which seeks to elucidate the significant implications and influences of organizational culture, as well as the establishment of a learning organization, on the process of organizational development. Following this, the investigation delves into research on organizational change and adaptation in response to external shocks. It explores the dynamic adaptive processes organizations undergo in response to changes in their external environments, along with the fundamental components of organizational change theory.

After these explorations, attention shifts to a literature review on the transformation approach to leadership. This section lays the groundwork for examining the people and process dimensions of leadership, with a particular emphasis on elucidating the importance of the
reciprocal influence between leaders and followers in the pursuit of common organizational goals. In contrast, another facet of the literature review focuses on indigenous Chinese leadership, which accentuates the ethical and moral dimensions of leadership that are prominent within Chinese cultural contexts, along with discussions on power dynamics.

Finally, through a comparative assessment of Western and Chinese leadership paradigms, the study identifies intersections between the two, particularly in discussions related to the dynamics of the leader-follower relationship, the conceptualization of leadership as a process, and considerations about authorization. By employing this comparative framework, the examination of leadership practices at New Oriental Education Xi’an School seeks to reveal how leaders navigated organizational change in response to policy shifts introduced in 2021 and how they integrated Western leadership theories with Chinese philosophical principles to facilitate such change. This perspective rooted in traditional Chinese leadership offers valuable insights, addressing gaps that may exist within the Western frameworks, especially within the nuanced context of China, where certain aspects may not be entirely explicable or supported. Ultimately, this approach fosters a more comprehensive understanding of organizational change processes and their cultural implications, bridging the theoretical divide between Western theories and the distinctive features of Chinese leadership practices.

Combining these theoretical perspectives, this chapter will provide a comprehensive conceptual foundation for analyzing New Oriental Education’s leadership practices, exploring their impact on organizational change and how the interplay of Western and Chinese leadership concepts has influenced them. Furthermore, this analysis contributes to the broader discourse on Leadership in an era of interculturalism, offering lessons and inspiration for the future as leaders navigate the evolving leadership landscape in a globalized world.
Western Leadership Theories

Organizational Culture

Based on the literature in cultural studies, culture is defined as a social phenomenon collectively learned and inherited by a group of people. It encompasses their beliefs, values, behaviors, attitudes, viewpoints, and cognitive patterns for thinking, feeling, reacting, and problem-solving. Within an organizational context, a distinct culture emerges, comprising shared beliefs, values, and practices. It strongly influences members’ perceptions, thoughts, and emotions, impacting their behavior, even if it becomes dysfunctional due to external factors (Schein & Schein, 2016). Research on organizational culture and change has underscored the pivotal role of culture in driving performance and shaping employee behavior (Kotter & Heskett, 1992). Kotter contends that strong cultures characterized by deeply held and widely shared values are essential for organizational success. According to Schein (2007) and Wagner (1975), the founder’s role in shaping organizational culture is intricate and multifaceted. It commences with the founder’s initial concept and undergoes further refinement through their values and assumptions.

Additionally, adaptive cultures that foster confidence and risk-taking enable organizations to navigate changes effectively. Effective Leadership is also highlighted as crucial in shaping and maintaining organizational culture. Hence, a profound understanding of the existing culture is imperative before implementing any change (Hofstede, 1998). Schneider et al. (1996) further accentuates the significance of modifying the fundamental psychology of an organization’s members to achieve sustained change. In essence, organizational changes are successful only when employee psychology changes accompany them.
Consequently, understanding and managing organizational culture becomes imperative for successful change initiatives. This process involves assessing the organization’s readiness for change, addressing staff attributes and resistance, and ensuring adequate resources are available. Staff resistance to change emerges as a critical factor, often rooted in fear, loss, or threats to professional identity. Recognizing and addressing these concerns is crucial for managers to facilitate a smoother transition during organizational change (Austin & Claassen, 2010).

Exploring organizational culture and its impact on change extends beyond the internal dynamics of individual organizations. Abrahamson (1994) and Ogbonna and Harris (2002) delve into the broader context of macrocultures and their influence on organizational behavior and outcomes. Abrahamson sheds light on how inter-organizational macro-cultures contribute to inertia and shape the diffusion of innovations across industries. Conversely, Ogbonna emphasizes delving deeper into industry-specific macrocultures to understand organizational culture comprehensively. Building upon this, Hofstede (1998) further dissects organizational culture by delineating various subcultures within organizations, including professionals, administrators, and customer-facing staff, and examines their tangible impacts. In a departure from traditional perspectives, Linstead and Grafton-Small (1992) introduce a postmodern viewpoint, arguing that organizational culture is inherently paradoxical and emerges from its members’ creativity and practices. These insights highlight the interconnectedness between broader microcultures and the intricate fabric of organizational culture, underscoring the complexity of managing change within organizations.

**Three-Level Analysis of Organizational Culture.** As Schein’s model outlines, organizational culture encompasses three distinct analysis levels (Schein, 2011b). At the surface level, *artifacts* serve as the visible manifestations of culture that outsiders readily observe. These
artifacts include office layouts, dress codes, communication patterns, and organizational structures. However, interpreting their significance necessitates delving beyond mere surface observations.

Beneath the artifacts lie the organization’s *espoused beliefs and values*, representing its stated beliefs and norms. These beliefs and values are often articulated through mission statements, slogans, and official policies, reflecting the organization’s aspirations and desired public image. Espoused beliefs and values are guiding principles that influence decision-making processes, behaviors, and interactions within the organizational context (Schein, 2011b; Schein & Schein, 2016). Schein also indicated that within these beliefs and values, some can be validated through actions and outcomes, thus transforming from a solution or an idea into a belief or value. However, not all beliefs and values undergo such a transformation process. For instance, in domains dealing with less controllable elements of the environment, aesthetic, or moral matters, thus consensus through social validation is feasible. When members reinforce each other’s beliefs and values, they become taken for granted. Those who do not accept these beliefs and values may eventually leave the group (Schein & Schein, 2016).

At the core of organizational culture lies *basic assumptions*—the fundamental beliefs, shared perceptions, and tacit truths that shape individuals’ worldviews and behaviors. These assumptions are implicit and often go unacknowledged, yet they wield substantial influence over day-to-day decisions and actions within the organization. If a basic assumption becomes firmly established in a group, members will find behavior based on any other premise inconceivable (Schein, 2011b). Basic assumptions are also non-confrontable and non-debatable and, therefore, challenging to change.
As organizational change is a process of repositioning, it requires organizations to undergo a rapid and thorough transformation, which may involve developing emerging businesses, redefining core businesses, and restructuring. This process inevitably presents challenges and disrupts basic assumptions. Therefore, when organizational change occurs and individuals need to acquire new knowledge, it requires altering the more entrenched aspects of their original cognitive frameworks. It poses a learning challenge, as revisiting basic assumptions disrupts individuals’ familiar cognitive and interpersonal environments, leading to heightened anxiety. However, in the process, building culture can have a positive impact (Argyris & Schön, 1996). Culture, as a set of basic assumptions, mainly influences internal organizational members’ focus, meaning-making, and responses. The environment constructed by those with the same assumptions makes them feel comfortable, while changes and differences in assumptions can lead to maladaptation and vulnerability. At this level, culture gives its members a basic sense of identity and defines the values that provide self-esteem (Bushe, 2011; Douglas, 1986; Hatch & Schultz, 2004). By recognizing the interplay between visible artifacts, espoused beliefs and values, and underlying assumptions, leaders can effectively shape and align organizational culture to achieve desired outcomes (Schein & Schein, 2016).

**Learning Culture and Learning-oriented Leadership.** Schein (2016) identified a learning culture as a dynamic and adaptive environment prioritizing proactive problem-solving and continuous learning. It emphasizes the importance of the learning process itself and fosters a “learning to learn” mindset. Mastering the methodology of learning and possessing such awareness is a requisite for every member within a learning organization (Scharmer, 2009; Senge, 1990), regardless of whether they hold a leadership position. This culture is built on optimistic assumptions about human nature, believing that people are inherently capable and willing to
learn if provided with the necessary resources and psychological safety. In such a culture, the environment is manageable to some extent, and there is a focus on balancing adaptation to changes with actively shaping the environment. Open inquiry and dialogue are central to finding solutions, and wisdom is not seen as residing in any source. Systemic thinking is encouraged to understand complex, interconnected issues, and internal cultural analysis is vital for reflecting on and adapting organizational practices (Schein & Schein, 2016).

Moreover, a learning culture values cultural diversity and open communication, recognizing that diverse perspectives and transparent information sharing are crucial for innovation and practical problem-solving. Leaders in this culture exemplify lifelong learning, inspiring their teams to embrace uncertainty and view challenges as opportunities for growth. One of the critical characteristics of a learning leader is the willingness to ask for help and accept it; in this context, feedback and reflection can be most helpful (Schein, 2016). Characterized by its forward-thinking, inclusive, and reflective nature, a learning culture constantly evolves to meet the challenges of a changing world. Schein (2016) presented a compelling case for shifting from rigid, stable cultures to dynamic, learning-oriented ones, where continuous improvement and adaptability are ingrained in the organizational DNA.

Learning-oriented Leadership plays a pivotal role in shaping organizational culture and facilitating change. As Schein (2016) suggests, leaders need to maintain a clear vision in rapidly evolving environments while remaining adaptable to changing circumstances. They must consistently communicate their vision while remaining open to change, nurturing a resilient and flexible culture. As organizations enter their midlife phase, leaders must deeply understand their organizational culture to discern which elements support or impede its mission. They should possess the necessary skills to cultivate cultural diversity or unity, fostering the most conducive
culture for the organization’s future success. In mature organizations, entrenched cultures may define Leadership in ways that hinder adaptation (Schein & Schein, 2016). Leaders must be adept at cultural analysis and change, often necessitating an external perspective to challenge entrenched assumptions and initiate a new learning process for organizational survival. Learning-oriented Leadership entails striking a balance between a steadfast vision and the flexibility to learn and adapt, fostering a culture that embraces continuous learning and evolution across all stages of an organization’s life cycle (Schein & Schein, 2016).

As organizations develop, their culture drives them, shaping strategies, structures, procedures, and member interactions. Culture strongly influences members’ perceptions, thoughts, and emotions, impacting their behavior, even if it becomes dysfunctional due to external factors (Schein & Schein, 2016). Recognizing complexity and embracing uncertainty and experimentation are critical at the strategic level. However, the over-focus on vision may hinder the acknowledgment of uncertainty and the collective learning process necessary for adaptation. In addition, while leadership vision is emphasized, the importance of listening, absorbing information, and building learning capacities is also often overlooked. Leaders must engage the organization in a collective learning process to navigate survival challenges effectively.

Schein (2011a) and Michael (1997) emphasized the importance of building learning capacity and the courage to face uncertainty in Leadership. The role of learning leaders extends beyond vision to proactive engagement with organizational challenges before crises occur. Listening, learning, and fostering adaptability are paramount for navigating complexity and driving organizational evolution.
Organizational Change under External Shock

Organizational change and adaptation are crucial for organizations to survive and thrive amidst external shocks such as economic reforms, institutional turbulence, and pandemics. Hrebiniak and Joyce (1985) suggest that leaders should consider strategic choices and environmental determinism when making organizational adaptation decisions. Strategic choice and environmental determinism are not mutually exclusive but independent variables that can interact differently to shape organizational adaptation. Adaptation is a dynamic process that depends on the relative strength and dependence between the organization and its environment and the alignment of internal capabilities with external contingencies (Hrebiniak & Joyce, 1985).

In the face of extreme environmental changes, organizations adopt a rapid and painful approach to deal with them to complete significant transformations quickly. It is consistent with organizational adaptation theory (Tushman & Romanelli, 1985), which views organizational change as a reorientation process. Suarez (2005) emphasizes that managers need to understand the different environmental changes and how they affect the organization. They should also be able to assess the frequency, magnitude, speed, and scope of change and adjust their strategies accordingly. Managers need to be prepared for an avalanche of change that requires a rapid and radical transformation of the organization. It may involve developing new capabilities, redefining core operations, reorganizing, laying off employees, and changing organizational culture and values. They should also consider the ethical implications of change management and how to foster employee trust, engagement, and innovation.

The literature highlights the distinction between leaders and managers. Bennis and Nanus (1986) emphasized the significance of vision, communication, trust, and self-deployment in leadership, while Williamson (1986) stressed the importance of managerial adaptation to
change, mission focus, goal setting, feedback mechanisms, reward systems, and support structures. Kumaran (2012) further delineated between these roles, stating that not all managers are leaders and vice versa, underscoring the importance of motivation as a crucial skill for both.

In contrast, Gardner (1988) challenges this dichotomy, suggesting that effective managers often exhibit leadership qualities.

Furthermore, at each stage of organizational development, Leadership is necessary to help groups identify and address critical emotional issues, particularly when organizations face crises or significant transformations. During these stages, leaders often need to absorb and contain the anxiety unleashed when things do not work as expected (Frost, 2004; Hirschhorn, 1988; Schein, 2007). Leaders may not have the answers, but they must provide temporary stability and emotional reassurance until the answers are found (Schein & Schein, 2016).

When an organization introduces changes, it is common for staff to exhibit resistance. It often stems from a sense of personal loss or inadequacy, which can be pretty unsettling. Changes can also threaten an individual’s professional identity or status, which they have worked hard to establish and maintain. Adapting to new practices or roles requires building new competencies, which can be challenging and shake one’s self-confidence. Moreover, the emotional journey through change can be tumultuous, mirroring the stages of grief, including denial and anger, before finally reaching acceptance (Austin & Claassen, 2010). Understanding and supporting staff through these emotional and professional transitions is crucial in minimizing resistance and ensuring a smoother change process (Austin & Claassen, 2010).

A study by Roth and Kostova (2003) discussed the challenges firms face in adapting to new governance systems during institutional turbulence in transition economies. A firm’s ability to adapt depends on factors such as the strength and pervasiveness of existing institutional
arrangements and the cultural and contextual embeddedness of the firm. To understand how firms react to dramatic changes in an underdeveloped institutional environment, the authors suggest using the concepts of institutional imperfection and institutional baggage as alternative explanatory mechanisms (Roth & Kostova, 2003). This study highlights the importance of cultural and historical context in understanding corporate governance patterns, particularly in transition economies. Managers operating in such environments need to be aware of these factors and adapt their strategies and practices to deal with the uncertainty and inconsistency of the institutional environment. They should also monitor and evaluate their perceptions of the institutional environment and seek feedback and information from various sources to reduce their cognitive biases and increase their awareness of institutional change.

One referential framework that combines the three perspectives of the business plan, frugality, and emotional support with the crisis response phases (during, after, and before a crisis) presents a guiding framework for entrepreneurial action in the context of exogenous shocks, such as the COVID-19 pandemic (Giones et al., 2020). Under this framework, flexibility in business plans, adjusting frugality, and providing emotional support to employees are practical tools to cope with the crisis and better manage their resources. Entrepreneurial stakeholders, such as investors, gas pedals, and policymakers, play a critical role in supporting entrepreneurs during a crisis, and these stakeholders need to support entrepreneurs to survive and innovate in such situations (Giones et al., 2020).

Another framework that enlightens people about coping with exogenous shocks is business process management (BPM). BPM can play an essential role in restoring organizational resilience and adaptability when faced with exogenous shocks that have a low probability of occurring but have a significant impact on the organization (Röglinger et al., 2022). Through
strategic alignment, BPM helps leaders identify and assess critical processes that can withstand external shocks. Through governance, BPM can build on existing crisis types to identify similar shocks, and this model can be used as a potential conceptual framework in New Oriental’s case study to guide the layout of research questions in questionnaires and interviews (Röglinger et al., 2022).

**Transformational Approach to Leadership**

In the evolving discourse on leadership theories, there has been a discernible shift from a leader-centered approach towards acknowledging the importance of a transformational approach, including relationships and embracing a transformational perspective. Lipman-Blumen’s Connective Leadership model challenges conventional individualistic values by advocating for a relational approach that prioritizes inclusiveness and coalition-building (Lipman-Blumen, 1992; as cited in Dugan, 2017).

**Relational Leadership.** Similarly, relational leadership (Komives et al., 2009) is gaining prominence, emphasizing cultivating positive relationships within organizations and collaboratively pursuing shared objectives. This model is grounded in five key components: ethics, purpose, inclusivity, empowerment, and process orientation, all crucial for fostering a supportive and productive organizational culture (Dugan, 2017; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). It also underscores that relational leadership focuses on relationships and relational dynamics (Uhl-Bien, 2006). Moreover, scholars delving into relational leadership philosophies consistently emphasize dialogue as a key mechanism for fostering relational connections. Effective communication transcends the mere transmission of predetermined information; it thrives on the emergence of open dialogue (Cunliffe & Eriksen, 2011; Uhl-Bien, 2006; Uhl-Bien & Ospina, 2012).
Furthermore, leadership philosophies emerging from postmodern paradigms conceptualize leadership as a social construct arising from complex networks of relationships. These paradigms diverge from the traditional ‘heroic’ portrayal of leadership, advocating instead for a collective, emergent process deeply entwined with social interactions and the co-creation of knowledge (Fletcher, 2004). This nuanced understanding of leadership acknowledges the potency of collective endeavors and underscores the importance of cultivating connections to leverage human potential fully. It signifies a paradigmatic shift from venerating individual leaders to acknowledging the collaborative essence of effective leadership (Dugan, 2017).

**Transformational Leadership.** Within the spectrum of a transformational approach to leadership studies, relational leadership and transformational leadership exhibit a close interconnection. Whereas relational leadership is oriented towards cultivating relationships within the organization, transformational leadership emphasizes inspiring and motivating followers to exceed their own self-interests for the good of the organization. Transformational Leadership focuses on moral components and explores the leader-follower relationship, and it has emerged as a critical factor in successfully navigating these changes and achieving organizational goals, especially when organizational change has become common in today’s complex, dynamic, and competitive social environment (Bass, 1985; Bush, 2018; Eisenbach et al., 1999; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005).

Transformational Leadership emphasizes the leader’s ability to inspire and motivate followers to achieve common goals and objectives (Bass, 1985). This leadership style has gained significant attention recently due to its positive effects on followers’ performance, motivation, and job satisfaction (Den Hartog & Belschak, 2012). Transformational Leadership integrates the advantages of leadership styles, such as charismatic leadership, servant leadership, and...
authentic leadership, while aiming to create a positive work environment that promotes creativity and innovation (Dugan, 2017). In the context of organizational change, research indicates a significant concurrent association between transformational leadership and attitudes towards specific changes, albeit transient. Consequently, substantial leadership efforts to influence employee attitudes need to be sustained over time to avoid the potential waste of efforts (Henricks et al., 2020).

The four transformational factors are crucial for effective Leadership, enabling leaders to inspire, motivate, stimulate, and consider their followers. Like charismatic leaders, transformational leaders can serve as role models to exert Idealized Influence in the organization and create emotional attachments with followers to achieve goals (Bass, 1985). These attachments enable followers to willingly emulate the leader and perceive them as trustworthy and respected (Dugan, 2017). Transformational leaders also inspire the ability to exceed expected performance through Inspirational Motivation, as they provide significant meaning and challenge to followers’ work (Bass & Avolio, 1994). Transformational leaders intellectually stimulate followers in critical thinking and creative problem-solving processes, which allows followers to become co-contributors to organizational development. Also, they are open to mistakes and turn them into positive learning scenarios. Finally, transformational leaders customize mentoring, coaching, and developmental investment initiatives with individualized consideration for each individual’s unique needs. It facilitates the establishment of a mutual communication channel between leaders and followers, fostering learning opportunities for organizational members that contribute to personal growth and development (Avolio, 2023; Dugan, 2017).
Assisted by transformative initiates, members not only discover opportunities for growth and development within the organization but also gradually nurture a sense of belonging with the organization, facilitating their engagement in creating a shared vision for the team (Dugan, 2017). This sense of belonging entails more than just acknowledging personal value; it represents a profound expression of collective identity. Such an identification promotes friendships and collaborative relationships among team members, fostering an environment conducive to collective creativity and learning. Consequently, the interaction between leaders and followers transcends a hierarchical exchange, evolving into a partnership in mutual growth and creation.

**Sense of Belonging and Collective Identity.** Cultivating friendships and collaborative relationships and benefiting from mutual support, learning, and collective creativity are vital ways to foster a sense of belonging. A sense of belonging also encapsulates an individual’s perception of engagement within a particular system, where they feel integral to its fabric. Establishing this sense necessitates experiences wherein individuals feel valued, indispensable, or significant within their social circles or surroundings. Furthermore, it encompasses instances where individuals align or resonate with people around them, groups, or environments due to shared or complementary attributes (Hagerty et al., 1996). A sense of belonging empowers individuals to engage more actively, willingly, and wholeheartedly within a given system or environment. It grants them greater recognition and satisfaction in their involvement while offering the system or environment richer emotional, cognitive, and behavioral feedback. This dynamic interplay is shaped by both environmental and individual factors (Mahar et al., 2013). A sense of belonging is intricately tied to how individuals perceive acceptance, respect, support, and recognition, as well as their self-esteem, confidence, and happiness. The sense of accomplishment, confidence, and pride individuals derive from their experiences within the
organization, coupled with the organization’s societal influence and reputation, collectively enhance the satisfaction internal members derive from gaining social respect and recognition. The sense of security that the organization provides its members solidifies their identification and reliance on the collective, thereby forming an awareness of collective identity.

Collective identity refers to an individual’s identification, emotions, and evaluations of the organization or social group to which they belong and the behaviors consistent with it. Collective identity is a psychological connection between individuals and collectives, reflecting individuals’ sense of belonging and identification with the organization, as well as acceptance and support for the organization’s values and goals (Albert et al., 2000; Bose & Patnaik, 2015; Y. Lu, 2023). Organizational values play a pivotal role in bringing together individuals with similar beliefs. At the heart of collective identity is a shared sense of we or us, grounded in identifying common attributes and experiences among collective members, as well as comparisons or conflicts with one or more actual or imagined others (Snow, 2001).

Collective identity yields positive outcomes for both individuals and organizations. Individuals benefit from enhanced self-esteem, self-efficacy, self-consistency, self-distinction, and self-expression, bolstering work attitudes, performance, happiness, and satisfaction. Similarly, organizations experience heightened cohesion, commitment, innovation, adaptability, and learning capacity through collective identity (Albert et al., 2000; Bose & Patnaik, 2015; Y. Lu, 2023). These factors collectively enhance organizational competitiveness and stability and facilitate development and transformation. The process of collective identity construction can also promote internal members’ openness and adaptability to organizational change and role transitions. Recognizing the necessity and benefits of change, internal members embrace it to align with evolving market and customer demands, foster diversity, and drive innovation.
Despite short-term challenges and discomfort, members maintain a positive outlook, striking a balance between adapting to change and preserving their original identity and style. The emergence and cultivation of collective identity may result in the attenuation or transformation of other identities, with collective identity assuming priority or universality in specific contexts (Snow, 2001). Additionally, intermediary variables such as transformational Leadership, organizational learning, organizational justice, and psychological authorization (Bose & Patnaik, 2015) bridge and regulate individual and organizational factors, thereby affecting the formation and development of collective identity. Leaders of organizations play a significant role in maintaining core values and consistent actions, strengthening the formation of collective identity among internal members.

**Indigenous Chinese Leadership**

According to Wong (2001), Chinese culture strongly emphasizes Leadership, with a tradition that values and prepares leaders on moral grounds, influenced by Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism. Under the influence of these philosophical traditions, Chinese Leadership values ethics and morals, as well as expectations and interactions between leaders and followers. The philosophy emphasizes critical aspects of Leadership, such as self-cultivation, human relationships, harmony with nature, and holistic thinking (Ling et al., 2000).

In contrast to Western culture, Chinese culture emphasizes human activities, practical wisdom, ethical humanism, and moral art in action, shaping differences in morality, epistemology, religion, and education. Wong (2001) notes that moral leadership is an essential concept in China, appealing to the sense of righteousness, obligation, and goodness for both leaders and followers. In developing moral Leadership, Chinese cultural history and practice also offer rich resources to build trust and empower people within the leader-follower relationships.
Leaders in Chinese culture are expected to exhibit benevolence, wisdom, humility, and respect for others, while followers are expected to demonstrate loyalty, obedience, diligence, and cooperation. It is also crucial that the roles of leaders and followers are always interchangeable based on the Yin and Yang framework (Li, 2017). The cognitive and decision-making processes of leaders and followers are also impacted by Chinese philosophy, with Chinese leaders relying more on intuition, sense-making, and non-abstract reasoning and adopting a flexible and pragmatic approach to change and uncertainty, as compared to Western leaders (Alves et al., 2005; Ling et al., 2000).

**The Roots of Chinese Leadership Perspective**

A Chinese leadership perspective is rooted in classical Chinese philosophy. Chinese classical philosophy flourished during the Eastern Zhou period (771–256 BC). What makes these traditional pearls of wisdom relevant to leadership studies is their direct service to the ruling class of the time and the context of significant social change in Chinese history. Influenced by the dialectic of Yin and Yang from Zhou Yi [The Book of Change], rulers sought more than institutional authority and valued the power of collective authority from the people/followers. As a result, they encouraged talented individuals to offer their theories of governance, the art of war, or any wisdom that could enhance their power. The philosophical schools that emerged during this period were essentially organizational development strategies and leadership theories that served reality and were dedicated to acquiring power. These schools facilitated some of the earliest indigenous leadership perspectives in Chinese culture, including Confucianism, Taoism, and Legalism, which became mainstream in later times (Ma & Tsui, 2015).

The association of Leadership with authority and power is a feature of the traditional Chinese view of Leadership that is often overlooked, as more attention is always paid to its
practice of valuing such modest manifestations as morality and collectivity. For example, in traditional Chinese culture, the Loong[Chinese dragon] in Zhou Yi was used as a metaphor to symbolize imperial power but also embodied unknown, uncertain, and fearful authority (Li, 2018). The growing population and complexity of the social structure during the development of society necessitated the systematization and maintenance of Li [ritual and order] and the knowledge derived from it by authority. Civilization is a complication of society, which puts a demand on Li and requires power for its maintenance. Discussions of ritual, order, and knowledge in traditional Chinese philosophy are thus always associated with power, comparable to Foucault’s knowledge-power relation (Foucault & Gordon, 1980). Ancient Chinese rulers homologized the definition and mastery of Li, order, and ritual to legitimize their leadership (Li, 2018). Such discussion of establishing a solid connection between Leadership, authority, and power makes some Chinese leadership views coincide with the critical perspectives (S. Ospina & Foldy, 2009) Western scholars propose nowadays.

Confucianism’s Influence on Leadership

As a philosophy, Confucianism emphasizes the importance of integrity, compassion, justice, and moral courage in leadership. It is reflected in the classical model of political leadership, which incorporates virtues and visions. The relevance of Confucian values in shaping leader behavior is further underscored, with a focus on moral character, human-heartedness, human relationships, lifelong learning, and moderation (Cheng, 2011; Han, 2013; Keung Ip, 2011; Low, 2013; Seow Wah, 2010).

In a study discussing Confucian global leadership within the Chinese tradition, the authors discussed a renovated framework of Confucian political leadership, emphasizing a philosophy centered on humaneness and developmental potential (Cheng, 2011). This framework
critically analyzes classical Confucianism while advancing a novel model that integrates principles of utility and justice with the aim of pragmatic global implementation. The proposed model is normative harmonization, addressing leadership and management needs in modern academia and global contexts (Cheng, 2011). Notably, it introduces the concept of moral power as a potent force in political leadership, complementing conventional notions of hard, soft, and intelligent power, thereby contributing to the promotion of global harmony.

Furthermore, Low (2013) highlights Confucianism’s emphasis on virtues such as high integrity, the ‘desire’ to lead, and fulfilling one’s destiny with dedicated commitment (Low, 2013). It highlights the significance of knowing oneself, setting personal goals, and leading with a set of values, particularly Confucian values, which guide actions and decisions. Confucian leadership also stresses the necessity for leaders to have moral courage, take just actions, and serve as role models, aligning with the Dao[way] and acting in the interest of the masses. Additionally, Confucian leadership esteems Detachment, suggesting that leaders should be disciplined, not swayed by worldly desires, and should lead with a sense of honor and righteousness (Low, 2013).

Muniapan and Seng (2010) indicated that Confucianism offers an inside-out approach to transformational leadership development, emphasizing self-leadership before leading others. They investigated the importance of Confucian values in developing transformational leadership within the Chinese cultural context, emphasizing the imperative of leadership approaches grounded in cultural traditions. Confucian philosophy accentuates moral cultivation and self-leadership, aligning with the tenets of transformational leadership across cultural boundaries, notwithstanding the predominance of Western methodologies within this framework (Muniapan & Seng, 2010). However, a noticeable dearth of comprehensive research exists concerning
assimilating Chinese wisdom into leadership practices from a cultural perspective. Consequently, it is vital to comprehend indigenous wisdom and integrate it into contemporary leadership paradigms, given the pivotal role of economic advancement in fostering such assimilation within these nations.

**Taoism Inspired Leadership**

A prominent feature of the dialectic of Taoism is that in the enumeration of ideals, special attention is given to the soft, weak, and negative sides. To some extent, this can be understood as the value system of Taoism, in which a good leader leads and exerts influence by letting go of power and holding space for weakness and vulnerability. It seems contrary to some Western theories, primarily focusing on the individual and the leader. However, they have parallels with vanguard theories focusing on collectives or relationships and critical studies focusing on power dynamics, such as *leadership as a process* (Wood, 2005) and *leaderless leadership* (Sutherland et al., 2014).

Furthermore, Leadership seems to be a paradoxical concept in Taoism. Inspired by the *Yin and Yang* ontology, the Taoist view holds that no role is fixed because the context, time, and people constantly change. If the leader-follower relationship is brought into the *Yin and Yang* system, for the moment, the leader is seen as the *Yang* side because the leader is relatively active and positive, while the follower is seen as the *Yin* side because it is the opposite of the *Yang*, and is the passive, negative side in comparison. Under this assumption, according to the Taoist view, the *leader/Yang* is in an instantaneous state because it transforms into the *follower/Yin* in the next instant, and the *follower/Yin* will change into the *leader/Yang* at the exact moment; when these two maintain a dynamic equilibrium, a robust system arises. In other words, in the Taoist view, there is no leader-follower relationship because the leader is the follower, and the follower is the
leader. To explain this relationship more graphically, Taoism classic *Tao Te Ching* used the metaphor of water to represent this fluidity, the changing balance, and to put the so-called leader-followers in an equal position.

In Taoism leadership, the supreme good is like water. Water benefits everything by giving without taking or *Zheng* [competition]. It likes the place others dislike, so it closely follows the *Tao*. A good leader should be placed low like water, have a broad mind like water, bring kindness like water, speak trustworthily like water, lead methodically like water, work effectively like water, and act adaptively with the context like water. Without *Zheng*, there is no fault.

In addition, Taoism Leadership is closely related to Sun Tzu’s *The Art of War*. They both shared dialectical thinking, which largely influenced the philosophical meaning of *Tao*. The application of Chinese military treatises has not even been limited to the military context but has recently been valued by management disciplines and leadership studies on a global scale. Taoism and *The Art of War* analyze the organizational and collective levels. This approach is coincidentally reflected in the Western literature on strategic leadership and complements the systems and contextual approaches to leadership to refine further the dyadic models of leader-member relationships (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). It demonstrated a more holistic demand on Leadership in a global context, requiring not only the building of intercultural relationships but also attention to issues such as external and internal environments, system-level adaptation, and collective identity (Dimovski et al., 2012).

The Taoism leadership approach emphasizes the importance of *letting go of power* and valuing vulnerability while creating space for diverse perspectives and experiences. According to Taoism, if someone desires power over others, that person must sincerely be humble and let go of power with open hands (Ren, 2007). This seemingly contradictory approach is precisely the
dynamic of authority and power in the Taoist view that the way to gain authority is to let power go actively. Letting go of power resonates with Western literature on authorization, which views it as granted through dialogism, thus fostering trust, fairness, and addressing challenges while inspiring team enthusiasm and creativity. It also reinforces individual and collective identification, enhancing job performance and satisfaction and, ultimately, achieving the organization’s mission and vision (Burke, 1986; Green & Molenkamp, 2005; Keller & Dansereau, 1995; van Eeden & Cilliers, 2009).

Taoist leadership recognizes the importance of vulnerability and the value of the soft, weak, and feminine sides. Letting go of power creates space for diverse perspectives and experiences. In Taoism, the leader-follower relationship is seen as fluid and constantly changing, with the leader transforming into the follower and vice versa. This dynamic equilibrium creates a robust system of leadership.

Summary

This chapter presented a comprehensive analysis of research and discourse surrounding organizational culture, organizational change, and leadership under a Western leadership paradigm while also delineating the unique attributes of indigenous Chinese leadership perspectives. It serves as a robust groundwork for scrutinizing the leadership practices employed by New Oriental Education Xi’an School in addressing timely organizational change under external shock. Furthermore, the chapter illustrated the evolving nature of Chinese leadership under the influence of traditional philosophy and modern economic globalization. The theoretical framework integrated insights from Western leadership studies with indigenous Chinese leadership perspectives, thereby shedding light on the intercultural assimilation of leadership concepts.
Through a thorough review and synthesis of existing literature, research gaps. Despite the wealth of studies on multicultural leadership, this research can further serve as a bridge between Western and Chinese leadership theories, delving into the pragmatic application of this synthesis across diverse organizational settings. Additionally, from a longitudinal standpoint, examining the long-term impact of integrating these leadership styles on organizational performance and employee satisfaction remains an area for future research. Ultimately, considering its global relevance, further exploration of the universal applicability of integrated leadership approaches across varied cultural backgrounds and industries is imperative to authenticate their efficacy on a global scale.
CHAPTER THREE. METHODOLOGY

This chapter endeavors to offer a comprehensive elucidation of the methodology and research design utilized in the study. A mixed-method parallel design was employed for the investigation, incorporating interviews and surveys conducted with staff and leaders at New Oriental Xi’an School, aimed at comprehending their experiences, perspectives, and reflections. The primary objective of this study was to investigate the factors that guided the organization’s responses to external shock, the implementation of organizational changes, and the assurance of its adaptability amidst the surge of educational reforms. Furthermore, the study intends to unravel the complex interplay between Chinese and Western leadership philosophies to provide insights into the broader significance of leadership in guiding organizational change within a challenging multicultural environment.

During the phase of designing the research questions, an iceberg conceptual framework (refer to Figure 3.) was utilized to direct the inquiry. This framework aimed to enhance understanding regarding how leaders at New Oriental Education responded to policy reform and how their actions contributed to effective organizational change. Additionally, attention was given to the underlying ideological or cognitive factors influencing this process.

Figure 3.

Research Question Framework
The analysis has been structured into three tiers: surface, underwater, and contextual. The surface level examined the practices and concepts involved in the leadership process of implementing organizational change in response to external shocks. The underwater level delved into the underlying concepts, exploring how the interaction of Western and Chinese leadership perspectives influenced their approach to leading organizational change. Finally, the contextual factors surrounding the leadership process were scrutinized. This framework yields valuable insights into the leadership strategies, actions, and awareness required to propel organizational change in a complex environment.

Ultimately, the research question was formulated as follows:

1. What are the practices and concepts for the leadership process in implementing organizational change in response to external shocks?
2. How did the interplay of Western and Chinese leadership concepts shape their leadership approach to organizational change?

Research Design

Given that this study aimed to examine the organizational changes experienced by a Chinese private enterprise in response to policy changes and their theoretical foundations, a multi-stage mixed-method case study research approach was adopted. This methodological
approach involved a pre-stage thematic analysis and a parallel convergent mixed-method design. The pre-step thematic analysis provided sufficient theoretical basis and assumptions for the subsequent convergent step, and the parallel convergent design included both quantitative and qualitative components. The quantitative aspect comprised a survey questionnaire for current employees of New Oriental Education Xi’an School, while the qualitative component involved conducting in-depth interviews with selected leadership team members. Subsequently, the collected data underwent analysis using descriptive statistics and thematic analysis, respectively. The findings from both strands were triangulated to identify any divergence, convergence, or corroboration of theories within the dataset. See the process of research design in Figure 4.

**Figure 4.**

Diagram of the Research Design
Methodology

Parallel Convergent Design

This study employed a convergent parallel design within a mixed-method approach, wherein separate quantitative and qualitative datasets were collected and analyzed simultaneously. Subsequently, the results from both strands are combined to enable comparison or integration for final analysis (Creswell & Clark, 2017). By combining the results from both strands, a more comprehensive understanding of the research question can be achieved while also giving voice to participants with diverse positions within the same organization.

Quantitative and qualitative methods offer several advantages, including capturing diverse perspectives and gathering insights from various data sources (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). This approach contributes to a more nuanced and robust comprehension of the case study. In this study, quantitative data was collected through a survey instrument to capture the opinions and perceptions of general employees, while qualitative data was obtained through interviews with leaders. A comprehensive understanding of the scenario can be attained by comparing and merging different yet complementary data sources on the same topic (Morse, 1991). Questions such as the alignment of ideas between leaders and followers, areas of divergence, and the significance of these divergences have been addressed. The findings derived from these inquiries yield valuable insights and underscore significant aspects of the study.

Both time constraints and philosophical considerations influenced the selection of a convergent design for this study. The occurrence of policy changes, organizational change, and initial findings within a two-year timeframe necessitated a time-sensitive approach to gathering data through interviews with individuals directly involved in these events. Adopting a pragmatic and applied research philosophy informed the methodology selection, as it was consistent with
the overarching philosophical perspective of pragmatism guiding the research study. Pragmatism provides a comprehensive worldview that is well-suited to the study’s objective of exploring practical effectiveness (Creswell & Clark, 2017). Consequently, a convergent design was chosen to align with this paradigm and effectively advance the study’s objectives.

**Mixed-Method Case Study**

I opted for a mixed-method case study approach to examine the organizational change within New Oriental Education Xi’an School, as it represents a tangible, intricate, and significant entity reflecting the impact of China’s educational reform on the tutoring sector. The changes witnessed at Xi’an School spanned various dimensions, including alterations in business models, organizational structures, human resources, financial conditions, and market dynamics, all of which warranted thorough exploration and elucidation. Moreover, Xi’an School served as a representative case exemplifying the challenges and opportunities organizations face amidst external shocks prompting transformations, rendering it a suitable subject for analysis.

According to Yin (1981), a case study involves an empirical investigation of a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, mainly when the boundaries between the phenomenon and its context are ambiguous. Researchers across various social science disciplines utilize case studies to provide detailed and comprehensive accounts of specific social phenomena, explore underlying principles or causes, and test or generate hypotheses (Priya, 2021). Unlike other research methodologies, case studies do not rely on sampling or population-based approaches; instead, they focus on observing events over a specific timeframe. They systematically collect, interpret, analyze, and report case data (Priya, 2021). The organizational changes observed at Xi’an School emerged unexpectedly, compounded by both policy reform and the enduring repercussions of the global pandemic that transpired a year earlier. Hence,
depending solely on past experiences or preconceived notions to inform or analyze this change would have been inappropriate and could have led to erroneous conclusions. Considering the unique circumstances and contextual factors associated with this change, it provided an excellent opportunity for conducting a comprehensive case study analysis.

Cases enable individuals to confront real-world dilemmas and decisions, offering a perspective to assess challenges within the broader organizational, industry, and social context. Significantly, cases directly demonstrate how theory can be applied to practice and generalized from practice (Nohria, 2021), interpreting them as applicable to a pragmatic philosophical standpoint. Yin (2017) also discusses the role of case studies in theory generation or testing. He suggests that case studies contribute to theory development by identifying new variables or constructs, proposing new relationships or causal mechanisms, or refining existing theories.

At the outset of this study, I engaged in a brief informal discussion with both my former supervisor and colleague. I posed a common question to them: “Who, in your opinion, played the most critical role in driving the change?” Interestingly, their responses diverged. My former supervisor (B-Level manager) attributed paramount importance to the founder of the organization, Yu Minhong, citing his wise decisions and decisive change strategy that instilled confidence among senior leaders and charted the way forward. On the contrary, my former colleague (F-Level) underscored the importance of collective power in the change process, emphasizing the need to foster a culture of trust and support between leaders and followers. This variance in perspectives piqued my interest, considering their differing leadership roles, levels of involvement, and interpretations of the broader context. It prompted further inquiry into why individuals at various organizational levels hold divergent views on the same issue. This anecdote resonated with another critical aspect of the case study approach, involving theory
testing by examining how well a theory explains or predicts a phenomenon, comparing rival theories or hypotheses, or falsifying existing theories (Yin, 2017).

Within this study, it is intriguing to consider the concepts of transformational leadership and indigenous Chinese leadership as existing theories worthy of examination. While transformational leadership and charismatic leadership may account for my former supervisor’s perspective, which emphasizes the role of leaders with formal authority in driving change, it fails to encompass the alternative viewpoint that highlights the significance of the leader-follower relationship. It is worthwhile to explore how, in the case of New Oriental, a comprehensive explanation of effective leadership extends beyond attributing it solely to an individual’s attributes or competencies. Given the pervasive influence of dialectics in traditional Chinese culture and the transformative nature of leader-follower dynamics in indigenous Chinese leadership perspectives, effective leadership is more of a multi-party process. Contextual factors such as external shocks also play crucial roles.

This reflection aligns with the perspective of leadership as a process, underscoring a nuanced comprehension of leadership as a dynamic process of transformation and individuation (Wood, 2005). It underscores the interconnectedness and emergence of leadership within a complex social circumstance rather than conceptualizing it as a discrete relationship or identity between a leader and follower. Consequently, it emphasizes the significance of exploring collective dynamics and contextual factors contributing to effective leadership rather than solely focusing on individual attributes or qualities (Wood, 2005). Investigating whether transformational leadership is more effective, the extent to which Chinese traditions influence leadership, or if effectiveness results from combining Chinese and Western ideologies is crucial. Through conducting a case study on New Oriental Education’s Xi’an School, these assumptions
can be tested, thereby enriching our understanding and awareness of the leadership role in the change process. Moreover, this study can offer valuable insights and inspiration for similar organizations.

Establishing validity, reliability, and generalizability poses significant challenges in case study research. However, strategies exist to address these challenges and bolster the study’s robustness. One such approach involves leveraging multiple sources of evidence (Labaree, 2023). In my research design, I aimed to utilize documents, interviews, and surveys as the primary sources of evidence to fortify the study’s validity and reliability. The documents furnished valuable insights into the case’s organizational context and historical backdrop and helped me construct survey questions and interview guidelines. Conducting interviews with leaders provided diverse perspectives and a profound understanding of the phenomenon under scrutiny. Additionally, surveys furnished quantitative data from employees, facilitating the collection of standardized responses and further enhancing the reliability of the findings.

Methods such as triangulation, pattern matching, explanation building, time-series analysis, logic models, and cross-case synthesis have been identified as valuable techniques for corroborating research findings (Yin, 2017). The objective is to triangulate various forms of evidence to converge on the same research questions, thereby mitigating concerns about potential bias resulting from reliance on a single data collection method (Yin, 2009). In this case, triangulating leaders, followers, and current employees’ perspectives have been intriguing. Given the complexity of the change process, understanding how individuals with different roles and experiences respond differently to the same situation can offer valuable insights.

A more comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted reactions to organizational change can be attained by soliciting input from various stakeholders. Leaders provided insights
into their decision-making processes and strategic approaches, while followers offered perspectives on their experiences, challenges, and levels of engagement during the change process. Current employees can offer real-time perspectives and the long-term impact of the change. Triangulating these diverse viewpoints helped to unveil patterns, contradictions, and unique insights from varying perspectives. It facilitated a deeper understanding of how individuals perceive and navigate the complexities of the change process, shedding light on the dynamics between leaders and followers, the efficacy of communication strategies, and potential areas for improvement.

Having maintained close contact with my former colleagues and leaders at Xi’an School, I developed a keen interest in studying their organizational change process through a leadership lens. To my delight, the current leadership team of the organization shared their curiosity about effective leadership practices that facilitated successful change. They also expressed a genuine desire to gain professional insights that could assist them in similar situations in the future. With their enthusiastic support, I received permission to recruit participants within the organization.

Furthermore, New Oriental Education Xi’an School boasted an abundance of data sources that aligned with the requirements for data collection methods and were conducive to mixed methods in case studies. Through thematic analysis, descriptive statistics, and triangulation, I collected quantitative and qualitative data about Xi’an School before and after the organizational changes. These diverse data sources underwent comparative and integrated analyses, enabling me to effectively provide comprehensive and practical insights that addressed the research questions. Considering the abovementioned factors, a mixed-method case study research design was an ideal approach for my study. It allowed for the integration of quantitative
and qualitative data, ultimately leading to a more robust and insightful examination of leadership practices during the organizational change process.

**Sampling and Recruiting**

The sample for this study comprised current employees, including members of the leadership team at New Oriental Xi’an School who were directly involved in or affected by the organizational change process. Xi’an School was chosen as the sample pool due to its comprehensive organizational system and staff structure compared to other New Oriental branches. Additionally, it held a significant position in the K-12 business segment, which was more impacted by the policy change. According to the Human Resources Department report of Xi’an School for the first quarter of the fiscal year 2024, the school had 3,358 employees in August 2022. Following a streamline and lean restructuring, the total number of employees was expected to drop to 1,264 by August 2023. The organizational structure is depicted in Figure 5.
Figure 5.

Xi’an School Leadership Structure Chart
Quantitative Strand

A stratified random sampling technique was employed during recruitment to ensure the selection of a representative and unbiased sample. Each employee stratum’s sample size and sampling method, encompassing factors such as gender, position, and current/former status, were carefully determined. I anticipated the target sample size to range between 15-20% of the total employee population, comprising approximately 1300 individuals and 200 participants. However, the actual number of participants reached 327, which accounts for roughly 25% of the total employee population. The pursued gender ratio target of 7:3 for females and males was approached, with the actual respondents reflecting a ratio of 6:4, consisting of 98 females and 59 males who provided substantial survey responses.

Among the study participants, 37.7% indicated previous or current engagement in teaching positions, while 62.3% were employed in non-teaching roles. Regarding professional tenure, 21.6% represented individuals within the sample who were recently hired within the preceding year. 36.4% of participants reported 1 to 3 years of experience within New Oriental Education, with an additional 19.1% disclosing a range of 4 to 6 years. Moreover, 14.6% of respondents reported a tenure spanning 7 to 9 years, while 9.3% indicated a career history of 10 years or more.

Regarding educational attainment, the majority of respondents, constituting 80.9%, hold a bachelor’s degree, followed by 14.2% with a master’s degree and 0.6% with a doctoral degree. For political affiliation, a notable proportion of respondents align with various political entities: specifically, 25.3% identify as members or probationary members of the Communist Party, while 38.3% affiliate with the Communist Youth League, and 35.8% do not associate with any political
organizations. Similarly, concerning religious beliefs, the vast majority of respondents, totaling 98.1%, report no adherence to any religious faith, while 1.9% express religious convictions.

**Qualitative Strand**

The interview participants were selected from the current and former leadership team members of New Oriental Xi’an School who held a Level 6 position or above and had directly participated in the organizational change process. The recruitment process employed purposive and convenience sampling techniques to ensure participants possessed the most relevant knowledge and experience regarding change management at New Oriental Xi’an School.

The purposive sampling technique facilitated the selection of participants based on specific criteria and objectives, ensuring access to a targeted subset of the population with particular qualities or experiences. Conversely, the convenience sampling technique allowed for the efficient recruitment of participants who were readily available and accessible, thereby minimizing time and cost requirements (Etikan, 2016). By encompassing a diverse group of leaders from various levels and backgrounds, the interviews aimed to comprehensively understand participants’ viewpoints regarding change management within New Oriental.

The study sample encompassed 17 interviews, distributed as follows: one at the A-level position, five at the B-level position, five at the C-level position, four at the D-level position, and three at the E-level position. Within this interview cohort, five participants held female leadership roles, while the remaining individuals occupied male leadership positions. This stratified approach ensured representation across diverse leadership tiers, thereby facilitating a comprehensive analysis of the change management process within New Oriental Xi’an School. See the structure of the interviewee in Figure 6.
**Instrument and Data Collection**

During the preparatory phase, I meticulously examined numerous interviews, reports, and written works by Yu Minhong, a prominent figure at New Oriental. Yu Minhong holds the position of founder and CEO of New Oriental Education and is widely recognized as the spiritual leader and guiding force behind the organization. It is widely acknowledged that his ideas and speeches wield considerable influence over leaders’ decision-making processes across all echelons within the New Oriental Group. These materials were sourced from internal publications of New Oriental, personal blogs maintained by key leaders, interview recordings, and reports disseminated by media platforms such as Weibo and official WeChat channels. The synthesis of these findings served as valuable resources in formulating survey instruments for quantitative research and crafting interview prompts for qualitative inquiry.

In the quantitative strand of STEP 1, the survey instrument was employed to collect employees’ experiences regarding leadership in managing the organizational change process. By gathering quantitative data from the survey, valuable insights into organizational members’
perceptions were obtained, enabling the researcher to draw meaningful conclusions about the
effectiveness of New Oriental’s leadership in navigating organizational change. It also sheds
light on their self-perceptions and impact on the change process.

Conversely, the qualitative strand in STEP 1 utilized interviews to delve deeper into the
leadership experiences of New Oriental’s senior executives during the organizational change
process. Specifically, the focus was on the Xi’an School’s leadership team and their perceptions
of the diverse relationships within the organization. Through in-depth interviews, a nuanced
understanding of the leadership practices and the intricate dynamics within New Oriental was
captured, providing valuable insights into the organizational change process from the perspective
of key decision-makers.

**Quantitative Strand**

A meticulously designed survey questionnaire was crafted to evaluate the perceived
effectiveness of New Oriental’s leadership in managing organizational change in response to
policy changes. The questionnaire comprehensively covered various topics, including the
leadership style employed by New Oriental’s leadership, the communication strategies utilized,
the effectiveness of the change management process, and the overall impact of the change on the
organization’s performance. A balanced mix of closed-ended and open-ended questions was
incorporated to elicit diverse insights.

In order to maximize participant engagement and ensure a manageable survey length, the
number and types of questions were carefully tailored to gather pertinent information efficiently.
Likert scales and other response scales were utilized to capture nuanced opinions and perceptions
from the participants. Additionally, recognizing that the participants were native Chinese
speakers, the questionnaire was designed in Chinese. This approach aimed to accommodate the participants’ linguistic preferences and facilitate their ease of understanding and response.

The data collection process took place online in Xi’an, China. Distribution of electronic/online questionnaires commenced at the end of July 2023 and continued until the end of October 2023. Since this period typically represents a busy time for teachers, the data collection period was extended to accommodate their availability. Questionnaires were disseminated through internal email lists and WeChat groups to ensure broad participation. Each survey questionnaire was expected to take approximately 20 to 30 minutes, and participants were provided with and asked to sign a consent form before the official data collection phase began.

Qualitative Strand

The interview guide was carefully developed, comprising a well-structured set of questions to elicit comprehensive and insightful responses from the participants. It consisted of open-ended questions and specific probes designed to explore various aspects of the research topic. Follow-up questions were strategically employed to delve deeper into participants’ perspectives and experiences, fostering a rich and meaningful dialogue during the interviews.

A semi-structured interview format guided the exploration of key research questions, informed by the results of the pre-stage thematic analysis. The interview questions were crafted based on the findings of the pre-step thematic analysis and drew inspiration from the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (Muenjohn & Armstrong, 2008). This approach facilitated a comprehensive exploration of key research areas, including the interplay between Western and Chinese leadership concepts and participants’ perceptions of leadership effectiveness in managing the change management process. The interview guide adhered to the structure outlined in Figure 7.
A summary draft was initially prepared based on the interview data and analysis. This draft was shared with the interview participants, who were asked to review it for accuracy and resonance with their experiences. Feedback and comments from the participants were solicited, either in written or verbal form, and subsequently incorporated into the final findings or report. Techniques such as paraphrasing, summarizing, or asking follow-up questions were also employed during or after the interviews to confirm the understanding of the participants’ responses. Through member checking, the validity and reliability of the research were enhanced, ensuring that the participants’ perspectives were accurately represented in the final report.

To undertake this study, I traveled to Xi’an, China, in July and August 2023, conducting interviews with 17 participants. These individuals occupied various leadership positions across
different departments of New Oriental Xi’an School, with tenures spanning from 6 to 19 years, averaging 11 years. Sixteen participants were currently employed, and face-to-face interviews took place at New Oriental Tower, situated in the southern region of Xi’an. Meanwhile, two former participants were interviewed separately at a coffee shop, having departed from the organization at least six months prior. In addition, before the official interview, participants received and were asked to sign a consent form.

Notably, New Oriental Xi’an School had leased and utilized the building for nineteen years before acquiring ownership in 2021, formally designating it as New Oriental Tower. Having entered this establishment as a student in 2005, subsequently joining the organization as an employee in 2012, and departing in 2017, my return in 2023 elicited both familiar and unfamiliar sensations, evoking a blend of emotions. I harbored a curiosity regarding the growth and changes that had transpired during my absence for both myself and the participants, who also served as my former colleagues, and how these would impact the research.

Privacy Protection and Confidentiality

To maintain ethical integrity throughout the research process, careful attention was given to ethical considerations for both strands of data collection. A primary focus was on obtaining informed consent from all participants involved. It was imperative to ensure that participants fully understood the nature of the research and the implications of their participation. I clearly explained how their identifiable private information would be handled, managed, and disseminated.

Survey responses, interview audio recordings, transcripts, and other collected data were stored in encrypted electronic files on password-protected electronic devices, with restricted access granted to authorized individuals. To safeguard the confidentiality of participants,
personal identifiers were replaced with codes or pseudonyms. The coding key was securely stored in a separate and protected file location, linking the identifiers to the actual data. This ensured that participant identities remained anonymous and could not be linked to their responses. Additionally, stringent measures were taken to protect the collected data. All data were stored in encrypted electronic files on password-protected electronic devices, preventing unauthorized access. Physical storage devices were locked and securely stored, with access limited only to authorized individuals.

Appropriate statistical methods and data encryption techniques were employed to mitigate the risk of re-identification further. These measures helped ensure that individuals could not be identified or linked to their responses, thus safeguarding their privacy and confidentiality throughout the research process. By upholding these ethical standards, the research aimed to maintain the trust and confidence of the participants and uphold the principles of responsible and ethical research practices.

Data Analysis

Pre-step Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis was applied to explore the leadership concepts and practices within New Oriental Education, along with its organizational culture, values, and ethos. This qualitative method was employed to identify, analyze, and report themes within the collected dataset. These themes represent patterns or categories encapsulating the essence or significance of the data (Creswell & Clark, 2017).

The collected documents underwent analysis using NVivo qualitative software, facilitating efficient and systematic data structuring, thus enhancing the coding and analysis process. Upon importing the data, a thorough review was conducted to familiarize myself with
the content, accompanied by detailed note-taking on critical points relevant to the research questions and objectives. Subsequently, initial codes were generated to label specific information segments within the data. These codes served as descriptive labels, including categories such as change vision, motivation, and innovation, alongside in vivo codes reflecting the language used by key figures. The coding process was conducted manually or with the assistance of NVivo’s auto-coding feature.

Following the coding phase, the generated codes were organized into themes and subthemes, encompassing broader and more abstract concepts or topics within the data. Visualization tools were utilized to aid in identifying and grouping related codes into potential themes, which were then reviewed and refined. During the review process, I evaluated the themes’ coherence, consistency, and relevance concerning the critical research questions and objectives. Depending on the analysis, adjustments such as merging, splitting, renaming, or dropping of themes were made, and subtopics were created to capture more specific aspects if necessary.

Upon finalizing the themes, each was defined and named, and clear and concise definitions were provided, elucidating their meaning and relevance to the main research questions and objectives. The analysis of themes derived from the documents provided insights informing the development of robust research instruments and facilitated the triangulation of results obtained through the parallel convergent process, thereby enhancing the validity and reliability of the findings. Additionally, the discussion focused on how the identified themes directly addressed the research questions and objectives, exploring their interrelationships and connections with existing literature or theory.
**Quantitative Strand**

The questionnaire was distributed to employees across various departments of New Oriental Xi’an School using Tencent’s Survey Platform. Eventually, 327 individuals completed the questionnaire, with 162 valid responses collected. The response rate was 49%, and the valid responses accounted for approximately 12.5% of the total employees. Upon receipt of the completed survey responses, I collected and prepared the data for statistical analysis.

I verified the collected data’s completeness, accuracy, consistency, and validity to ensure data quality using the survey platform’s statistic tool and Microsoft Excel. This process included eliminating duplicate responses, removing outliers, checking missing values, and standardizing the data format. Additionally, I coded and organized the data into a spreadsheet to optimize the value of insights obtained and improve the overall quality and reliability of the findings.

Descriptive statistics, such as mean, median, mode, standard deviation, and frequency, provided a comprehensive overview of the primary features of the collected data. This analysis summarized the demographic characteristics and response frequencies of the participants. Tables, charts, or graphs were employed effectively to enhance comprehension and visualize patterns and trends within the data. Response scales, including Likert scales, captured participants’ nuanced opinions and perceptions. The data was labeled and organized into themes and subthemes using codes and memos. In addition, I conducted comparative analysis methods to discern patterns and trends within the data, comparing and contrasting themes across participants and different groups. Throughout this process, I carefully explored alternative interpretations and uncovered hidden insights within the data.

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1 Based on statistics from the Human Resources Department of Xi’an School, as of August 2023, there were approximately 1300 employees at Xi’an School.
**Qualitative Strand**

As an intercultural practitioner, I acknowledge the substantial influence of language disparities on comprehension and knowledge construction. All interviews and questionnaire surveys were conducted in Chinese to uphold authenticity and precision in understanding the participants’ meanings, metaphors, and emotions. I utilized in-vivo coding for select keywords and phrases in the transcription process, which was also conducted in Chinese. Translation into English commenced only after a comprehensive analysis of all themes preceding the drafting of the findings.

For the discussion on findings in Chapter Four, rather than employing direct translation, key concepts or terms were phonetically presented with explanations to mitigate potential information loss during intercultural translation. Diligent attention was dedicated to ensuring the accurate conveyance of viewpoints and emotions from the original language throughout this process. This approach takes into account cultural variances in concept interpretation, which are extensively addressed in the analysis. Additionally, the leadership levels of interviewees were indicated by letters, while numbers denoted their sequence; for example, B3 represents the second-highest level and the third interviewee.

To elucidate the content of the collected data, I employed NVivo to assign initial codes. Within the NVivo platform, I meticulously selected comments and annotated them with codes representative of various themes and ideas. Furthermore, I deliberated upon potential criteria or themes associated with Western or Chinese traditional leadership paradigms, posited to influence New Oriental Education’s leadership initiatives.

The analytical process involved identifying patterns or themes in the codes across different interviews and survey responses. I utilized NVivo to group and organize the codes into
broader themes that encapsulated the main aspects of the research topic. Subsequently, within each theme, I created subthemes to capture more specific or nuanced aspects of the data. I reviewed the alignment of the themes with the data and research questions and used NVivo to refine, edit, merge, split, or reposition the themes at different levels. Additionally, I compared and contrasted themes across different participant groups, including employees and individuals occupying various levels of leadership positions, using the functionalities of NVivo. See significant themes and subthemes in Table 1.

**Table 1.**

Significant Themes and Frequency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme name</th>
<th>Sub-theme</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Mentioned by</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Double Reduction policy</td>
<td>Challenge</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Post- Effect</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Government Relation</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership process</td>
<td>Leadership as a Process</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Influence</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Authorization</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Support</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LDP</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational culture</td>
<td>Cultural inheritance</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Collective Identity</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Learning Culture</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Value</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western vs. Chinese leadership</td>
<td>Compare and Contrast</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chinese Conceptual of Leadership</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leadership Skills, Traits, and Practices</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The identified themes were given clear definitions and names and detailed descriptions. I wrote memos or summaries for each theme using NVivo to elucidate their meaning and relevance to the research question and provide supporting evidence. Visualizations such as charts or diagrams were employed to enhance comprehension of the themes and their relationships.

**Convergence of Results**

In identifying areas of convergence and divergence, I employed a triangulation approach, combining quantitative and qualitative data. By utilizing a comparative analysis approach, I
aimed to uncover patterns and trends within the data. The integration of findings from both stages was then presented in a joint display, providing a comprehensive analysis.

Considering that the survey participants primarily consisted of employees, while the interviews targeted individuals in leadership roles, comparing the results from these two cohorts was deemed crucial. This comparative analysis enabled me to examine emerging relationships and different perspectives between the groups reflected in the data. Furthermore, implications were drawn based on the converging findings and critically examining limitations.

Moreover, I thoroughly analyzed any substantively significant results to understand their implications comprehensively. This meticulous analysis contributed to developing recommendations for future research or practical applications.

Summary

This chapter outlined the methodology, research design, data collection, and analysis methods employed in this study. The research adopted a mixed-methods case study design to collect and analyze quantitative and qualitative data. Through surveys and in-depth interviews, we explored the interactions among leadership styles, communication strategies, cultural inheritance, and leadership ideologies from both Western and Chinese perspectives. This approach allowed us to investigate the role of effective leadership in organizational change from various angles and provided valuable insights into effective leadership in organizational change. These findings served as a robust foundation for subsequent analysis and interpretation. In data analysis, some key findings pertained to organizational culture, collective identity, integrating Western and Chinese leadership practices, and discovering indigenous leadership concepts in China. These findings were elaborated on in detail in the following chapter.
CHAPTER FOUR. THEMES AND FINDINGS

In this chapter, an in-depth examination of the transcripts and data garnered from the case study will be conducted. The primary objective of this analysis is to elucidate how New Oriental Xi’an School has responded to external shocks by achieving organizational change. Furthermore, an exploration will be undertaken to scrutinize the influence of Western and Chinese leadership paradigms on the approach to leadership amidst organizational change within this transformative trajectory. As mentioned in the methodology chapter, a case study was chosen because it is an empirical investigation of a contemporary phenomenon in a real-life context, which allows for a detailed and comprehensive description of a particular social phenomenon, exploration of the rationale or reasons behind it, and testing or proposing hypotheses (Priya, 2021). New Oriental Education Xi’an School, after experiencing the sudden Double Reduction policy and being impacted by the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, responded rapidly and implemented organizational changes. This provides significant insights into studying organizational changes and leadership in Chinese private enterprises.

The analysis in this chapter presents five principal themes derived from encoding and categorizing interview transcripts and survey questionnaires into thematic clusters. These five themes are 1) The impact of Double Reduction policies as external shocks on organizations; 2) The pivotal role played by organizational culture and collective identity formation in the trajectory of organizational change; 3) The comparative assessment of Chinese leadership perceptions vis-à-vis Western leadership paradigms among Chinese leaders; 4) Chinese Conceptualizations of Leadership; 5) Skills, Characteristics, and Practices of Chinese Leadership.
The Impact of Double Reduction Policy as External Shocks

The Double Reduction Policy refers to the *Opinions on Further Reducing the Homework Burden and Off-Campus Training Burden of Students in Compulsory Education* issued by the Ministry of Education (MOE) of the People’s Republic of China in July 2021, in short, *Double Reduction*. This policy’s primary purpose is to protect minors’ physical and mental health, promote the comprehensive development of students, alleviate family economic pressure, achieve educational equity, regulate the for-profit education and tutoring market, and counter excessive intervention by capital in education. The interviewees in this study encompass a range of leadership positions, spanning from Vice President of New Oriental Education and Principal of Xi’an School to entry-level team leaders within Xi’an School. They boast extensive teaching or management experience and demonstrate a deep understanding and awareness of the implications and obstacles presented by the Double Reduction policy.

This section comprehensively analyzes the Double Reduction Policy’s impact on the New Oriental Education Xi’an School and its stakeholders. The analysis examines the policy’s goals and outlines its effects on the Xi’an School’s business operations, which have led to reduced operational efficiency and profitability. It also addresses the associated challenges faced by the school’s leadership.

Furthermore, this section includes employee perspectives, providing personal accounts that shed light on the emotional and professional consequences of the policy. These accounts cover workforce reduction, career uncertainty, and declining morale. The discussion also covers the organizational strategic responses, detailing New Oriental Education’s shift to new business areas, effective talent management, and charitable activities as a reaction to the demands of the policy.
In addition, the section delves into the dynamics of government relations, focusing on the interaction between New Oriental Education and government agencies. It highlights the importance of adherence to regulations, cooperative efforts, and mutual respect as critical factors. Finally, the section contemplates the potential long-term strategic effects of the Double Reduction Policy on New Oriental, suggesting a possible alignment with the country’s developmental goals.

**Policy Impact on Business Operations**

The impact of the Double Reduction policy on New Oriental’s business scope and profits was a common theme mentioned by almost all the interviewees. The policy has led to a significant contraction in these sectors, particularly in the tutoring business for the K-9 stage. Interviewees used various data and terms to describe this impact, such as *only remaining*, *reduction, collapse, drain*, and *catastrophe*. One interviewee reported (B3\(^2\)) that prior to the implementation of the policy, the company had a significant presence in over 100 cities. However, following the policy’s release, they experienced a considerable reduction in operations, now covering only approximately sixty cities nationwide. Reflecting on the workforce impact, an interviewee indicated a loss of nearly two-thirds of the workforce(C3). Financially, another interviewee highlighted the severity of the situation by revealing that the school’s revenue plummeted from around 1.4 billion to a mere 360 million at the most critical juncture(C2).

During the interviews, some respondents also highlighted that the policy has fundamentally altered the organization’s operational landscape, bringing previously overlooked issues to the forefront. They indicated that amidst the rapid development of the tutoring business in China, many problems or challenges might have gone unnoticed due to the overall growth.

\(^2\) I use letters to indicate the interviewees’ leadership levels and numbers to denote which interviewee they are. For example, B3 means the second-highest level and the third interviewee.
However, these issues became more pronounced following the implementation of the Double Reduction policy (D3). It underscores how changes in the external environment can accentuate previously overlooked problems, compelling the organization to confront them. One interviewee explained:

Confronted with the challenges of the Double Reduction policy, school leaders encountered implementation difficulties and faced challenges to their leadership efficacy. Many interviewees used the term ning ba [twisted] to describe this situation. It was noted in the interviews that leaders were required to adhere to strategic decisions from the group’s top decision-making team but experienced difficulties in executing them. The restriction on certain compulsory education subjects presented a dilemma for evaluating branch school principals. They must balance compliance with policy requirements while meeting shareholders’ profitability expectations. However, the demands for growth often fail to align with anticipated business expansion. These emerging dilemmas may impact the overall operations and decision-making of the leadership team at Xi’an School. For example, one interviewee argued:

In the execution process, the dilemma for branch leaders is that Mr. Yu (the founder and president of New Oriental Education) explicitly states in all communication meetings that any school’s involvement in K-9 subject-related products is strictly prohibited. The penalties are severe once a violation is detected, as it is a strategic-level decision. However, the assessment mechanism for branch schools has not fully considered the impact of the policy on revenue. Consequently, when a principal fails to achieve profit targets, it becomes a source of great stress and ning ba feelings. (B1)
Some interviewees also highlighted that the school needed to increase profit per unit hour after the policy release without reducing teachers’ remuneration. It prompted adjustments in class sizes and substitute teaching hours to maintain employee income, yet it also resulted in a notable impact on teaching quality and teachers’ workload. Simultaneously, market pressures have posed challenges to developing art or non-disciplinary subject tutoring, underscoring the school’s economic and market environment pressures. One employee stated:

After the policy was released, it was indeed ning ba. On the one hand, people always talk about the market economy; on the other hand, it is a survival issue for so many employers. For the company to continue, it must make profits. However, developing art or non-disciplinary subject businesses takes time in this large market environment. It feels like there is no hope in the short term. (E1)

**Policy Impact on Brain Drain.**

The steep decline in business scope and profits, coupled with layoffs and an uncertain future, has significantly affected employees in multiple aspects, particularly their passion, confidence, career expectations, and income. Interviewees expressed various emotional reactions to this impact, including loss, turmoil, lack of confidence, pain, and loss of hope. These emotions were rooted in employees’ anxieties about their future, as well as cognitively shifted societal identity and reputation. One interviewee stated:

When the Double Reduction hit, there was widespread upheaval among my colleagues. Confidence plummeted across the board. However, confidence is more valuable than gold back then. Many began questioning whether this industry could still be a positive driver for the nation’s development. The sentiment was one of considerable turbulence. (D3)
As another interviewee explained, there was also pain from watching their past accomplishments and new opportunities being erased. Due to the downsizing, some employees eagerly anticipating thriving in new positions were recalled and reassigned to their former roles, which significantly undermined their confidence and motivation, leaving them to mechanically and dispassionately sit idle in the office (C4).

During the interview, the organization’s significant challenge was highlighted: the need to transform team mentality and nurture team confidence. The interviewee expressed worry and confusion about the difficulties in shifting the team’s mindset and creating a supportive environment. They emphasized that the lack of energy for team morale posed a more formidable challenge than business-related concerns. This shift in team mentality could result in diminished expectations for the future among employees, affecting their dedication and professionalism. Moreover, it could weaken employees’ sense of responsibility towards students and parents, establishing a negative cycle. An interviewee pointed out that the mindset of many frontline employees shifted from “I want to take my career seriously and strive for excellence” to a take-each-day-as-it-comes approach. This change was due to uncertainty about the longevity of their jobs and whether these positions would continue to provide them with financial security and a sense of achievement as before (B1).

The policy also resulted in an organizational-level brain drain. Initially, a decision made at the headquarters, which, in hindsight, may have been somewhat rushed, dictated that large-scale redundancies were necessary to tackle the crisis. Consequently, Xi’an School adhered to this recommendation by laying off numerous employees. However, it was later realized that there was a need to rehire talent. The layoff process incurred significant financial costs, and the subsequent demand for talent created new recruitment challenges. It resulted in enormous
financial pressure and disrupted the team structure. The layoffs and subsequent recruitment may have disturbed the original team synergy, necessitating more careful management. Additionally, the recruits might bring different experiences than the previous team, impacting the school’s overall human resources capacity. An interviewee noted that after spending approximately 170 million RMB in severance pay to persuade employees from the terminated departments to leave, Xi’an School soon realized that the organization still has a renewed demand for talent(B1).

Moreover, in the initial year following the enactment of the Double Reduction policy, the company faced a formidable challenge concerning its newly recruited employees. Some exceptionally promising and talented newcomers were informed of the potential necessity to depart after completing merely one semester of courses. This situation posed a considerable obstacle for the company, especially amidst a talent scarcity. The uncertainties not only impacted the morale of new employees but also precipitated resignations from critical managers and experienced teachers. The departure of such talent disrupted the stable functioning of the business and depleted the reservoir of valuable experience and resources amassed over the years.

Numerous interviewees have underscored the direct impact of the policy on human resources. The ambiguous future of the industry has dissuaded many top talents from entering or remaining within the field. Historically, New Oriental Education has predominantly recruited fresh graduates from numerous prestigious universities across China and overseas institutions. However, this trend has been notably curtailed, with fewer individuals opting to pursue careers in the industry. The immediate consequence of this talent drain is a significant setback to the industry’s prospects and innovation potential (B5; B2; C6).

Furthermore, as the school pursued growth in emerging businesses, there was a concern that these nascent roles, starting from ground zero, might not generate immediate returns and
could be seen as unable to directly contribute value to the institution, potentially marginalizing current employees in such roles. One interviewee noted:

I openly expressed to the principal that sometimes I feel like my position lacks value. Regardless of how much emphasis he or the group’s leaders put on the importance of these emerging businesses, they must be vigorously developed. But from the perspective of those of us in these positions, the actual output is minimal, there is no revenue in the short term, and we do not know when things will improve. I feel like we have been devalued. (D2)

Additionally, employees hired for emerging business positions externally encountered challenges related to salary disparities between what New Oriental offered and industry standards. For instance, when recruiting employees from the new media industry, the company commonly faced difficulties meeting salary expectations, making recruitment more challenging. An interviewee cited the new media positions as an example, noting that the offered salaries are significantly below the industry average, which deters professional practitioners from joining (D2).

**Dialectical Perspectives Towards Policy**

Despite the negative emotions evoked by its impact, the interviews revealed an overall positive attitude and a penchant for dialectical thinking among the interviewees. This optimistic mindset was intricately connected to the organization’s core values, particularly the ethos of finding hope from despair, a theme that will be explored more deeply in subsequent discussions. Various interviewees offered diverse perspectives on the impact of the Double Reduction policy on New Oriental’s organizational change and innovation. Some believed that while the policy presented significant challenges and difficulties, it compelled the organization to streamline its
structure, adjust its business model, and reorganize its talent pool, ultimately enhancing its development and competitiveness. Conversely, others viewed the policy as an opportunity that provided new avenues for growth and development, prompting New Oriental to innovate its business practices and modify its business model, thereby enhancing operational efficiency.

Based on the survey findings, it is evident that most respondents hold an optimistic outlook regarding the policy and its consequent impact. A noteworthy 63.6% of participants expressed strong agree (rated 10) with the effectiveness of the suite of countermeasures and organizational changes implemented by New Oriental Education, viewing them as instrumental in fostering the organization’s future growth. Furthermore, 16% and 11.7% of respondents rated the initiatives with 9 and 8, respectively, indicating considerable support for the strategies deployed. Additionally, 72.8% of respondents strongly agreed that developing emerging businesses, such as Eastbuy and New Oriental Tourism, positively influenced the group’s organizational growth. Moreover, 68% of respondents expressed confidence in the group’s future expansion into non-traditional fields.

A notable aspect is that with the closure of numerous campuses, New Oriental found itself with surplus teaching equipment across the country, including desks and chairs. While other tutoring companies opted to sell these items at reduced prices, New Oriental’s founder, Yu Minhong, chose to donate these desks and chairs to primary and secondary schools in impoverished mountainous regions of China. One employee remarked:

Indeed, Mr. Yu took action. He chose not to convert those items into profit, preceding any financial gain, and instead donated them to numerous schools. My elementary school, situated in a rural area, was among the beneficiaries. I vividly remember being present when the Xi’an School went to deliver desks
and chairs, and I even had the chance to take a photo with my primary school teacher. It was a profound moment for me, realizing that those desks and chairs were now part of my school. Mr. Yu’s sincerity was unmistakable; there was no deception, no ostentation—his donation was genuine. (D3).

This initiative has garnered widespread public acclaim, bolstered brand reputation, and expanded market influence. However, its profound enhancement of internal members’ self-confidence and collective sense of honor is of greater significance. Implementing the Double Reduction policy had once subjected many practitioners in the tutoring industry to severe criticism and censure from societal discourse, being perceived as the main culprit of educational inequality. Consequently, numerous employees of New Oriental harbored doubts and experienced distress regarding their professional honor. Nevertheless, this donation initiative has given them long-awaited praise and recognition amidst numerous critiques.

**Reflection on Business-Government Relations**

Following the implementation of the Double Reduction policy, the interviewees recognized New Oriental’s adept handling of its relationship with the government as a private enterprise. Being compliant, legal, and socially responsible, both the top leadership of the New Oriental Education and Xi’an School demonstrated a willingness to communicate, negotiate, and cooperate with government entities actively. They exhibited respect for government decisions and guidance. The interviewees emphasized that collectively, the company maintained a non-confrontational stance throughout the process, actively seeking to understand, adjust, and refine its business model. They believe that New Oriental Education’s approach is rooted in considerations of its brand, reputation, social responsibility, and long-term development.
Moreover, deep down, they agree with and recognize the government’s intentions and decisions. As a large corporation, the company demonstrates a strong sense of social responsibility by respecting and cooperating with national educational policies and public demands. Additionally, in exploring emerging business areas, several interviewees expressed a commitment to developing products that align with market economy principles, China’s overarching policies, and the Communist Party’s governing philosophy.

Reciprocal to New Oriental’s reaction, relevant government departments have also shown respect and support for businesses affected by the policy. One interviewee reflected:

All levels of government have been, and I would use the words polite and respectful, which I feel the most. They would invite us to meetings, and I think we talked to the districts, city, and province representatives. Under the leadership of the principal, we had countless communications with them. During that period, we had to correspond with the government every week, writing situational reports. They were concerned about the significant size of Xi’an School, with tens of thousands of students. They wanted to have discussions to understand the challenges that our company is facing. (E1)

Another interviewee mentioned that it is not only the local government of Xi’an but also the National Development and Reform Commissions (NDRC) of other provinces and cities that have proactively reached out to understand the difficulties businesses face after noticing the potential turmoil caused by policy changes. They are willing to offer help and seek solutions. Consequently, many interviewees have analyzed their options and strategic positioning in various new business trajectories, considering the long-term perspective. Of 17
respondents, 10 emphasized the importance of aligning the organization’s development strategy with the national long-term developmental direction.

Following the reflection on the impact of the Double Reduction Policy on both the organization and individuals, as voiced by the interviewees, our discussions gradually transitioned towards exploring the underlying principles of responding to external shocks and facilitating organizational change. Contrary to my initial anticipation of focusing solely on technical challenges, interviewees consistently underscored the pivotal role of organizational culture in navigating crises and facilitating organizational transformation. This observation further solidified my perception of New Oriental Education’s corporate culture, which strongly emphasizes emotional factors and a profound attachment to the organization. Interviewees displayed heightened enthusiasm for delving into the relationship between organizational culture and emotional dynamics. Moreover, as the interviews progressed, the significance of the collective identity of New Oriental Education’s employees became increasingly evident, offering valuable insights for conducting a comprehensive analysis of this case.

The Pivotal Role of Organizational Culture and Collective Identity During Organizational Change

This section investigates the formation of the collective identity, Xindongfang Ren, as influenced by organizational culture and values. The analysis commences with scrutiny of cultural inheritance, emphasizing its pivotal role in organizational development, team cohesion, and individual growth. It underscores the necessity of a resolute mission, consistent value system, and unique organizational culture for sustained progress.

Embedded within the organizational culture is a value system that merits further examination. The foundational values and ethos of New Oriental are dissected, including the
impact of the organization’s funder. These principles include integrity and responsibility, genuine care, perpetuating learning awareness, and pursuing excellence, which is vital to the organizational culture. Moreover, the discussion expands on how the organizational culture and robust value system engender a sense of belonging. It contemplates the congruence between the organizational culture and individual values, thus nurturing members’ shared sense of purpose and ambition.

In conclusion, this section probes into the essence of Xindongfang Ren and the association of individuals with the collective identity. It examines the elements that shape collective identity, such as cognition, emotion, and organizational culture, and their influence on self-esteem and organizational cohesion. It provides insights into the organizational dynamics of New Oriental, emphasizing the interplay between individual identities and the overarching corporate culture.

**Cultural Inheritance**

The organizational culture of New Oriental Education is a focal theme in this case study, as the construction and continuity of organizational culture are closely tied to the development and identity construction of its internal members. Interviewees from various perspectives and levels revealed the significant role and value of cultural inheritance in organizational development, team cohesion, and individual growth. They highlighted the dynamic and diverse nature of cultural inheritance.

Interviewees generally believe that the long-term development of an organization requires a steadfast mission, a stable value system, and a distinctive organizational culture. These elements constitute the core genes of a company, capable of rallying people and maintaining competitiveness in adversity. Interviewees also view cultural inheritance as the fundamental
driving force for organizations to maintain a sense of mission, pursue excellence, innovate, and adapt to challenges at different stages and in various environments. One interviewee stated:

The sustained expansion of a company hinges on its mission and cultural values, guaranteeing that those who prioritize these aspects will engage in their endeavors with determination, resilience, and a focus on the long term. (A1)

The interviewees also pointed out that cultural inheritance involves selfless sharing and transmission from top to bottom, old to new, and from within to outside. It requires genuine care, responsibility, and a spirit of pursuing excellence and doing the right things. An interviewee mentioned that in the past, his leader always seized every opportunity to provide bonuses and benefits to team members. Now, he imparts these valuable experiences to his team, fully aware of how wonderful this feeling is and its impact on themselves(B5). Achieving cultural inheritance demands an open mindset, adaptability to change, and a continuous self-driving force for improvement. It is not about exchanging interests or controlling power but conveying values and influencing others.

The cultural inheritance at New Oriental Education is seen as comprehensive, covering various aspects such as organizational mission, values, leadership style, and in-group dynamics. Some view it as focusing on crucial aspects like their business, products, technology, and talents. Others see it as an inclusive transmission encompassing diverse business forms, cultures, values, and innovations. Underlying shared values, principles, leadership style, and group dynamics, members form deep emotional bonds, reciprocal support, and a growth-oriented relationship. For each individual, this represents a continuous absorption and transmission of knowledge, skills, and thinking patterns and a driving force for self-realization and transcendence in learning, work, and life. One interviewee mentioned:
We have been working on building the talent pool system for about 15 years. Such a system and selection processes form a self-evolving circle within New Oriental. To some extent, these circles represent symbols of New Oriental at different developmental stages. I believe this cultural tradition can convey a lot for us, whether in talent selection or organizational culture. Cultural inheritance serves as a transmitter of ideology. (B3)

This perspective highlights that cultural inheritance is not only a process of transmission and succession but also a process of innovation and enhancement. It demands continuous transformation and improvement by both the group and individuals based on culture to adapt to different environments and needs and achieve higher goals and values. It also reflects the dynamic and diverse nature of cultural inheritance. It changes over time and space and is not isolated but interacts and communicates with other factors and domains. An interviewee observed that a company’s performance will likely improve with robust leadership and an influential team. The analogy of fertile soil and quality seeds described the optimal combination of a positive culture, upright values, and exceptional individuals. When these elements are synergized, the result is both additive and multiplicative, enhancing the organization’s overall effectiveness (A1).

**Value System**

The culture of New Oriental is collectively shaped by the organization’s vision, mission, philosophy, and core values. This framework gradually evolves from the initial motto, Cong Juwang Zhong Xunzhao Xiwang [finding hope from despair], to a refined set of principles. The organizational culture remains dynamic, continuously updated, and developed. In the survey, respondents were asked, “If someone were to ask you what the New Oriental spirit is, how would
you answer?” Interestingly, 43 out of 163 respondents accurately cited *Cong Juewang Zhong Xunzhao Xiwang*.

Many interviewees mentioned the spirit of New Oriental: *Zhuiqiu Zhuoyue* [pursue excellence], *Tiaozhan Jixian* [challenge limits], and *Cong Juewang Zhong Xunzhao Xiwang* [find hope from despair]. These essential beliefs motivate them when experiencing the challenges of *Double Reductions*, the pandemic, and even some unexpected crises in the past. It is not merely a slogan; instead, they genuinely perceive it as a principle they have adhered to in the past, presently uphold, and will continue to embrace in the future. Survey findings indicate that 91.4% of respondents *strongly agree* or *agree* with the assertion that the New Oriental spirit significantly influences the organizational change process within Xi’an schools.

In their daily work and life, they actively practice New Oriental values: *Chengxin Fuze* [integrity and responsibility], *Zhenqing Guanai* [genuine care], *Haoxue Jingjin* [be curious to learn], *Zhigao Xingyuan* [aim high and go far]. Many interviewees chose to summarize a story or event with one of these value phrases during the interviews. Interestingly, when they chose any of these phrases, we did not need to explain much during the conversation because, as former *Xindongfang Ren*, we share a common understanding of this value system.

The founder’s values lead to positive guidance, giving back to society, and thus creating a positive reputation. Several interviewees mentioned the impact of New Oriental’s founder, Yu Minhong’s influence on them. They perceive him as a leader with social responsibility, educational aspirations, and positive energy. His values have been inherited and reflected in New Oriental’s organizational culture, contributing to the company’s positive societal reputation. An interviewee stated:
At the core is the value held by Mr. Yu. Over the past 30 years, he has built a set of values for the New Oriental brand. Although the value system may not be his name, he undoubtedly led everyone in the collective creation of this value system. For example, in *Cong Juewang Zhong Xunzhao Xiwang*, this value is ingrained in our blood. When anyone here encounters despair, even if it has not been overtly expressed, surely in everyone’s subconscious, we are all moving towards finding hope. (D4)

The interviewees suggested that although there might be variations in individuals’ understanding of these values, the mission and vision are unified. Such uniformity makes individuals highly adaptable and open-minded when transitioning between roles. One interviewee mentioned their diverse work experiences in different positions within the organization, attributing their ability to adapt to various work environments and requirements to the consistency of their values. Aligning with New Oriental’s values has enabled them to maintain a positive and steadfast attitude when facing challenges and changes(D3).

**Doing The Right Thing.** *Doing the right thing* is associated with having upright values. It helps them make decisions without hesitation, adhere to their principles, and avoid doing things against their conscience(D4). *Doing The Right Thing* is also related to New Oriental’s commitment to contributing to society. The interviewees believe that while New Oriental engages in business to make money, it is equally important whether it can bring about more positive social effects. Whether it is the donation of desks and chairs after the Double Reduction policy, supporting rural revitalization through live commerce Eastbuy, or venturing into new businesses like New Oriental Tourism to enhance domestic tourism quality, the interviewees see these actions as New Oriental’s social responsibility and their social responsibility.
**Genuine Care, and Integrity and Responsibility.** These values are frequently cited as core principles and reflect the organization’s commitment to people-oriented traditional Chinese values. Interviewees recounted the substantial support they received from colleagues and leaders when they were new, highlighting their appreciation for New Oriental Education’s authentic concern for its employees. This approach is highly regarded within the organization. Furthermore, many leaders prioritize the welfare and growth of their team members, thereby strengthening emotional bonds. One interviewee shared:

> Theoretically, we are supposed to be professional managers. The term *professional manager* itself lacks emotional connotations. It is because we inject emotions into our work that this term becomes warm. Normally, the leader’s requirement for you is to do a good job and achieve results together; they get paid, we get paid, and it is over. But in our process, we incorporate our own emotions. Once emotions are added, things become warm. Many managers initially think they should focus solely on performance, but as time passes, they also consider emotions in everyone’s lives and development. (B5)

*Genuine Care* can assist both employers and employees in managing and adjusting to changes by offering psychological support and fostering a sense of security. This support may manifest in seemingly small gestures, such as being attentive to the emotional well-being of team members. One interviewee emphasized the importance of team members maintaining a delightful mood when coming to work, indicating a leader’s value in fostering a happy work environment (C4). This sense of care helps employees feel connected and valued within their workplace community, reducing feelings of isolation and building trust. Consequently, it enables employees to approach changes positively rather than resisting or fearing them. It, in turn, diminishes
resistance and associated risks, thereby enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of organizational change processes.

In times of external shocks and crises facing the organization, the value orientation of Genuine Care and Integrity and Responsibility prompts leaders to prioritize taking care of employees. Many interviewees mentioned the approach taken by Xi’an School during the Double Reduction, where, through genuine care, the school provided compensation to laid-off employees and collaborated with the local government to find new jobs for laid-off staff. It made the employees feel respected and secure, reducing discontent and potential legal disputes and avoiding public relations crises. Genuine Care is a responsibility and commitment, a way to show respect and provide security to employees, creating a sense that they are not abandoned. Such experiences deepen the sense of belonging and recognition within the organization, further strengthening the collective identity of Xindongfang Ren. One interviewee mentioned:

The boss (Mr. Yu) doesn’t want anyone to suffer. Even in the toughest times, we (the group executives), although experiencing salary reductions, still have certain guarantees, which are even higher than those of many peers or even those in other industries. The boss was willing to let the company lose money in the toughest times but could not let the managers or employees suffer losses.

(A1)

Surveys can also support the perspectives shared by the interviewees. The survey results reveal that 96.3% of respondents endorse their leader’s integrity and ethical behavior, while 93.8% agree that their leader genuinely cares for and prioritizes their well-being.

Pursue Excellence. Another value that assisted New Oriental and its employees in working together through the crisis was Pursue Excellence. Several interviewees mentioned that
organizations and individuals who pursue excellence can quickly learn and acquire new knowledge and skills to cope with changes and challenges in the external environment. They do not stick to old ways of thinking and doing things but dare to experiment and innovate to find better solutions.

*Pursue Excellence* continuously encourages individuals and organizations to elevate their business capabilities and professional competence, maintaining a competitive advantage and a leading position in intense market competition. According to survey findings, 93.8% of respondents affirm that their leaders are dedicated to fostering a culture emphasizing innovation and creativity. They are unsatisfied with current achievements and levels but set higher goals and standards, aiming for more remarkable breakthroughs and innovations. One interviewee pointed out that the influence New Oriental has on individuals lies in cultivating an atmosphere of dissatisfaction with the status quo and a relentless pursuit of improvement. When the collective strives for progress, individuals who do not seek advancement cannot integrate into this collective. However, this process also fully respects the diversity of individual desires, such as some pursuing excellence in teaching abilities while others seek development in management roles. In this process, everyone pushes each other forward (D3).

For customers, organizations and individuals that persistently *pursue excellence* can consistently provide higher-quality products and services, meeting and surpassing customer and societal needs and expectations. They will not overlook the feedback and evaluations from customers and society but actively listen and improve, seeking better cooperation and win-win situations. One interviewee noted:

We want everyone to have a good experience. This is our core value: *Integrity and Responsibility*. These cultural values influence many specific actions. I
think these deep-rooted ideological factors determine that we do things differently as a group. These principles are quite simple. However, persisting in this way, many a little makes a mickle. Many entrepreneurs or companies lose their way in the process, being led astray by interests, short-term gains, and capital, losing their initial intentions. (A1)

The uniqueness of the New Oriental value system is also related to the role of a teacher. This role and its moral perception also profoundly impacted the interviewees. The interviewees mentioned how their role as teachers was not only to impart knowledge in the teaching process but also to pass on values such as integrity, resilience, and rationality to their students, which would have a positive impact on the student and would, in turn, influence their own value choices, enabling them to adhere to their principles and beliefs when faced with difficulties or temptations. One interviewee stated:

During the teaching process, as they (teachers) talk, they gradually align with this direction. When encountering situations, they first consider whether they can act with integrity and kindness. They talk to students every day, so in the end, this becomes a value choice. (B1)

Interviewees also generally agreed that New Oriental’s values promote dedication, which enables employees to contribute their abilities and wisdom at work to provide valuable services and products to society and customers, as well as to give back to their own growth and development at work to create value for their careers and lives. Interviewees also expressed their values of dedication and being able to realize and enhance their self-esteem at work.

Many interviewees believe their values are constantly adjusted and perfected through interactions in New Oriental and other environments. During the interview, I mentioned to a
senior colleague that he once said a sentence that greatly impacted my work philosophy, and I still adhere to that principle. His response was as follows:

This is the characteristic of Xindongfang Ren; this sentence, in fact, is not even my creation. When I joined here, my leader handed it over to me through the word of teaching, and then I passed it on to you. (A1)

New Oriental’s values are a diverse yet consistent system, influenced by founder Yu Minhong and all employees and customers. There is a solid internal motivation that helps New Oriental maintain its stability and growth in the face of external shocks.

**Perpetuating Learning Awareness.** This is another of New Oriental’s core values, and as an educational institution, this seems unsurprising. Some interviewees believe that *Perpetuating Learning Awareness* aims to enhance their abilities and qualities, keep pace with the times’ development, and realize their life plans and values. One interviewee mentioned:

*Xindongfang Ren* is always on the journey of learning, or you could say, always pursuing knowledge and innovation. After all, many of us come from a teaching background, are intellectuals, or are individuals with well-planned life paths and high expectations for personal development. Therefore, New Oriental has established many learning opportunities, whether in terms of leadership sequence development and promotion or teacher sequence development and promotion, providing everyone with ample space and opportunities for learning. (B3)

*Perpetuating Learning Awareness* was more than just a talk for many of them. During the interviews, eight people met me in their offices. Behind each interviewee’s desk was a bookshelf filled with many books on management and leadership, biographies, history books, etc. During
our conversations, several of my former colleagues casually pulled a particular book off the shelf and opened it up to show me the source of knowledge they had benefited from when mentioning it. I was given multiple recommendations for works they thought might be of interest to me as well. Such an atmosphere of shared learning seems to have permeated their daily lives and radiated outside the circle.

Many interviewees regard Perpetuating Learning Awareness as a self-driven and self-disciplined way of constantly seeking new knowledge and skills, challenging themselves, adapting to innovations, growing, and developing. They believe that New Oriental as an organization has the influence and incentive of the culture to cultivate perpetuating learning awareness. They enjoy the resources and support from here and inherit the philosophy. They view the organization as a platform and a home for collective learning, growth, and development. They actively participate in the innovation and transformation processes, share insights, and openly communicate within the New Oriental community, which facilitates the creation of a sense of belonging.

**Sense of Belonging**

Generally, a sense of belonging refers to the extent to which an individual feels accepted, respected, supported, and recognized, closely related to self-esteem, confidence, and happiness. Interviewees commonly believe that New Oriental’s organizational culture aligns with their personal values, making them feel like members of a team with a sense of purpose and pursuit. Almost all interviewees mentioned that New Oriental’s culture and philosophy were significant reasons for choosing and staying with the organization. They see New Oriental Education as a platform that allows them to fulfill their dreams and values, providing a joyful and growth-oriented environment.
The interviewee generally revealed a profound connection and identification with New Oriental culture and philosophy. They consistently expressed a high level of trust and respect for leaders and colleagues within the organization. They view encountered seniors as mentors and role models, experiencing selfless sharing and guidance and gaining access to a broader platform and opportunities. At the same time, they have built deep friendships and collaborative relationships, enjoying the fruits of mutual assistance, learning, and collective creation.

It is worth noting that some interviewees refer to colleagues or subordinates as Xiao Huoban [childhood friends], perhaps indicating the more intimate and profound friendships they have established within the organization. It is evident that employees at the Xi’an School have formed a close-knit working community where mutual respect, trust, support, and healthy relationships are emphasized. Interviewees highlight that they have found partners here, engaging in learning, communication, sharing, and encouragement, creating a sense of having a reliable group of friends.

During times of crisis and impending challenges, it often becomes an opportunity to demonstrate a sense of belonging and commitment among organizational members. Several interviewees mentioned that despite the external shocks and organizational changes, which have led to fluctuations in job stability and income levels, they chose to stay because the mentor-type leaders who significantly influenced them are still present. They can continue learning and growing here (E1; D2; E2).

When discussing the policy’s impact and uncertainties, some interviewees express complete confidence and expectations for New Oriental’s future. They believe that the organization can adapt to and lead changes in the market, providing them with more development opportunities and possibilities. They are willing to follow the organization through
corresponding transformations and innovations and contribute to the process. An interviewee mentioned:

(The reason for not choosing to leave initially) There are two reasons. First, I feel that New Oriental provides us with a sense of security. Second, I have been with New Oriental for many years unless the company stops doing anything. As long as the company still has tasks to accomplish, regardless of what they are, even if they are not education and tutoring but something else, I feel that in these years with New Oriental, the abilities I have developed and my sense of security are quite substantial. ... We have some excellent leaders, even if we open a hot pot restaurant together now, I think compared to others, we still have our advantages. So, I have confidence in New Oriental. We will likely succeed if we have a direction and something to do. (D1)

In addition, interviewees expressed openness to job reassignments and a readiness to explore different roles within the Xi’an School, viewing them as opportunities for personal development. One question in the survey asked employees how willing they were to try new business departments or positions within New Oriental Education, even if they were not their previous expertise or jobs. The employees rated their willingness on a scale from 1 to 10, where 10 meant strongly agree and 1 meant strongly disagree. The results showed that most employees (96.3%) strongly agreed or agreed with this idea, as 113 chose 10, 23 chose 9, and 20 chose 8. Only 6 employees chose 7 or 5, and none chose lower than that.

The survey results revealed that the employees of New Oriental Education were highly adaptable, innovative, and eager to challenge themselves and acquire new skills. This attitude not only benefited the company’s business growth and talent development but also embodied the
company’s culture and values. The data suggested that most employees were motivated to explore new possibilities in various business domains, crucial for enhancing the company’s innovation and diversification.

Identity Construction

The profoundly ingrained cultural inheritance, value recognition, and sense of belonging within the organization enables its members to always proudly maintain a collective identity, whether they are still in the organization or not. During casual conversations with my former colleagues and supervisors, a familiar term came up for me before the interview began: *Xindongfang Ren* [New Oriental people]. Everyone seems to like to use this term to refer to individuals involved or involved in the New Oriental Education. People often say, “*Xindongfang Ren* are generally like this,” “We, *Xindongfang Ren*, would do this.” Unintentionally, I had even become accustomed to using this term to define myself. Despite having left the organization for over five years, whenever I mention it to others, I naturally say, “as a *Xindongfang Ren*.” When I realized this, I could not help but link it to the construction of collective identity.

Collective identity refers to individuals perceiving themselves as part of an organization or group and thus developing a sense of identification and belonging. This process is influenced by various factors, such as individuals’ cognition, emotion, motivation, values, social environment, organizational culture, structure, and goals. Collective identity can enhance individuals’ self-esteem, self-efficacy, self-consistency, self-differentiation, and self-expression, as well as promote organizational cohesion, loyalty, innovation, adaptability, and learning ability (Albert et al., 2000; Bose & Patnaik, 2015; Lu, 2023). The construction of *Xindongfang Ren* is inseparable from its organizational culture, particularly within the Xi’an School and the internal members’ adherence to core values. As a result, an important theme emerged during the
interview process. Therefore, this section will focus on the relationship between cultural inheritance, values, and the construction of collective identity.

In collectively constructing the identity of *Xindongfang Ren*, several commonalities among the interviewees can be summarized. Firstly, they deeply understand and share consensus on New Oriental’s values and mission. An interviewee explained:

I think our company can achieve better internal consensus compared to other companies. Our internal training is well-executed, allowing people with similar values to work together. ... In simpler terms, it’s like a priceless bond. Huawei has a saying, ‘Only by learning the same can we think alike, only by thinking alike can we speak in harmony, only by speaking in harmony can we act in unison.’ I believe that only by acting in unison can we achieve the collective benefit, and only with collective benefit can we endure in the long run. Applying it to New Oriental is quite fitting—reading the same books, attending the same training, and collectively achieving success. Eventually, we will work harmoniously to expand the business, embodying the core principles found in many Chinese private enterprises. (A1)

A few years ago, New Oriental Education launched a nationwide famous slogan on Teacher’s Day, *Xindongfang Laoshihao* [Hello, teachers from New Oriental!/ Teachers from New Oriental are great.] This advertising phrase cleverly utilizes a double entendre. Internally, it expresses gratitude and appreciation to the organization’s core members— the teachers. Externally, it communicates to the public that New Oriental’s teachers are excellent. All of these indicate their clear understanding of New Oriental’s mission and vision, and they align with
them. One interviewee stated that organizational values are crucial in bringing together a group of individuals who share similar ideas (A1).

Additionally, the interviewees expressed a strong sense of belonging and warmth towards New Oriental’s culture and atmosphere. They repeatedly emphasized that the culture and atmosphere of New Oriental make them feel comfortable and happy. They used words like warmth, no barriers, intimate, etc., to describe their relationships with colleagues and leaders, indicating that they experience a family-like warmth and support within the organization. They also believe New Oriental’s culture and atmosphere are essential factors stimulating their creativity and potential. One interviewee noted:

A good culture can bring people together in adversity and help the company overcome difficulties. It has been proven that many people stayed with the organization during the toughest times, such as the pandemic and the education policy changes. Now, as we see the dawn, everyone is more determined and firm about the future. (A1)

Finally, many interviewees expressed strong pride and honor in New Oriental’s achievements and accolades. They take pride in and feel confident about New Oriental’s achievements and honors, considering them essential factors for gaining social respect and recognition. Respondents were asked to select the three most salient identities in the survey questionnaire. Among them, 85.8% of people ranked Xindongfang Ren as their top choice, followed by 46.3% choosing educator, and 36.4% selecting teacher.

Another characteristic of Xindongfang Ren is their open attitude and adaptability to organizational changes and role transitions. Interviewees exhibit different attitudes and adaptability levels toward changes, such as transitioning from offline to online, from education to
entertainment, and from being teachers to becoming influencers or tour guides. Some interviewees see these changes as necessary and positive, allowing New Oriental to stay abreast of the times, better aligned with market and customer demands, and enable them to become more diverse and innovative. Others find these changes challenging and stressful, causing discomfort. However, if these changes are necessary to make New Oriental more diverse and open, they are still willing to maintain a positive attitude to balance the need to adapt to changes while preserving their original identity and style.

The collective identity of Xindongfang Ren shares similarities, such as identification with New Oriental values, culture, achievements, and a sense of belonging and pride. However, they also have different characteristics, such as their definition of Xindongfang Ren, and their attitudes toward organizational change vary based on their experiences. These features reflect the experiences and feelings of the employees in their work and life at New Oriental, as well as the position and influence of New Oriental in the tutoring industry. The findings from the survey reveal that 79.7% of respondents strongly agree or agree with the statement, “Xindongfang Ren’s identity instills confidence in the organization’s capacity to navigate external challenges and crises.” Additionally, 91.9% of respondents agreed that this identity cultivates greater loyalty to the organization, while 91.3% believe that Xindongfang Ren’s identity fosters an open and adaptable attitude towards role adjustments within the organization.

The collective identity of Xindongfang Ren is also dynamic and vibrant, evolving and changing with the interviewees’ organizational development and personal growth and transformations. The collective identity of Xindongfang Ren is challenging and full of potential, requiring interviewees to maintain their core values and features amid New Oriental’s changes
and transformations while showcasing their creativity and innovation in response to these changes and transformations.

This section delves into the organizational culture of New Oriental Education and its influence on the collective identity known as *Xindongfang Ren*. It highlights the significance of cultural inheritance in organizational development, team cohesion, and individual growth. The narrative demonstrates how the organization’s mission, values, and leadership style foster a strong sense of belonging and commitment among its members.

In the following section, the focus shifts to the interaction between Chinese and Western leadership concepts. Building upon the established foundation of New Oriental Education’s cultural values, the discussion will explore how these principles align with or diverge from Western leadership paradigms. This comparative analysis will provide insights into the distinctive blend of leadership styles that propel the organization forward within a global context.

**The Comparative Assessment of Chinese Leadership Perceptions vis-à-vis Western Leadership Paradigms among Chinese Leaders**

This section examines the integration and influence of Western and Chinese ideas on leadership development practices within New Oriental Education. It commences with exploring leadership development practices, wherein members of New Oriental share their perspectives on leadership tools and cognition, emphasizing the significance of self-awareness and emotional intelligence. Subsequently, attention is directed towards New Oriental Education’s talent management strategies, elucidating systematic programs to cultivate leadership and excellence.

The discussion highlights the organization’s emphasis on teaching performance as the traditional index of talent development and the value of professional knowledge in non-teaching roles. Furthermore, the section underscores the company culture’s promotion of leadership
through innovative guidance rather than rigid instruction. It underscores integrating practical experience with theoretical knowledge, emphasizing the importance of hands-on action and learning from real-world scenarios.

The section finishes with a discourse on the fusion of philosophies, offering insights into harmonizing traditional Chinese leadership concepts with Western knowledge. It advocates for a versatile leadership style capable of adapting to diverse tasks, objectives, and workplace cultures, focusing on the mutual pursuit of individual and communal success.

**New Oriental Education’s Leadership Development Practice**

When asked about their personal experience of leadership development within the organization, the relationship between practice and theory emerged as a recurring theme. Interviewees had varied perspectives on the importance and connection between practice and theory. Some perceived their development as progressing from practical management techniques to a higher level of philosophical understanding, achieved through a combination of practical experience accumulation and textbook knowledge. Others emphasized the significance of the practice, stating that the leadership development workshops they provided for department colleagues were based on the combination of work philosophy and real-life scenarios rather than purely theoretical courses. Furthermore, some interviewees bluntly stated that “act first” is crucial, believing one should take action first, then learn and correct, rather than learning formulas and solving problems like children. It can be seen that respondents generally consider practice to be more important than theory, or at least complementary to theory, rather than theory taking precedence. One interviewee stated:

I feel that practice is more important. It is about *acting first*. Through experiences like the Double Reduction, I learned that everything starts with
taking action. Don’t overthink it because it is useless. You might as well just start doing it. If problems arise, learn from the process and determine what to do next. I feel like this approach might be better. (C4)

Interviewees demonstrated a rich and profound understanding and experience regarding the tools and cognition involved in leadership development. Some believe that highly developed management tools or models from the US and European countries are the foundation of leadership development but not the entirety. They highlighted the need for deeper elements such as self-awareness, emotional intelligence, and philosophical-level reflection, considering these essential for leadership development. One interviewee noted:

Leadership is not a skill but an attitude, a perspective on things, people, and oneself. I believe the essence of leadership is to have one’s ideas, judgments, and choices rather than being constrained by the ideas or patterns of others. (C6)

The interviewees have also demonstrated keen observation and reflection on the influence of different environments and self on leadership development. They generally recognized that New Oriental Education is a good platform that gives individuals many opportunities and resources to connect with excellent people and events and ample opportunities to try and practice many new tasks. Some respondents believe that their leadership development occurs within the internal environment of New Oriental, achieved through teamwork where everyone shares the same goals, learns from each other, motivates each other, and supports each other. Such an environment is ideal for realizing one’s values and visions. One interviewee stated:

As the organization undergoes changes and further development, I can implement many ideas and concepts here and achieve my expectations. (C2)
The leadership development advocated by New Oriental’s organizational culture goes beyond imparting instrumental management methods. Leadership development is described as a cyclical process from practice to theory and vice versa. The organization’s preferred approach to nurturing leadership is not an indoctrinating education but creative guidance. Leaders generally acknowledge the importance of creating a space for subordinates to learn, grow, and achieve goals independently while providing necessary support and feedback. This approach aims to stimulate subordinates’ initiative and creativity, empowering them to advance and elevate collectively. The survey results revealed that 93.2% of respondents strongly agree or agree that their leaders provide feedback and recognition for their achievements, and 93.8% of respondents agreed that their leaders are delicate to create an environment that values creativity and innovation.

In this organization, leadership practice involves taking action first, then learning and adjusting. Theories or formulas should not confine individuals but adapt flexibly based on practical situations, continually experimenting and improving. Leadership practice is also described as a service based on business requirements, demanding leaders to integrate external knowledge with internal experience to foster business development.

**New Oriental’s Talent Management Concepts and Approaches.** National-wide, New Oriental Education has launched programs aimed at cultivating outstanding talents and enhancing leadership, including talent selection and training at different levels, such as Ying Cai[Excellent Talent], Dong Cai[Building Talent], and You Cai[Outstanding Talent], which have been systematically developed and implemented for more than ten years, reflecting the organization’s emphasis and investment in talents, as well as its diversified and personalized cultivation approach to talents. In addition, the talent training model focuses on personalized
customization, i.e., providing different training programs and incentives according to the characteristics and needs of the talents so that they can find their development direction and goals, enjoy personalized attention and support, and achieve personalized growth and value. Encourage internal mobility through job rotation, exchanges, or different types of challenges, enable talents to switch and migrate between different positions and departments to broaden their horizons and thinking, enhance their abilities and experience, and improve their competitiveness and innovativeness.

The core philosophy of New Oriental’s talent development strategy in the past can be summarized as *Jiao Er You Ze Shi* [promoting by teaching], which means promoting one’s position through excellent teaching to gain more leadership opportunities. The traditional talent development model at New Oriental Education uses teaching excellence as the fundamental criterion and evaluation system for talent. Teaching performance serves as the basis for talent promotion and development while teaching practice is considered the pathway for talent training and development. This model reflects New Oriental’s educational philosophy and corporate culture, aligning with the organization’s primary business and market demands. This theme appears three times in the interviews, with the interviewees starting as frontline teachers and gradually advancing to managerial or leadership roles. They believe New Oriental’s talent development strategy effectively enables them to achieve their career goals and contribute value.

An interviewee stated:

> I was originally a physics teacher. Later, I became the head of the teaching program... Last year, I applied for the Outstanding Talent Plan’s leadership development program. Fortunately, I passed the selection process. Then, the principal and leaders felt I needed to change this position after being selected.
Coincidentally, the Individualized Study department needed such a position.

Some issues arose and needed to be addressed, so I adjusted my work. Since I participated in this talent development program, it requires you to rotate positions and undergo training and experience. (D3)

By participating in New Oriental’s Talent Program, the Interviewees received recognition and support from their principals and directors, leading to job changes, promotions, and more opportunities for exercise and experience. It shows that New Oriental’s talent development strategy can provide customized training and incentives according to the characteristics and needs of individuals, thus promoting the growth and development of talents.

However, this tradition also reflects some shortcomings and issues in the talent development strategy, namely, excessive reliance on talent with a teaching background, overlooking the importance of professional knowledge and theoretical learning on non-teaching related business. It has led to the loss and challenges faced by some talents. Viewing the strategy from managerial or executive perspectives, interviewees have criticized and reflected on it. They believe New Oriental’s talent development strategy has limitations and cannot adapt to new fields and challenges due to a lack of diverse specialized talents and proficiency in new knowledge and practices(D2).

The strengths and weaknesses of New Oriental’s talent development strategy are evident. The advantage lies in cultivating and motivating talents through excellent teaching, providing customized development opportunities and practical experience, and facilitating the growth and development of talents. However, the disadvantage stems from an over-reliance on talents with teaching backgrounds, neglecting the importance of knowledge and theoretical learning in cross-industry areas, resulting in the organization’s loss and challenges.
Leadership Development Program. New Oriental’s emphasis on talent development is also reflected in providing comprehensive leadership training. All interviewees indicated that leadership development training programs have been consistently available since they joined New Oriental. Survey data shows that 40.1% of respondents reported participating in leadership training more than once since joining New Oriental Education, while 22.8% expressed that although they have not yet participated, they are eager to do so when given the opportunity in the future. For those who received the development program, the survey results revealed that 64.7% of respondents strongly agree that leadership development training positively impacts their career, with 35.3% indicating agree. Furthermore, 63.1% strongly agree that these trainings contribute to their growth as effective leaders, while 30.8% express agree with this sentiment.

However, feedback from interviewees who have undergone leadership training warrants in-depth exploration. They hold diverse perspectives on the content and format of the training. Those who acknowledge the effectiveness of such training believe that leadership cultivation requires certain common principles and methods coupled with continuous self-awareness and reflection. Some interviewees argue that some leadership theories are validated based on successful outcomes and cannot be learned through training or theory. They believe leadership primarily comes from exploration and decision-making in practice rather than being replicable or imitable. One interviewee stated:

Many existing so-called leadership cases are distilled under the premise of success. However, in reality, when you face a new challenge, whether it’s external factors or internal factors, it’s not quite the same. So, sometimes, I doubt that leadership may not be learnable or is difficult to replicate. (B5)
Overall, interviewees see the advantages of training in providing leadership theories and models, helping them broaden their awareness and learn new perspectives and tools, such as strategic canvases and vision boards. Successful cases and experiences assist interviewees in learning good practices and methods. Some training opportunities enhance self-awareness and reflection, aiding interviewees in improving their leadership skills. For example, leadership coaching, values reflection, and cultivating open communication skills offered by a consulting company are considered helpful. Interviewees believe these trainings are most valuable in expanding awareness and improving leadership mindset. They expect leadership training to enhance self-awareness, encourage introspection, and update their perspectives and cognitions. One interviewee reflected:

Some of the MBA courses I have taken are not aimed at helping me do specific business tasks; they broaden my cognition, help me improve my leadership skills, enhance my self-awareness, and enable me to have a more comprehensive understanding of the world. It’s even possible that my perspectives may be updated and iterated upon. (D4)

However, there are areas where these training programs need improvement. The main issues revolve around content that does not align with practical business and management scenarios, causing interviewees to perceive the content as vague, theoretical, and lacking practicality and relevance. Additionally, the training does not consider the individual personalities and styles of the trainees, making them feel that the content is rigid, uniform, and lacking flexibility and diversity. The training format also fails to capture the interest and engagement of the interviewees, resulting in a perception that the content is boring and lacks attractiveness and interactivity. One interviewee pointed out:
Sometimes, these training sessions, to be honest, may have good intentions, but in terms of our actual level of acceptance or the efficiency of learning, sometimes the form outweighs the content. The presenters may be very serious, and the organizers may also work hard, but for the listeners, due to the methods and content not being very effective, we move on after listening. (D2)

Interviewees have varying degrees of acceptance regarding the application and benefits of training, as they perceive differences in the effectiveness and value of the training programs. Furthermore, during the interviews, an interesting phenomenon gradually emerged: the interviewees have, to some extent, clarified the differences and comparisons between Chinese and Western leadership within leadership training programs. It leads to the subsequent discussion on the integration and influence of these two types of leadership on leadership development.

**Interviewees’ Understanding of Leadership in Traditional Chinese Perspectives and the Western Perspectives**

After discussing their experiences and reflections on leadership development training, the focus of the questions almost invariably shifted to a deeper consideration—comparing and evaluating Chinese traditional leadership perspectives with Western leadership studies.

From the interviewees’ responses, Chinese indigenous leadership philosophies mainly include ancient philosophical ideas such as Confucianism’s *Doctrine of the Mean*, Daoism’s *Wu Wei* [governing by non-action], and Sun Tzu’s *Art of War*. They also included the ideas of some outstanding contemporary Chinese companies or entrepreneurs, such as Huawei and Alibaba. Notably, many interviewees and survey respondents emphasized Maoism’s influence on their individual and professional development. These ideas emphasize the goodness of human nature, the importance of emotions, the art of balance, the dialectics of collective and individual, and
flexible strategies. Interviewees believe that Chinese indigenous leadership philosophy can help enhance their moral cultivation, mental maturity, emotional management, and more, enabling them to face challenges and dilemmas in work and life. One interviewee mentioned:

Having upright values essentially upholds our traditional belief that Renzhichu, Xingbenshan [human nature is inherently good]. Some principles we have always upheld, such as “giving in order to receive” and “benefiting oneself through altruism,” are concepts passed down from our ancestors. (D1)

In terms of interpersonal relationships, it helps them navigate social complexities, teaching them how to communicate, collaborate, coordinate, and compromise with different individuals, ultimately achieving team goals and interests. Notably, respondents believe that Chinese indigenous leadership philosophy can foster an open and inclusive mindset, teaching them to respect and draw inspiration from diverse cultures and ideas, facilitating better adaptation and innovation. One interviewee noted:

I advocate the Daoist principle of ‘doing nothing, and yet everything gets done.’

In today’s context, this concept is quite accurate. It means creating an environment where everyone can work and strive with an open and inclusive mind. (C6)

According to the summarized responses, they are also familiar with Western leadership or management theories, including the works and contributions of Jack Welch’s Winning, Amazon’s business model, and Japan’s Kazuo Inamori management theory, among others. These theories emphasize clear goals, standardized processes, scientific mechanisms, and practical tools. Interviewees believe Western leadership theories primarily impact efficiency, providing tools and promoting self-drive. Western leadership theories help them improve work efficiency and quality
by setting clear goals, indicators, plans, and processes, enabling rapid and accurate execution and feedback. Additionally, Western leadership theories assist them in mastering and applying various practical tools and methods, achieving data-driven and quantifiable analysis and decision-making. Interviewees also specifically mention that Western leadership contributes to cultivating and showcasing their charm and influence, achieving breakthroughs and accomplishments through self-drive, self-improvement, and self-innovation. Many interviewees expressed similar beliefs that Western theories are more tool-oriented, making them more convenient because they are readily available models that can be applied directly (C1).

As expected, interviewees do not adopt an either-or attitude between the two but emphasize integrating Chinese indigenous leadership philosophy with Western leadership theories for innovation. Depending on their position, experience, age, and other factors, interviewees choose different leadership theories to guide their work and management. One interviewee noted:

I think, for example, cultivating moral character and self-cultivation, cognition alone is not enough; at this point, traditional Chinese culture is used to make oneself more inclusive and open-minded, enabling better problem-solving. (B2)

The survey results indicated that 58.6% of respondents perceive their leaders as incorporating both Chinese and Western leadership theories and practices into their daily work. Regarding attitudes toward statements assessing the effectiveness or maturity of Western leadership research compared to Chinese indigenous leadership, the predominant response for each statement was neutral, indicating neither agree nor disagree.

Furthermore, from the distribution of leadership roles among the interviewed participants, it appears that junior or mid-level leaders tend to lean towards Western leadership theories. This
preference arises because these theories are more tool-oriented and practical, assisting them in quick implementation and problem-solving. On the other hand, senior leaders lean more towards Chinese leadership philosophies as they are more philosophical and idea-oriented, aiding them in handling complex interpersonal relationships and strategic decision-making. One interviewee stated:

From this perspective, the foundational aspects within me, the most fundamental things at the core, are influenced by Chinese ideas. However, the managerial techniques in everyday operations, such as setting KPIs or motivating teams, tend to be more tool-oriented and approach-focused, influenced more by the West. (D1)

Interviewees believe in optimizing their work and leadership practice by combining different leadership theories based on the nature of their tasks, goals, and the work environment at different levels. In general, for specific transactional tasks, Western leadership theories are considered more suitable because of their emphasis on efficiency and quality, helping managers standardize and quantify task completion. For abstract strategic or adaptive tasks, Chinese leadership philosophies are deemed more appropriate due to their emphasis on balance and flexibility, assisting leaders in adaptation and innovation:

In terms of getting things done, the leadership styles from the West are more practical. However, as my position increased, I got more involved in interactions with people and relational dynamics. In this regard, the influence of Chinese classical philosophy may become more prominent. (C1)

Also, the interviewees pointed out that adapting different leadership theories to improve their work and management is imperative according to their different personalities, values, and
study habits. Generally speaking, for more direct, paranoid, and heroic personalities, it is more suitable to use Western leadership theories because they align with their personal charisma and leadership and can help them stand out and achieve. Meanwhile, for more moderate, calm, and relation-oriented personalities, it is more appropriate to use Chinese leadership philosophies because they align with their moral character and emotional management, which can help them harmonize and collaborate. Among many theories, Taoist thought seems to be more popular among the leaders in this organization. One interviewee noted:

I think Taoism philosophy has had a greater influence on me. The people around me don’t necessarily rely on specific rules or regulations to drive them. They already possess strong self-motivation, self-management skills, and self-awareness. In my work, I prefer being around such individuals. Our organization has numerous leaders but is very open and inclusive here, allowing us to be different. (B3)

The interviews show that Chinese traditional leadership philosophy and Western leadership theories complement and promote each other in practice rather than mutually excluding or canceling each other. In New Oriental Education, the interviewed individuals have integrated and innovated upon both a traditional Chinese leadership philosophy and Western leadership theories to varying degrees and in different ways. They suggest a need for balance between individual heroism and teamwork, asserting that future leaders should incorporate both individual excellence and self-motivation and the ability to collaborate and communicate within the collective. One interviewee stated:

Integration is crucial. It’s similar to traditional Chinese and Western medicine because there’s no one-size-fits-all solution. Many Western theories are based on
Western enterprises’ development history, political system, and economic background, while China has unique aspects. (A1)

These answers reflect the interviewees’ intercultural influences on the learning and development of leadership. They integrate Western leadership theories and tools with traditional Chinese culture and wisdom. These leaders may flexibly apply different leadership styles and methods in different contexts and stages to adapt to diverse needs and challenges. On the other hand, these opinions also reveal the interviewees’ dual pursuit of individual and collective leadership. They seek excellence and self-drive in individual heroism while pursuing balance and harmony in the collective. They demonstrate different values and goals to achieve outcomes and meanings at various levels and roles. These insights could contribute to the academic field of leadership studies by revealing Chinese leaders’ leadership characteristics and dynamics and their similarities and differences with Western leaders. Additionally, these insights may guide intercultural leadership education and training by highlighting the leadership needs, challenges, and potential solutions and approaches.

The following section will delve deeper into the Chinese conceptualization of leadership. It will explore how these traditional philosophies, focusing on balance and flexibility, intersect with and diverge from Western leadership theories that prioritize efficiency and specific goals. By examining these contrasting perspectives, we aim to extract a nuanced interpretation of leadership that integrates cultural insights with practical applications, offering a richer, more holistic framework for understanding leadership dynamics in a global context.

**Chinese Conceptualizations of Leadership**

This section provides an in-depth examination of leadership concepts within a Chinese organizational context, focusing on the linguistic and cultural nuances that shape intercultural
leadership. It delves into the distinct roles and perceptions of leaders and managers, their influence on organizational change, and the dynamic interaction between leadership and management roles. Additionally, it emphasizes the significance of self-identification in leadership roles, using metaphors to illustrate leadership and the multifaceted nature of leadership as a process. The section concludes by reflecting on the impact and importance of leadership, highlighting the crucial role of adaptability, creativity, and relational aspects in achieving organizational objectives.

Before delving into a detailed discussion of leadership and its processes, it is essential to acknowledge the notable linguistic and cultural differences inherent in this case study, constituting a significant aspect of intercultural leadership worthy of exploration in this research. For example, while there may be similarities between the meanings of leader and manager in the Chinese context and the definitions of these terms in Western leadership studies, there are also nuanced contextual differences. Furthermore, based on my experience within this organization, I have observed varying preferences for using these terms in the daily work of different individuals. Therefore, my interviews began with the question, “Do you perceive yourself as a leader or a manager?”

A Dialectical Perspective on Leadership and Management.

The diverse responses revealed that the interviewees hold varied understandings and identifications regarding the distinctions, roles, and evolution of leaders and managers. However, certain commonalities emerged amidst this diversity, such as a focus on innovativeness, service orientation, and teamwork. Additionally, the interviewees positioned themselves as either leaders, managers, or both based on their roles, responsibilities, and perceptions of the
organization. Some interviewees also expressed their aspirations and experiences transitioning from managers to leaders, indicating personal growth and development.

These perceptions significantly impact organizational change amidst external shocks, shaping employees’ needs, expectations, attitudes, participation, adaptability, and growth. Ultimately, they influence the effectiveness and outcomes of organizational change processes.

**The Distinction Between Leaders and Managers.** One of the most evident themes in the interviews is the distinction between leaders and managers, a topic explored by almost all interviewees from various perspectives and criteria. Generally, leaders were perceived as occupying a higher echelon, being more innovative and influential, prioritizing team development and goal attainment, and excelling in motivating and guiding team members. Conversely, managers were regarded as occupying a relatively lower tier, being more focused on technical aspects and data-driven decisions, prioritizing the enforcement of team rules and processes, and displaying excellent proficiency in controlling and supervising team members.

One interviewee at Level 10³ exemplified this contrast: “The essence of leadership is to empower others, while the essence of management is to leverage existing resources and capabilities. (A1)” An interviewee at Level 5 believes that “management uses tools to restrict people within a certain range. Leadership is an intangible energy, while management is an effective tool. (E2)”

**Self-Identification of Leaders and Managers.** Another significant theme evident in the interviews is the self-identification of interviewees as either leaders, managers, or both, influenced by their roles, duties, and perspectives within the organization. Broadly, senior-level interviewees tend to view themselves as leaders, as they are tasked with strategizing, driving business expansion, leading teams, and navigating through changes. Conversely, those at lower

³ See Xi’an School Organization level in Figure 5. in chapter 3
levels are inclined to see themselves as managers responsible for task execution, process optimization, customer service, and quality assurance. For instance, one interviewee elaborated:

When you position yourself as a leader, your considerations diverge from those of a manager. As a manager, particularly at the middle or entry-level, your primary focus revolves around effectively executing tasks assigned by superiors. However, as a leader, your perspective must encompass the broader picture. It includes monitoring the team’s progress, fostering a collaborative environment, and emphasizing key aspects of teamwork. I believe that a leader should consistently prioritize these matters rather than solely concentrating on the performance of subordinates. (C5)

**The Dynamic Interplay of Leading and Managing.** This theme emerged as one of the most captivating aspects of the interviews. Several interviewees delved into their aspirations and the journey of evolving from a manager to a leader. They reflected on the reciprocal transition and interplay between these roles across various organizational settings. These individuals acknowledged their strengths and weaknesses and the unique demands and obstacles encountered at different stages and within diverse environments. As articulated by one interviewee:

(The transition) is actually based on a desire to pursue novel endeavors, ventures that may not have been previously explored and whose outcomes are uncertain. Nonetheless, such initiatives bring hope among individuals, bolster team confidence and open avenues for new developments or opportunities. I believe this innovative spirit should serve as a defining characteristic that sets an ordinary manager apart from a true leader. While other traits may exhibit some
overlap and resemblance, a genuine leader is likely to demonstrate greater
willingness and boldness in innovation or challenging existing limitations. (C1)

These themes indicate that interviewees comprehensively grasp their roles and positions
within the organizational structure and culture. On the one hand, they demonstrate an awareness
of the distinct roles and responsibilities of leaders and managers. They expect leaders to offer a
clear vision, innovative ideas, motivating inspiration, and adaptable guidance, while managers
are anticipated to deliver standardized systems, technical assistance, data-driven feedback, and
quality assurance.

The clarity or ambiguity displayed by interviewees in differentiating between the roles of
manager and leader and their depth of reflection on the transitions and interactions between the
two is evident in the variations observed in their leadership roles. For instance, individuals
situated in the middle tier of the organizational hierarchy are more inclined to contextualize their
understanding of these roles. They aim to leverage their strengths and compensate for
weaknesses while acknowledging and valuing their colleagues’ diverse traits for collaborative
success.

“How do you understand leadership?”

After elucidating the distinction between leader and manager, the interviews generally
delved into the comprehension of leadership. In English, the terms Lead, Leader, and Leadership
connote the act of guiding, the individual acting, and a more holistic concept. Similarly, in
Chinese, there are distinct phrases for leader and leadership. Ling Dao[Lead or leader] can serve as
a verb denoting the act of leading or as a noun referring to an individual or even a collective
engaged in such action, while Lingdao Li [leadership] combines the notion of leading with the
character Li[power]. In this term, both power and influence are encompassed. When processing
the transcripts in Chinese, the various meanings of these characters were discerned and analyzed, and the conceptual level was employed to establish a correlation between the subject of study in this case and the notion of leadership as a process.

Based on the integration of interviewees’ responses, I found both commonalities and differences, affirmations and reflections, and dependence and autonomy in interviewees’ diverse and complex perceptions of the meaning of leader as a verb in leadership practice.

**Definition of Leadership**: Interviewees and survey respondents’ definitions of leadership varied in emphasis, yet all incorporated vital terms such as *guiding, inspiring, supporting, planning, leading the team, and goal-setting*. Generally, participants perceive a leader as someone who sets a direction or goal, leaving it to those being led to determine how to achieve it. Some view a leader as a role model capable of guiding others forward, while others highlight the significance of forward-thinking, such as “Thinking about what the business will look like three years from now.”

Of particular interest is the prevalent use of metaphors among interviewees when describing their perceptions of a leader or leadership. Table 2. lists specific metaphors and their connotations:

**Table 2.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Metaphor</th>
<th>Interpretation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Party members</td>
<td>During societal stability and peace in China, it might be challenging to differentiate between the general population and party members. However, as a crisis looms, party members tend to be the first to respond, taking on leadership roles or making sacrifices. Similarly, the leader’s identity may not be evident when the entire organization is thriving or stable. (E1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and the masses</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Poker Player</td>
<td>If my subordinates are like a deck of cards and I am the player, I pick up this deck, regardless of what kind of cards they are. I hope that after reorganizing them, I can still win. I am unwilling to discard what is considered a bad hand. I am willing to play the current hand better, so as a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Metaphor</td>
<td>Interpretation</td>
</tr>
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<td>-----</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Captain and Sailor</td>
<td>If we were a sailing ship, the principal of Xi’an School would be the captain, the head of a department would be the one at the helm, and we would be the sailors. (E2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Captain American</td>
<td>In The Avengers, Captain America is not the most powerful in abilities, but he is a soulful character and a spiritual leader everyone is willing to follow. During the Endgame, he rallies everyone with a raised arm. (C2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Chess Player</td>
<td>Therefore, when leaders strategize, they also consider where each sector requires individuals driven by performance and where interpersonal-oriented individuals are needed. They strategically approach their decisions, much like playing a game of chess. (C4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Lighthouse</td>
<td>The founder is like the lighthouse, indicating the direction. (E2) He gave me considerable support and guidance, predominantly emanating a lighthouse-like sense. I perceive this as a form of leadership, a reassurance that our pillar remains steadfast as long as he is here. (E1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to the metaphors mentioned above, another crucial metaphor warrants further scrutiny and interpretation: the metaphor of the *Niu Dai* (bond). Three interviewees positioned themselves within an intermediate management capacity. They find themselves tasked with executing the group’s objectives and decisions upwards, leading and influencing subordinates downwards, and collaborating and communicating with colleagues at the same hierarchical level. Unanimously, they liken their roles to a *Niu Dai*, responsible for connecting diverse interests and needs vertically and horizontally, facilitating information transmission, and fostering trust. They underscore the multifaceted leadership demands inherent in this role, encompassing upward, downward, and lateral leadership (B1). Distinct skills and strategies are required to lead in each direction effectively.

In organizations like New Oriental Education, middle and senior-level leaders within branch schools perceive their leadership roles as *Niu Dai*, which presents both challenges and opportunities. Functioning as *Niu Dai*, they must exert varied leadership styles in different directions to facilitate communication and coordination across all dimensions while fostering information transmission and trust. Within this role, they must also demonstrate heightened
critical thinking, energize their teams, and possess a thorough understanding of and proficiency in executing their superiors’ ideas and decisions.

Various middle-level leaders exhibit distinct interpretations and manifestations of their roles, influenced by personality, experience, and position within the organization. Conversely, though modest, the tone of senior-level interviewees exudes confidence, while entry-level leaders adopt a more restrained tone, underscoring the primacy of execution. In general, they clearly understand the significance and value of their roles within the organization and the requisite abilities and skills needed to fulfill them.

These metaphors and interpretations, to varying degrees, exemplify the multifaceted understanding of leadership among the interviewees, encompassing aspects such as guiding and motivating subordinates, as well as strategic planning and visionary outlook. Collectively, these metaphors underscore traits deemed essential for effective leadership, including establishing clear goals and direction and inspiring and guiding teams or organizations toward their achievement. Leaders must possess strategic thinking and decisive decision-making skills and be capable of adapting and optimizing resource and talent allocations according to diverse circumstances.

It is crucial to acknowledge that leadership styles and traits vary among individuals; some prioritize performance and results, while others emphasize fostering interpersonal relationships. Additionally, leaders may assume different roles and positions depending on the context; some are overtly assertive, while others exhibit more implicit leadership styles. It underscores another characteristic of leadership within New Oriental Education, namely, the diversity of leadership styles present within the organization.
Leadership Styles. Interviewees also exhibited diverse preferences and experiences of leadership styles, yet all underscored the importance of inclusivity, creativity, and resilience in navigating crises. Reflecting on their experience, interviewees noted that there was no overarching mandate dictating uniformity among leaders; instead, they were encouraged to leverage their unique characteristics and strengths.

Some leaders prioritize the personal development of their subordinates within their leadership style, offering hands-on guidance and providing direct feedback. Conversely, some bring a more emotional dimension to their leadership approach. Despite conventional wisdom suggesting that leaders should be rational and pragmatic, these emotionally attuned leaders contribute to fostering a congenial organizational atmosphere and enhancing interpersonal bonds among members. One interviewee reflected on his supervisor, and he said:

I have always admired his focus on individual development, particularly his dedication to nurturing teachers and future leaders. In this regard, I believe there is much for us to learn: setting high standards, maintaining strict requirements, providing hands-on mentorship, offering direct feedback on various matters, and encouraging continuous growth. Haha, it is truly something we can aspire to!

(D3)

These varied leadership styles reflect interviewees’ diverse expectations of leadership, which require respect and encouragement of individuality and innovation, attention and support for growth and development, and the ability to address and resolve crises and challenges. While interviewees generally expressed positivity and appreciation for the influence of leadership, they all pointed out that its impact is limited and requires individual initiative and effort. The influence of those around them often shapes such perspectives.
Influence and Leadership

The interviewees mentioned various sources of influence, including personal abilities, enthusiasm, ideas, creativity, communication skills, and the ability to inspire and guide. Organizational factors like culture, motivational mechanisms, performance management, and structure also significantly shape influence. Interviewees emphasized the varied manifestations of influence, recognizing that individuals possess distinct strengths and weaknesses.

As an organization known for its inclusivity, New Oriental does not impose uniformity in influence across its members. Rather, it encourages individuals to harness their distinct characteristics and styles. One interviewee noted:

So it (diversity) has also contributed to the fact that New Oriental is very influential and creative in the public. New Oriental is inclusive and open enough, allowing many people with different cultures and styles to exist. (B3)

Interviewees generally agree that influence is an essential competency, not only for leaders but also for all members here, as it enhances professionalism and competitiveness. They also agree that influence is an acquirable skill that can be learned and improved by continually refining through observation, emulation, practice, and feedback. Moreover, interviewees unanimously stressed that influence requires responsibility; it should not only serve personal interest or involve manipulation but also achieve the organization’s mission and vision and promote societal progress and development. Additionally, interviewees exhibit diverse perceptions and experiences regarding the sources and manifestations of influence, emphasizing personal attributes, group dynamics, persuasive techniques, and inspirational approaches.

Furthermore, it is worth noting that interviewees hold different perspectives on the relationship between influence and leadership. Various connections exist between influence and
leadership, including interdependence, mutual reinforcement, and complementarity. This dynamic relationship requires individuals to adapt their influence, leadership approaches, and strategies as environmental conditions shift and tasks vary. Interviewees perceive the relationship between influence and leadership as intricate; different leadership models and influence techniques may yield varying effects and feedback, necessitating flexible application according to specific contexts and objectives. Some scholars contend that the essence of leadership lies in influence, but many interviewees naturally integrated these two concepts through active listening and effective communication. One interviewee noted:

What truly matters is one’s ability to utilize leadership to listen to everyone’s perspectives and whether my ideas can effectively yield results through an influencing process. It starts with actively listening and conducting thorough research to comprehend the needs. Only then can I develop initiatives that align with their desires and goals. I can drive meaningful outcomes by integrating these insights with my own initiatives and leveraging influence. Without this reciprocal exchange, I may have talked a lot, but gaining acceptance becomes challenging. A saying resonates deeply with this notion: *Listening is leadership, and communicating is influence.* To achieve tangible results, both leadership and influence are essential; one cannot exist without the other. (B1)

The phrase “Listening is leadership, and communicating is influence” was echoed by many interviewees. In their view, the comprehensive process involves actively listening to comprehend the ideas and aspirations of others and then persuading them to express their thoughts and aspirations. When these two elements are effectively combined, successful leadership effectiveness is fostered in practical terms.
Interviewees demonstrated how they influence those around them, including superiors, subordinates, and peers, employing various direct or indirect methods with positive or negative implications. They prioritize building trust, fostering effective communication, fostering collaboration, seeking consensus, and cultivating mutually beneficial relationships, all while embodying traits such as independence, innovation, initiative, and leadership. They understand that influence is a two-way, interactive, reciprocal process rather than a one-way, unilateral, coercive endeavor. Simultaneously, they acknowledge that leadership is a complex, multidimensional, multilayered process, contrary to being simple, unidimensional, or linear. The goal of leadership is no longer to transform individuals in an organization into a unity like a melting pot, but rather the concept of encouraging collective formation while maintaining individual diversity (S. M. Ospina et al., 2012).

The interviewees’ multifaceted and nuanced perspectives on influence and leadership and their comprehension of the interplay and synergy between the two stem from everyday experiences as well as individualized and diverse modes of thinking. These perspectives may be shaped by factors such as organizational culture, teaching philosophy, and work environment, which can significantly impact the organization’s development and innovation.

**Leadership as a Process.**

Wood and Dibben view leadership as a relational process rather than a personal attribute or behavior of leaders or followers (Wood & Dibben, 2015). The process is characterized by constant change and development rather than a fixed and predetermined outcome. Leadership emerges from the mutual influence and creation of leaders and followers, which is not defined by their roles or status. Leadership as a process is not a one-way or two-way influence but a multidimensional and complex dynamic.
Integrating the results of interviews and surveys, it is evident that the leadership style of this organization shares commonalities with relational leadership. Most members have strong emotional attachment and identification with the organization, and they connect through emotional and cognitive resonance rather than defining each other through language and discourse. The participants’ perspectives collectively reflect a mutual growth among subjects rather than a mutual interaction among objects. One interviewee noted:

I advocate for, or rather prefer, a relatively relaxed, open-minded, and inclusive work environment. At the same time, in this process, I also prefer to interact with people who have a positive attitude, are creative, can effectively express themselves and communicate with others, or are self-driven. Working and collaborating with these types of people, I feel a sense of mutual achievement or shared accomplishment, which I value highly. (B3)

Many interviewees noted that their leadership style and practices continuously adapt to both external and internal changes. They actively seek new opportunities and breakthroughs to create fresh value and impact. They refuse to settle for the status quo or cling to tradition; instead, they dare to experiment, even if it means encountering failure. Through continuous adjustment and improvement, they refine their style and distinctive traits (D3). Innovation has consequently emerged as a fundamental aspect of New Oriental’s organizational culture.

Moreover, most interviewees highlighted their learning experiences at New Oriental Education. Whether in the capacity of students, employees, or team leaders, they have all gleaned valuable insights from the environment, culture, colleagues, and leaders at New Oriental. These experiences have encompassed not only knowledge and skills but also life lessons and values. They perceive learning as an ongoing, dynamic, and multifaceted process rather than a
static, singular, or predetermined outcome. Furthermore, they acknowledge that cultivating leadership cannot be pursued through rigid methodologies but necessitates exploration, experimentation, and adaptation to individual circumstances and environments. They contribute to the organization’s mission and vision through mutual influence and creativity rather than relying solely on predetermined roles or positions to dictate leadership distribution. One interviewee stated:

I believe leadership starts with continuously exploring and trying things out in various situations. As one experiences more events and engages in more practice, upon reflecting on theories learned from books or training, they find that these theories resonate with their experiences. For example, many leadership books nowadays advocate that to accomplish something; we first need to look at the strategy, examine the organization, analyze processes and systems, assess performance, and consider culture. Then, as long as we achieve all of these, we can succeed, right? That’s what everyone says. However, without practice and experience, completing each task in sequence is not guaranteed because many factors are interrelated, and we also need to consider change and the environment. All of these aspects require learning. (D1)

Combined with the previous discussion of influence, I found that when interviewees reflected on their leadership, they were more inclined to agree on the importance of building trust, engaging in effective communication, fostering collaboration, and seeking win-win relationships with those around them. These efforts influence others’ thoughts, emotions, and behaviors, ultimately achieving the organization’s goals and missions. Interviewees focus not only on their team members but also on relationships with superiors and peers. While prioritizing
performance, they also value interpersonal relationships, concentrating on current tasks and considering the future. One interviewee stated:

Leading upwards, leading laterally, and employing different approaches for different individuals. It’s about exerting influence comprehensively, acting as a pivot, and turning all leadership behaviors into a process that involves everyone around me, regardless of their hierarchical position. It’s not only about my process, but rather, all individuals I interact with, including my leaders, subordinates, and even external parties, are encompassed in this process. (B1)

Many of the interviewees’ answers showed commonality in acknowledging the existence of individuality and differences among each other. They generally agreed that personal leadership practices are flexible in applying different approaches, techniques, and strategies based on their personalities, experiences, values, goals, and various factors such as people, events, time, and circumstances. When faced with various contradictions and conflicts, many interviewees consistently attempted to find a balance or an optimal solution to satisfy the needs and expectations of all parties while maintaining their principles and goals. They also recognized that balance is a relative, dynamic, and evolving process rather than an absolute, static, and unchanging state. One interviewee noted:

When an organization reaches a certain stage of development, it will encounter different contradictions. If a company only faces performance issues, I don’t think it qualifies as a mature large enterprise. A mature large enterprise should deal with both interpersonal and task-oriented issues simultaneously. In some cases, even in giant corporations where performance may be relatively stable, focusing on interpersonal issues becomes crucial. In the case of New Oriental,
it’s not extremely large, but it’s not small either; it falls into the category of medium-sized enterprises. Therefore, it may need to balance between different issues while continuing to develop continuously. (C4)

The section delves into the subtle conceptual distinctions between leaders and managers within a Chinese context. Additionally, individuals within the organization define themselves as either leaders or managers based on their roles and responsibilities. Senior-level employees often perceive themselves as leaders due to their strategic and team-leading roles. The transition from manager to leader is perceived as a journey of personal growth, with interviewees reflecting on their aspirations and experiences in evolving roles.

These perceptions significantly influence organizational change, impacting employee adaptability, participation, and the effectiveness of change processes. The insights gained from understanding the distinctions and self-identifications within leadership and management set the stage for further discussion on the specific skills, characteristics, and practices that define Chinese leadership. It will likely examine how these elements contribute to effective leadership in the Chinese cultural and organizational framework.

**Skills, Characteristics, and Practices of Chinese Leadership**

The section provides a summary of the skills, characteristics, and practices of Chinese Leadership within New Oriental Education, with a focus on communication, trust, and organizational change. It underscores the importance of open dialogue and transparent communication in leadership for fostering trust, problem-solving, and motivating teams toward creativity. Furthermore, it explores the role of trust and tacit understanding in the workplace, emphasizing their contributions to employee’s work quality and life satisfaction. The theme of
support and authorization is prominent, depicting the supportive system within the organization characterized by trust, authorization, and mutual influence between leaders and followers.

Lastly, it discusses the communication culture of New Oriental Education and its impact on organizational change, including responses to external influences and policy implementations. This section offers insights into the leadership dynamics at New Oriental, illustrating how effective communication and trust-building practices can positively influence organizational culture and change.

**Communication**

For relational leaders, communication is not an expression of predetermined information; rather, it embodies an emergent, open dialogue aimed at uncovering what is meaningful and feasible (Cunliffe & Eriksen, 2011). Interviewees generally recognized communication as an essential competency in leadership and management, helping them to establish trust with team members, solve problems, address challenges, adapt to external changes, and stimulate team motivation and creativity. Several interviewees pointed out the importance of leaders maintaining open and transparent communication with their teams, refraining from withholding crucial information or painting an overly optimistic picture but instead providing an accurate assessment and analysis of the situation. This approach allows team members to perceive hope, build trust, prevent misunderstandings and speculation, and move forward collectively(B1; D1).

Interviewees also generally believe that leaders need to open up the team’s public quadrant, meaning that all team members are aware of the team’s goals, direction, progress, problems, and decisions, as well as each person’s roles, responsibilities, contributions, and evaluations. It can enhance the transparency, efficiency, and cohesion of the team. One interviewee reflected:
When I first joined, through interactions with many different leaders, I discovered that this place is very transparent and open (in terms of the work environment). Everyone can express themselves freely. After a group of young people express themselves, they are willing to push forward diligently. (D3)

In contrast to monologue-style dialogues, which are based on singular authority, advocate specific viewpoints and managerial significance, and aim to achieve a shared understanding of preconceived perspectives or visions, dialogism implies engaging in dialogue with others rather than speaking at them. Engaging in dialogue with others means that all viewpoints are shared and considered (Cunliffe & Eriksen, 2011). An interviewee mentioned the need for leaders to engage in open and honest conversations with team members, exchange analyses and perspectives on matters, and discuss whether their core goals align or if they can rally those around them. It can enhance mutual understanding within the team, foster collective identity, and strengthen collaboration. This became particularly evident during the tumultuous period following the implementation of the Double Reduction policy. One interviewee stated:

When difficulties arise, the most important thing is to be open and transparent with everyone about the external environment we face, the potential risks, and what we could do in the future. This is a very challenging process. Although I can usually bring energy to others, if I were to tell everyone, “Our future is bright, we are exceptional, and there is hope in our industry,” it would be useless at such times. So, how can I use my influence to keep everyone united and moving forward? I have pondered this for a long time, and I believe the answer is to be honest and direct and give them an analytical perspective on the actual situation. (B1)
The critical aspects of dialogue include the need for listening, understanding different viewpoints, valuing diverse ideas, and building relationships (Cunliffe & Eriksen, 2011), which were often reflected in interviewees’ narratives. Interviewees commonly give positive evaluations of the communication culture of New Oriental Education, particularly in Xi’an School, and it is precisely because the organization’s emphasis on communication positively influences the process and outcomes of organizational change. The survey findings further substantiate this perspective: 75.3% of respondents strongly agree that leaders effectively communicated a clear vision for the organization’s future during periods of change. Moreover, in satisfaction surveys concerning communication amidst the organizational change process, over 70% of participants expressed very satisfied with the clarity, consistency, transparency, and responsiveness of communication.

Organizational change involves communication activities that engage multiple stakeholders, requiring coordination, collaboration, innovation, adaptation, learning, and improvement in uncertain external environments. New Oriental Education’s communication culture not only exists internally but also extends beyond organizational boundaries. For instance, it maintains close communication with other branches under the headquarters. It also demonstrates permeability by engaging with external environments or influencing factors, such as government departments and even competitors, through continuous communication. These external communications help decision-makers better understand the relationship between organizational development and the external environment, which is crucial in driving the process and direction of change.

Trust and Tacit Understanding
The interviewees also discussed their varied understandings and experiences regarding the definition, formation, and significance of trust and tacit understanding in the workplace, identifying both commonalities and differences among their perspectives. Many agreed that trust and tacit understanding were founded upon mutual understanding and respect, which are influential factors contributing to both work quality and overall life satisfaction. They also recognized these qualities as integral aspects of New Oriental’s organizational culture, fostering a unique atmosphere within the company. An interviewee reflected:

We always emphasize personal charisma, so what does that mean? Personal charisma is the reaction that your actions bring to others every day. In other words, why do I trust you? Your actions make me trust you, not just your words. ...We observe one’s actions, whether they are willing to help their team members or even help more people, and if they consistently do so over time, then everyone will trust them more. (B4)

Several interviews underscored the significance of trust, both among leaders and subordinates and among colleagues, emphasizing the importance of fostering trust through honesty, transparency, inclusivity, and supportiveness to strengthen team unity and effectiveness. The interviewees’ interpretations of trust and tacit understanding varied, with some highlighting consistency in behavior, others emphasizing emotional acknowledgment, and others focusing on alignment of values. Notably, Chengxin Fuze[integrity and responsibility] and Zhenqing Guanai[genuine care] are two of the core values of New Oriental Education. The organization emphasizes not only how external customers are treated but also the importance of demonstrating integrity, responsibility, and genuine care for internal staff. This commitment is
evident in various aspects of daily operations, reflecting the transmission and embodiment of these values. One interviewee noted:

He (my superior) would not treat you badly. Initially, my leader’s promises to me were not just empty words; he had already begun implementing them. With every year’s incentive rewards, I do not have to worry about his proposed plans. That is why I have progressed from being a teacher to a small team leader and now a project manager. Every time, my rewards have been handled very well. So now I basically do not need to ask for details because he (my superior) assures me, ‘Don’t worry, it will be fine,’ and we will discuss the details later. I say, ‘No problem, I’ll get to work first.’ In the end, we both are delighted with the results. You see, this is another example of the tacit understanding and trust among Xindongfang Ren. (D3)

The above conversation may seem somewhat ambiguous, but the deliberate omission of keywords revealed Chinese culture’s high-context (Nahavandi, 2015) nature and indirectly reflected a kind of tacit understanding and trust within this organization. This conversation initially described how, before the interviewee embarked on a new project assigned by their superior, neither party discussed the benefits the interviewee would receive upon completing the project. The reason for not discussing it was that the interviewee believed that even without prior agreement, they would still achieve satisfactory results. During the conversation, neither I nor the interviewee mentioned specific terms such as money or promotion because I recalled my experiences working here. Thus, despite the absence of keywords, I could still grasp and convey the intended meaning of the interviewee. This seemingly ambiguous conversation between a
former and current employee can flow smoothly, thanks to our shared experiences in this organization and the tacit understanding of those shared experiences.

Interviewees believe that trust and tacit understanding can improve work efficiency and quality, increase motivation and enjoyment, alleviate pressure, and maintain morale during times of crisis. One interviewee noted that many individuals trust that the organization will offer responsible and fair placement solutions amid external turmoil. Consequently, they refrain from panicking or hastily resigning, opting to trust the organization and wait (D4). These observations highlight how trust and tacit understanding cultivate employees’ sense of belonging, particularly amidst organizational instability, change, resistance, and the need to enhance execution and innovation capabilities.

Support: Hold The Container

The interviewees’ perspectives on the support provided by their superiors during organizational changes in response to external impacts reveal a distinctive characteristic: that in the context of mutual support, the relationship is not a point-to-point linear connection, but rather, the collective actions of everyone construct a comprehensive, multidimensional, and all-encompassing support system. This system functions like a vast container, encompassing all aspects of individuals, events, and various organizational dynamics. Within this container, the roles of leaders and followers have a dialectical nature, and their influence on each other is mutual. Many traits characterize this container, with the most prominent being trust and authorization, endorsement, encouragement, and motivation, represented by three main themes.

Trust and Authorization. This is a common theme, with many interviewees mentioning how their superiors entrusted them with authorization, allowing them the creativity and freedom to work, respecting their ideas and proposals, providing them with resources and space to learn
and grow on their own, and how they, in turn, have treated their peers and subordinates in the same manner. One interviewee pointed out that the leader is responsible for authorizing subordinates and providing full support and resources to those who excel in that area. He also emphasized that the key to authorization is to strike a balance between being proactive on the one hand and avoiding making subordinates feel overshadowed by the leader on the other. “The most crucial aspect of leadership is to strive for a brighter future for your subordinates. (C6)”

The findings from the survey revealed that 91.4% of respondents either strongly agree or agree that their leaders actively encourage their participation in decision-making. Furthermore, 92.6% of respondents agreed with the statement, “My leader authorizes me to take action.” New Oriental’s leadership emphasizes creating an environment akin to a container, where individuals within it can autonomously learn and grow, ultimately meeting the organization’s expectations when completing tasks. At the same time, employees feel that this is something I have accomplished. This aspect aligns with the Taoist philosophy: “When things are done, people would like to say: this is how we are meant to be.”

**Endorsement.** Different interviewees perceived and assessed the endorsement and influence given by their superiors differently. Some viewed the endorsement and confidence bestowed upon them by their superiors as providing them with increased opportunities and resources within the organization, leading to smoother and more effective work. An interviewee stated:

In my previous experiences, I had established strong trust with my leader. So, he provided me with confidence and motivation on many levels. When facing significant decisions regarding job transfers, he still supported me considerably and endorsed me throughout the process. This endorsement was not just a
momentary gesture. Even after transferring away (to another branch), I knew my leader might continue to endorse me, supporting me whenever I encountered difficulties or problems. (D1)

**Encouragement and Inspiration.** Many interviewees mentioned that leaders at all levels within the organization can provide encouragement and inspiration during turbulent times, instilling confidence and drive in everyone, enabling them to face challenges with hope and optimism, and fostering a sense of achievement and recognition. An interviewee noted:

I think Mr. Yu has pioneered a new path in the long-term planning of the group, which gives us new hope. At the level of Xi’an School, the leaders continuously encourage us, prompting everyone to contemplate the reasons for persisting and not giving up easily. (C2)

It is worth noting that in the process of New Oriental Education attempting to explore new business pathways, online live-streaming sales emerged as a successful outcome, which was both unexpected and reasonable. Dong Yuhui, a former employee of New Oriental Xi’an School, joined the live streaming team of Eastbuy, a direct sales platform launched by New Oriental Education, after the Double Reduction policy that affected the tutoring industry. He became an overnight sensation on Chinese social media in 2022 by chance, boosting Eastbuy’s sales and New Oriental’s stock price. He is now one of China’s most influential live streamers and internet celebrities. Dong Yuhui’s success has brought great inspiration and confidence to the employees of various branch schools, especially Xi’an School, as almost all the interviewees have worked in the same office with this internet celebrity. Dong’s success has served as a potent stimulant for all those who were once uncertain about the future. An interview noted:
Someone like Yuhui has experienced long, seemingly endless struggles. In fact, their team may face even more challenges, but I believe Mr. Yu and Mr. Sun have instilled much confidence in them. I think building confidence is crucial in this process. So, whether your direct leader can give you much confidence is actually very, very important. (D1)

**Equal Relationship**

Equality in relationships emerged as a prominent theme in the interviews, and after integrating this theme, three sub-themes of equality were identified: leader’s empathy, authorization and error tolerance, and professionalism and decision-making.

**Empathy.** From the interviewees’ responses, they generally consider the leader’s ability to empathize as an essential factor affecting equal relationships. They believe leaders who can empathize with them, understand their needs and difficulties, and provide them with trust and support rather than simply demanding obedience and compliance are crucial. Empathy-building capacity can bridge the psychological gap between leaders and followers, enhance trust and cooperation, and promote an equal relationship. An interview noted:

No matter what problems I encounter, I always try to put myself in the other person’s shoes. I believe that as a middle-level manager, I need to have empathy, which is a very important ability. Because I need to understand my superiors, subordinates, and organization. (D2)

**Error Tolerance.** Another theme influencing the equal relationship is authorization and error tolerance. Interviewees indicated that they felt that leaders grant them a certain degree of autonomy and trust in their work without excessive interference or guidance, allowing them a

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4 Sun Dongxu, former principal of Xi’an School, former CEO of New Oriental Online(East Buy).
degree of autonomy and creativity. At the same time, leaders can accept mistakes and shortcomings and give them opportunities for growth and improvement rather than harsh criticism and punishment. These two sub-themes can stimulate motivation and initiative within the organization and improve the efficiency and quality of their work while also reducing stress and fear and increasing satisfaction and loyalty, thus promoting an equal relationship among them. One interviewee reflected:

> If I assign a task to someone, I can accept various issues that may arise during the process. I believe everyone’s growth is like this, and I have grown this way, too. No one is perfect from the start. ... I authorize them, although we discuss any issues that arise during the process, and then share my solutions. When we communicate, I often emphasize that I am just a contributor of opinions and that my title does not matter. We discuss things together, and everyone expresses their viewpoints based on experience. It is an exchange of opinions, not a matter of commands and execution between superiors and subordinates. (B5)

One of the most significant themes that emerged during the interview was authorization. This theme relates to how the participants perceived their own and others’ authority and responsibilities in their work contexts. Due to its relevance and implications, this theme will be examined in depth in the following section.

**Professionalism and Decision-Making.** Interviewees believe that leaders need to have a certain level of expertise and insight in business, be able to provide practical guidance and advice, and also be able to make clear and decisive decisions at critical moments. They should have the courage to bear the consequences of their decisions, ensuring the operation and development of the team. Leaders’ professionalism and decisiveness can earn followers’ respect
and trust, enhance team cohesion and combat effectiveness, and balance followers’ participation and obedience, maintaining equality among them. An interviewee stated:

For business people or entrepreneurs, courage is significant because you need the courage to make decisions to tell your team that if this decision is wrong, I will take responsibility. And then you need the courage to apologize to everyone if things go wrong. More important than having the courage to take responsibility is that once you have courage, you will have more determination and less hesitation. Only with firm determination can you have tremendous execution power to implement your decisions fully. (C6)

The interviewees have a certain level of admiration and trust in the professionalism and decision-making capacity of the leaders, but they do not lose their voice and judgment because of it. Some interviewees mentioned that, when interviewed two years after the Double Reduction policy implementation, they reflected on some initial decisions. Some may have been made hastily and could have negatively impacted the organization. However, most interviewees seem to have a great understanding and acceptance of the organization and its decisions. Given the unclear policy and development prospects, they believed making decisions was a step forward. In the survey, respondents assessed the organizational changes initiated in response to the Double Reduction policy. On a scale of 0 to 10 points, the average score awarded by respondents was 8.8. Notably, 97.6% of respondents explicitly expressed positive evaluations.

These three themes extracted from the interviewees’ responses collectively constitute the interviewees’ understanding and expectations of equality between leaders and followers. They also reflect the organizational culture and values of New Oriental Education.

Authorization
Authorization is a management style that refers to a leader handing over a certain amount of power and responsibility to subordinates, allowing them to complete tasks while providing necessary support and guidance autonomously. Authorization is beneficial for enhancing subordinates’ subjective initiative, creativity, and sense of accomplishment, as well as for saving and optimizing the time and energy of leaders. Authorization is a prevalent phenomenon and valued practice recognized and appreciated by members of the New Oriental Xi’an School. From the interview content, it can be observed that most interviewees mentioned receiving authorization from their superiors and implementing it to their subordinates. They believe that this approach contributes to their personal growth and development, as well as to team collaboration and innovation.

Based on interviewees’ responses, the prerequisite for authorization is trust. There needs to be a certain foundation of trust for effective authorization, whether from superiors to subordinates or from subordinates to superiors. The process is interactive because authorization is not a one-time event but an ongoing process that requires communication and feedback from both sides and timely adjustments and improvements. An interviewee said he continuously understands and cultivates his subordinates while discovering and enhancing their core competencies in the authorization process. Authorization is mutually beneficial, even triple-win, as both the authorizer, the authorized, and the organization benefit from this process. Authorization not only improves the efficiency and quality of subordinates’ work but also increases the job satisfaction and influence of leaders. One interviewee noted:

If you firmly believe in your authority, no matter what you do in the future, you will have leadership. If you don’t believe it and think, ‘In the future, I will listen to a leader, find answers in books, or follow a formula,’ you will never have
leadership in your lifetime. The starting point for having leadership is to say, ‘I
am going for it.’ and be prepared to do so. I am ready to start doing things
according to my ideas, and not only will I do it myself, but I will also lead
everybody to do it according to my method. (B1)

Through self-authorization and authorizing others, this interviewee ignited not only his
leadership but also the leadership of the subordinates. However, he also told me that this insight
came from a former senior executive who had already left the company, who encouraged him
when he was very frustrated and pessimistic about the work, “If you don’t lead yourself, you
won’t be able to lead anyone else.”

The motivations behind authorization are diverse. Different interviewees may have
different motivations for implementing or accepting authorization. Interviewees also exhibit
flexible approaches to implementing or accepting authorization; some fully authorize, others do
so conditionally, some provide guidance, and some seek feedback.

As a leadership process, authorization reflects the leader’s trust and respect for
subordinates and stimulates their initiative and creativity. In this process, the authorizer has
enough confidence in their leadership, and this also reflects that they have a high level of self-
awareness and reflection. They do not feel insecure due to the dispersion of power, nor do they
excessively interfere with their subordinates’ work; instead, they provide them with adequate
freedom and support. The authorization process is a two-way interaction: leaders authorize
subordinates and accept subordinates’ feedback and suggestions, forming an equal and
collaborative relationship rather than a hierarchical one of command and obedience.

The effect of authorization results in a multi-win situation, where leaders can reduce their
burden and improve their strategic thinking, and subordinates can enhance their abilities and
improve their job satisfaction. Organizations can improve their efficiency and achieve their goals.

**Summary**

This chapter provides an in-depth analysis of the interview texts and data to profoundly understand the severe operational and emotional challenges faced by New Oriental Education Xi’an School and its stakeholders in response to the Double Reduction Policy. It has led to a strategic transformation of the school, shifting towards new business areas while focusing on talent cultivation and organizational culture maintenance.

The school’s organizational culture is deeply rooted in values of integrity, care, and excellence, which have fostered a robust collective identity—*Xindongfang Ren*—playing a pivotal role in helping the school navigate crises and implement successful changes. Additionally, this chapter explores how New Oriental Education combines Western and Chinese leadership practices, emphasizing the critical importance of self-awareness, emotional intelligence, and the balance between practical experience and theoretical knowledge. This amalgamation has given rise to a diversified leadership style capable of adapting to various workplace cultures and driving collective success.

Lastly, the chapter summarizes the findings by highlighting that within the Chinese context, the concept of leadership within organizations emphasizes communication, trust, authorization, and viewing leadership as an ongoing process, which is significant in driving organizational change and achieving goals. The next chapter will build on these key findings to discuss their implications and reflections for academia, the practice field, and intercultural leadership studies.
CHAPTER FIVE. CONTRIBUTIONS, CONCLUSION AND LIMITATIONS

In the previous chapter, a thorough analysis and interpretation of the five primary themes of the case study were performed. In this chapter, I integrate and discuss these themes based on the conceptual framework and literature review outlined earlier. These findings encompass two primary dimensions that this research contributes to the field of leadership studies.

Firstly, by exploring the impact of the Double Reduction policy as an external shock on New Oriental Education Xi’an School, the findings revealed insights into the pivotal role of organizational culture and collective identity in shaping the trajectory of organizational change. Organizational culture provides a sturdy foundation for organizations navigating external shocks, with collective identity impacting employees’ resilience, commitment, and organizational adaptability. The symbiotic relationship between these factors facilitates successful organizational change and enhances resilience in facing external challenges.

The second dimension offers a comparative lens between Chinese leadership perspectives and Western leadership paradigms, emphasizing the importance of cultural integration in fostering innovation within leadership studies and practice. It also enriches scholarly discourse on leadership theory and practice by contributing to a deeper understanding of indigenous Chinese leadership through an intercultural lens.

These two dimensions construct a comprehensive narrative that synthesizes empirical findings from case studies with theoretical insights. They provide valuable insights into the intricate dynamics of organizational change and leadership development, particularly within global challenges and cultural intersections. The contributions and implications of these dimensions will be further expounded upon in subsequent discussions. Additionally, future research directions and limitations of this study will be discussed at the end.
Contributions From Dimension One: Organizational Culture and Collective Identity - The Bedrock of Transformation Amidst External Shocks

Based on the interview transcripts and survey data, it is apparent that respondents predominantly credit the successful organizational change within New Oriental Education to sustained practices, notably the cultivation of organizational culture and the nurturing of collective identity. Nevertheless, their attitudes toward post-crisis initiatives seem somewhat understatement, underpinned by the notion that the efficacy of these actions and strategies is an inevitable consequence of long-standing endeavors. Furthermore, they highlight the fundamental role of organizational culture in change management, as collective identity enhances resilience, commitment, and adaptability, facilitating successful organizational change during external shocks. The inheritance of organizational culture and collective identity is also closely linked to internal members’ commitment to the organization’s core values.

Organizational Culture Inheritance: Foundation In Change Management

The literature views culture as a collective social construct that shapes group cognitive and behavioral patterns. Prominent organizational culture, characterized by a robust value system and learning awareness, shapes members’ perceptions and behaviors, influencing performance even in the presence of dysfunctional external factors (Schein & Schein, 2016). Successful organizations maintain a solid culture with shared values, requiring careful management of cultural dynamics to support effective change initiatives (Austin & Claassen, 2010; Kotter & Heskett, 1992). The findings validate the literature, suggesting that organizational culture is a dynamic and ever-evolving process shaped by shared meanings derived from individual interactions and adapts to changes and demands. New Oriental Education’s cultural factors encompass technical aspects alongside adaptive elements such as values, group dynamics, and
interpersonal relationships. Existing group members transmit their cultural norms and values to newer members, contributing to the ongoing evolution of the organizational culture (Carpenter-Song et al., 2007; Heifetz et al., 2009; Nahavandi, 2015; Schein & Schein, 2016). This study added to the conversation by emphasizing the importance of organizational culture inheritance for long-term development, as it fosters innovation, adaptability, emotional connections, reciprocal support, and a learning-oriented environment.

The success of organizational culture inheritance is attributed to genuine care for people, inclusivity, adaptability, commitment to social responsibility, and continuous self-improvement. The finding indicates that such inheritance is not achieved through transactional benefits or control but rather through transmitting values and influence, leading to shared goals and values for both the collective and individuals and realizing common interests. This process requires generous sharing and influential rapport among internal members, representing self-realization, commitment to the organization, and societal responsibility.

The findings of this study correspond with Schein’s (2016) three-level framework for analyzing organizational culture. Observed artifacts, such as communication patterns, leadership language, and recommended readings, reflect the organization’s espoused beliefs and values, shaped by the founder’s vision, mission, employees’ work philosophy, and core values (Schein, 2007; Wagner, 1975). Basic assumptions are at the heart of organizational culture and serve as guiding principles, impacting daily interactions within the organization. Moreover, New Oriental’s organizational culture aligns with broader societal and ethical norms, such as emphasizing integrity and accountability, as well as demonstrating social responsibility through initiatives like donating desks and chairs to impoverished mountainous areas. These efforts have facilitated positive organizational change and enabled discussions on the interplay between
individual, organizational, and macro-culture (Bronfenbrenner, 1977; Vélez-Agosto et al., 2017). The literature indicates that organizational change involves challenging existing cognitive frameworks, leading to learning difficulties and anxiety. However, a robust organizational culture can mitigate these challenges by providing a sense of identity and self-esteem (Argyris & Schön, 1996; Bushe, 2011; Douglas, 1986; Hatch & Schultz, 2004). The findings suggest that this sense of identity promotes security among members, enhancing their adaptability within the collective consciousness framework. A detailed examination of collective identity will be presented later in this chapter.

Furthermore, the finding contributes to analyzing the interplay between collective and individual dynamics, highlighting the role of adaptability in organizational change. It indicates that internal members’ adaptability supports the change process, driven by alignment between individual and collective values. When personal values align with organizational values, individuals maintain resilience in facing challenges. Ethical value codes also aid decision-making, balancing member and organizational interests, fulfilling social responsibilities, and achieving mutual benefits. The case study highlights that harmony between personal and collective missions fosters adaptability during transitions, which is crucial for responding to external disruptions.

**Value Systems As Guiding Principles.** The values examined in this case study, such as Genuine Care, Integrity and Responsibility, and Doing The Right Thing, are the organization’s espoused beliefs and values (Schein, 2011b), reflecting both wisdom accumulated from experience and the people-oriented philosophical underpinnings of Chinese traditional culture. It further underscores that certain beliefs and values can be substantiated through organizational members’ and leaders’ actions and outcomes, thereby transitioning from mere solutions or ideas
to established beliefs or values. Within macro-culture, aesthetics, or morality domains, values arrived at through consensus via social validation remain acknowledged (Schein, 2011b). The literature also highlights the indispensable role of leaders in facilitating organizations to identify and address critical emotional issues, particularly amid periods of crisis or change, as leaders can absorb and manage the anxiety that ensues when circumstances diverge from expectations, thereby furnishing temporary stability and emotional reassurance to organizational members (Hirschhorn, 1988; Kahn, 1990; Schein, 2007; Schein & Schein, 2016).

However, the finding challenged such a perspective by suggesting that those who can absorb and contain anxiety and other negative emotions can be any responsible members of the organization rather than exclusively limited to leaders. This realization underscores a leadership process wherein a collective framework is established, contributing to stability and sustainability for facilitating change (Jiménez-Luque, 2018). In the classical work *Mencius*, Mencius discussed how individuals should deal with crises and difficulties (Mencius, 300 C.E.), which is a self-cultivation principle deeply ingrained in the Chinese tradition since ancient times. This notion has influenced the mindset of many, as they perceive collective crises as personal responsibility. Consequently, in this context, the boundaries of the leadership role become blurred, enabling individuals without formal authority or holding dual roles as both leaders and followers to wield influence. Such a phenomenon can be understood within the framework of collectivism inherent in traditional Chinese culture and Confucian perspectives on the dynamic between the individual and the collective.

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5 *Tian Jiangjiang Da Ren Yu Siren Ye*[when Heaven is about to confer a great responsibility on any individual, it first exercises their minds with suffering]. Mencius, Gaozi II.

6 Discussed in *Contributions From Dimension Two*. 
Psychological support and fostering a sense of security by influential individuals aid organizations and their members in adapting to change. This support helps employees perceive team cohesion during crises, preventing feelings of isolation. Consequently, members approach crises positively, reducing resistance and risks associated with change and improving change process efficiency. Schneider et al. (1996) argued that modifying employees’ fundamental psychology is essential for sustained change, as organizational change requires accompanying shifts in employee mindset. During external shocks and crises, leaders prioritize employee well-being, conveying respect and security, which fosters a sense of belonging and collective identity. Businesses facing external shocks adapt their plans, adjust financial principles, and provide emotional support and practical tools for crisis and resource management (Giones et al., 2020). This approach is consistent with both Western research and traditional Chinese values, emphasizing that fulfilling one’s obligations (Doing the Right Thing), as determined by social norms and ethical standards, typically results in favorable outcomes.

Cultivating Perpetuating Learning Environment. A learning culture (Schein, 2016) is a dynamic and adaptable environment prioritizing proactive problem-solving and continuous learning. It is renowned for its forward-thinking, inclusivity, adaptability, and introspection. It underscores the significance of the learning process itself and nurtures a mindset of learning to learn. A learning culture underscores the importance of diversity and transparent communication, recognizing their pivotal role in fostering innovation and pragmatic problem-solving. A defining trait of learning-oriented leaders is their readiness to seek assistance and incorporate feedback, facilitating optimal learning outcomes. Within such a culture, leaders embody a continual learning ethos, urging teams to perceive uncertainty as a catalyst for advancement (Scharmer, 2009; Schein, 2016; Senge, 1990). Notably, the commitment to and emphasis on lifelong learning...
learning are also evident in Confucian leadership, manifested at both individual and collective levels (Seow Wah, 2010).

The study’s findings align with these notions, indicating that individuals within a learning-oriented environment are inclined to explore innovation, challenge conventional paradigms, and persistently pursue enhanced solutions. It not only stimulates the refinement of business and professional competencies but also sustains organizational competitiveness in a fiercely competitive market. Organizations that cultivate an innovative culture and strive for substantial breakthroughs can reliably provide high-quality products and services, meet customer expectations, facilitate ongoing enhancements, and promote mutually advantageous partnerships.

Furthermore, this study contributes to discussions on learning culture by highlighting organizations advocating for a perpetuating learning awareness, empowering members to acquire knowledge and skills, embracing innovation, and facilitating personal growth. Members perceive the organization as a platform and home for collective learning, actively engaging in innovation and transformation processes, exchanging insights, and promoting transparent communication within the community, thereby driving organizational progress and development.

Existing literature indicates that the focal point of creating a learning culture lies in balancing adaption to change and actively shaping the environment, and open inquiry and dialogue are central to finding solutions. Through open exploration and dialogue, leadership continuously shapes and evolves relationships and status within and across organizations (Schein, 2016). The findings of this study suggest that effective leadership entails actively engaging in and guiding these interactions and communications while also offering constructive feedback. This assertion is supported by the interview and survey results presented in the previous chapter. Specifically, leaders consistently emphasized the importance of transparent communication,
while respondents from the organization expressed overall satisfaction with the communicative style and effectiveness of leaders, as evidenced in the surveys. Cultivating this perpetuating learning awareness entails an ongoing commitment to interactive communication, sharing insights and experiences, drawing inspiration, deepening understanding and trust, and fostering more significant influence and leadership effectiveness.

Schein (2011a) and Michael(1997) emphasize the importance of cultivating learning capabilities and the courage to confront uncertainty within leadership. The role of a learning-oriented leader extends beyond envisioning to actively addressing organizational challenges before crises arise. The case of New Oriental Education underscores the importance of fostering organizational learning awareness to attain shared interests, values, meanings, and outcomes. They prioritize perpetuating learning awareness as a pivotal value and supporting continuous innovation and collaboration. This further validates relevant theories emphasizing leadership responsibilities, including guiding change, addressing and mitigating risks, optimizing results and values, and surpassing goals and expectations. Leaders must actively involve the organization in collective learning processes to address challenges effectively.

The findings from this case study contribute to understanding the alignment between organizational culture and individual values. When members perceive alignment between the organizational culture and their values, they view themselves as mission-driven team contributors. This perception leads them to see the organization as a platform for realizing their aspirations and values, fostering an environment conducive to achieving personal goals. A deep connection with organizational culture and values also cultivates high trust and respect among members, contributing to a sense of belonging and collective identity.
**Collective Identity: Enhance Resilience, Commitment, and Adaptability**

Existing literature indicates that the sense of belonging stems from individuals’ perceived value and importance in social environments, resonating through shared or complementary traits with others. It is closely associated with individuals’ feelings of acceptance, respect, support, and recognition, as well as their self-esteem, confidence, and happiness, and it facilitates individuals’ active engagement with systems, providing rich emotional, cognitive, and behavioral feedback. Moreover, this process is influenced by environmental and individual factors (Hagerty et al., 1996; Mahar et al., 2013). The findings validate the literature by suggesting that individuals with a strong sense of belonging tend to show increased commitment and loyalty to the organization, particularly during times of crisis or external disruptions. The sense of achievement, confidence, and pride individuals acquire through their engagement within the organization, along with its societal influence and reputation, collectively amplify the satisfaction internal members experience from receiving social respect and recognition. The sense of security the organization provides its members solidifies their identification and reliance on the collective, forming the collective identity.

Collective identity is a psychological connection that reflects an individual’s identification, emotions, and evaluations of an organization to which they belong and the behaviors consistent with it. It encapsulates a sense of belonging, identification, acceptance, and support for the organization’s values and goals. In addition, collective identity yields positive outcomes for both individuals and organizations, elevating individual self-esteem, efficacy, and satisfaction while concurrently enhancing organizational cohesion, commitment, and innovation (Albert et al., 2000; Bose & Patnaik, 2015; Y. Lu, 2023). The findings suggest that collective identity construction begins with members developing a tacit understanding and
consensus regarding the organization’s culture, missions, and values, with the latter playing a pivotal role in bringing together individuals with similar beliefs.

Collective identity also contributes to organizational competitiveness and facilitates adaptability to change, occasionally resulting in prioritizing collective identity over alternative identities (Snow, 2001). In New Oriental’s case, after recognizing the necessity and benefits of change, internal members embrace it to align with evolving market and customer demands, foster diversity, and drive innovation. Despite short-term challenges and discomfort, current members maintain a positive outlook, striking a balance between adapting to change and preserving their original identity and style.

Research highlights that organizational members often resist change due to the anxieties caused by both survival and learning challenges (Coutu, 2002; as cited in Schein & Schein, 2016) triggered by impending changes. These anxieties may arise from fears of losing power or position, perceived incompetency, fear of punishment, loss of personal identity, or group membership (Schein & Schein, 2016). However, the findings of this case study demonstrate that fostering a stable collective identity not only stabilizes members’ group membership but also mitigates anxieties regarding individual identity transition. The collective identity of Xindongfang Ren facilitates members’ voluntary adaptation to new roles or positions. These transitions involve crossing industry or professional boundaries, as exemplified by shifts from teaching or administrative roles to live-streaming hosting or tour guiding during pivotal moments. The integration and flexibility among identities foster open and adaptive dispositions towards role switching, bolstering members’ confidence in the organization’s capacity to surmount challenges.
As a result, members demonstrate a higher commitment to the organization, enhancing its resilience despite individuals experiencing a certain level of personal discomfort and making sacrifices to endure stress and discomfort to some extent. This phenomenon reflects Confucius’s discussion of the relationship between individuals and collectives, as he believed this relationship is reciprocal (Angle, 1998). However, Confucianism has always emphasized the importance of the collective; the essence of valuing the collective lies in doing the best for others and constraining oneself with moral principles rather than constraining others (S. Liu, 1936). Scholars from the Republic of China era argued that the core of Confucian thought did not advocate sacrificing individuals to value the collective; instead, the collective would grow from individuals (Liu, 1936; as cited in Angle, 1998).

Collective identity is shaped predominantly by individual and organizational factors (Bose & Patnaik, 2015). It is neither biologically predetermined nor socially or culturally determined but instead invented, created, reconstructed, or pieced together in specific contexts (Snow, 2001). The findings illustrate that the construction of collective identity within an organization is a dynamic and evolving process shaped by the organization’s development and individual growth. Different generations of members exhibit varying self-identifications, showcasing the inherent adaptability of collective identity to evolve in response to situational and temporal demands. However, maintaining collective identity presents both challenges and opportunities, necessitating collaborative efforts from individuals and the organization to navigate change and transformation. It entails preserving core values and characteristics while fostering creativity and innovation to address evolving needs and transformations.
Contributions From Dimension Two: The Influence and Integration of Western Leadership Paradigm with Chinese Indigenous Leadership Perspectives

This finding elucidates contemporary Chinese leaders’ and employees’ perceptions of how foreign cultures influence leadership development and practice within the context of globalization. It also contributes to indigenous leadership studies by demonstrating how Chinese leaders integrate foreign and indigenous knowledge, providing a pragmatic perspective on leadership development.

Survey findings indicate a significant evolution in Chinese leadership perspectives, drawing from diverse sources such as ancient philosophical works, modern ideologies like Mao Zedong Thought, and insights from successful contemporary Chinese enterprises or entrepreneurs. They collectively represent emblematic Chinese leadership, emphasizing moral cultivation, mental maturity, emotional intelligence, and interpersonal coordination. Respondents view these ideas as crucial for navigating complex environments, fostering inclusive mindsets, and promoting innovation. These findings align with existing literature on Chinese leadership studies, emphasizing moral-based leadership influenced by ancient Chinese philosophy and leader-follower interactions (Ling et al., 2000; Wong, 2001). Moral leadership, appealing to notions of righteousness, obligation, and goodness, resonates within Chinese culture and aligns with New Oriental’s organizational values of integrity and responsibility. The findings also correspond to previous research on Chinese leadership and ethical leadership, emphasizing the importance of building trust and empowering people within leader-follower relationships (Alves et al., 2005; Ling et al., 2000; Tan, 2024).

On the other hand, respondents perceive Western leadership as primarily derived from prominent commercial organizations’ experiences and insights. They emphasize the importance
of clear goals, standardized processes, scientific mechanisms, and task orientation. Western leadership theories are seen as providing frameworks to comprehend and employ various practical tools, facilitating data-driven, quantifiable analysis and decision-making. Compared to Chinese leadership, respondents perceive Western leadership as more conducive to cultivating personal charisma and influence, achieving breakthroughs and accomplishments through self-drive and self-improvement. Respondents also believe that while management tools or models from Western countries are recognized as crucial theoretical underpinnings for leadership development, they do not encompass the entirety of the subject matter. At the same time, people-oriented components are frequently seen as distinctive aspects of Chinese traditional culture.

In leadership studies, Western theories are recognized for their multifaceted nature, encompassing technical methodologies and adaptive elements such as group dynamics, spiritual resilience, and people-oriented approaches. This prompts consideration of what shapes the perceptions of case study participants. The answer may reveal the influence of stereotypes and the reinforcement of perspectives regarding Western leadership.

**Binary Mindset on Viewing “Others” and “Us”**

When comparing foreign and Chinese indigenous leadership perspectives, it is easy to slip into a binary mindset inadvertently. Here, *Western* does not solely refer to geographic Western nations but also to capitalist economies, primarily the United States and Europe, and may extend to Asian capitalist countries like Japan and Singapore, along with their associated leadership theories. Consequently, amidst globalization and competitive pressures, numerous Chinese business leaders gravitate towards adopting Western management practices (Ma & Tsui, 2015). From the interview, it seems that people tend to trust leaders of successful business empires whose experiences are widely documented and disseminated through books,
documentaries, and workshops. Respondents in interviews frequently cited examples of successful business leaders rather than renowned scholars in leadership studies, possibly due to a disconnect between academic research and practical applications, contributing to the reinforcement of stereotypical impressions of Western business leadership in this case study.

The second reason relates to the construction of knowledge. Chinese indigenous leadership perspectives stem from epistemology and methodology rooted in traditional Chinese culture and history, differing fundamentally from mainstream Western academic paradigms. This dichotomy traces back to the late Qing and early Republic of China periods, when Western-inspired disciplinary frameworks supplanted China’s classical knowledge system. Since then, Western epistemology, methodology, and pedagogy have heavily influenced modern Chinese academia, particularly in social sciences like leadership studies (Kurtz, 2014). Due to historical factors, the term Western in Chinese discourse collectively refers to knowledge and viewpoints inspired by US-European perspectives, often resulting in generalizations and oversimplifications, leading to intercultural misunderstandings.

Intercultural misunderstandings often stem from habitual perceptions that separate diverse ways of thinking and cultures, excluding knowledge and culture from different groups, leading to the tendency to overlook the diversity of subcultures within larger cultural domains. Identity construction in intercultural communication involves concepts like otherness and dynamic otherness, which can exacerbate misunderstandings and conflicts (Guttormsen, 2018). Addressing these challenges requires a profound understanding and active engagement with diverse perspectives, beyond mere acknowledgment of cultural differences, to avoid perpetuating national stereotypes (Frenkel et al., 2015). This case study indirectly reveals how stereotypes of Western culture influence the differentiation and comparison of Chinese and Western leadership.
perspectives. Traits such as efficiency, standardization, and focus on technical challenges are associated with Western leadership, while balance, flexibility, and adaptation are attributed to China’s indigenous leadership philosophy.

**Factors Influencing Individual Leadership Preferences across Paradigms**

The findings indicate that organizational members’ different personalities, values, and learning habits influence their adoption of various leadership theories to enhance work and management practices. Individuals with assertive, outgoing personalities and a proclivity for personal heroism are often associated with perceived Western leadership styles. These traits align with their charismatic leadership approach, enabling them to distinguish themselves and achieve success. Conversely, those with gentle, calm, and relationship-oriented personalities are typically characterized as embodying traditional Chinese-style leadership. Their emphasis on moral virtues and adept emotional management informs leadership patterns centered on harmony and collaboration.

Existing literature not only underscores the disparities delineating the roles, functions, and pivotal competencies of leaders and managers but also challenges this dichotomy, recognizing the dialectical interplay inherent between these two organizational roles (Bennis & Nanus, 1986; Gardner, 1988; Kumaran, 2012; Williamson, 1986). The findings augment the discourse on this matter, indicating that organizational members uphold distinct expectations concerning the roles and obligations of leaders compared to managers. Leaders are expected to provide a clear vision, innovative ideas, motivational inspiration, and adaptable guidance, while managers are tasked with executing standardized procedures, furnishing technical assistance, delivering data-driven evaluations, and ensuring quality control.
Significantly, these research findings align with established literature while concurrently introducing fresh perspectives, explicitly highlighting the correlation between job hierarchy, length of service, and the preferences of Chinese leaders towards Western and Chinese leadership styles. Individuals occupying entry- or mid-level leadership positions often self-identify as managers and are inclined towards Western leadership theories due to their pragmatic orientation and emphasis on actionable strategies. Conversely, senior leaders self-ascribe to the role of leaders and exhibit a preference for indigenous Chinese leadership approaches owing to their philosophical profundity and conceptual intricacy. They perceive the transition from task-centric managerial duties to people-centric leadership responsibilities as emblematic of their progression from managers to leaders.

The findings revealed that organizational members exhibit a non-binary approach in application pragmatically, emphasizing integrating Chinese leadership philosophy with Western leadership theories to stimulate innovation. This amalgamation and innovation illustrate Chinese business leaders’ dual pursuit of individual and collective leadership, driven by their values and goals to achieve results and significance across different levels and roles. They aspire for excellence and self-drive in personal leadership while striving for balance and harmony within the collective. These insights contribute to the academic field of leadership research by elucidating the characteristics and motivations of Chinese leaders and highlighting their similarities and differences with Western counterparts.

Another contribution of this study is its elucidation of why Chinese leadership is sometimes perceived as challenging to grasp or define. The findings indicate that leadership ideologies and methodologies, influenced by Chinese traditional culture and philosophy and disseminated through familial, educational, and societal channels, often permeate deeply.
Initially, many interviewees were unaware that certain behavioral norms or principles they followed could be categorized within the domain of leadership theory, as they regarded them as fundamental guidelines for personal conduct or individual moral constraints. Consequently, during discussions of leadership concepts, these elements were disregarded as fundamental components of leadership. Subsequently, Western theories, models, and leadership practices later acquired were more readily acknowledged and articulated. These findings provide valuable guidance for intercultural leadership education and training by addressing leadership needs, challenges, and potential solutions and approaches within diverse cultural contexts.

**Chinese Conceptualization of Leadership**

In this case study, respondents’ flexible, dialectical, and adaptive understanding of leadership offers new insights into the leader-follower relationship. They do not mechanically confine themselves to a specific role or formal authority within the organizational structure. It resonates with the literature that the roles of leaders and followers are always interchangeable based on the *Yin and Yang* framework (Z. Li, 2017). They emphasize the influence of the environment, contexts, and interpersonal relationships on their leadership roles and view leadership as a process, a container, rather than a trait of one or several individuals.

This study’s interpretation of *Niu Dai*[bond] further explores the dialectical and transformative nature between leaders and followers. Group members simultaneously lead superiors and subordinates, taking the role of leaders and followers at the same time. It fosters interaction that connects different interests and needs, facilitating communication and trust building. When combined, multiple *Niu Dais* co-create a favorable environment, maintaining processes and facilitating power flow between individuals, thus promoting organizational vitality.
Moreover, the practice of New Oriental Education demonstrates, within a robust organization, the encouragement of diverse leadership style preferences and experiences, which positively impact the creativity and resilience of the organization. Such inclusivity enables individuals to manifest their influence through different means, enhancing professional competence and competitiveness. The finding further indicates that influence is a skill that can be learned and enhanced through observation, imitation, practice, and feedback. The exercise of influence relies on solid moral constraints and a sense of responsibility; it should not solely serve personal interests or manipulation but fulfill the organization’s mission and vision, promoting societal progress and development.

The findings contribute to the literature on leadership studies by highlighting a significant aspect in the Chinese context: the distinction between influence and leadership. In this context, influence and leadership are independent yet interconnected, necessitating individuals to adapt their methods and strategies as circumstances evolve. Different leadership styles and influence techniques may yield varied outcomes, requiring flexibility based on specific situations. While some perspectives suggest that leadership is fundamentally about influence, these concepts can be effectively integrated through active listening and effective communication. By fostering trust, promoting collaboration, seeking consensus, and cultivating mutually beneficial relationships, internal members of an organization can influence and lead others, irrespective of their formal roles or authority. It reflects leadership’s bidirectional and interactive nature, resulting in a complex and dynamic process. Individual diversity is maintained while collective unity is formed (S. M. Ospina et al., 2012).

*Mao and Dun During Organizational Change.* The study also contributes to understanding organizational dynamics by discussing the *Mao Dun* issue. One interviewee
offered a compelling perspective on *Mao Dun*\(^7\) within organizations, suggesting that different levels of complexity emerge as an enterprise expands. Mature large companies encounter *Mao Dun*, characterized by challenges in personnel, tasks, technology, and adaptability. Addressing these complexities requires simultaneous attention from leaders. The solution lies not in eliminating *Mao Dun* but in maintaining a relatively balanced dynamic equilibrium. Leadership is pivotal in this context, ensuring equilibrium within a dynamic system. This viewpoint fundamentally challenges the essential leadership capacity of “problem-solving.” Within *Mao Dun*’s epistemology framework, problems are viewed as incapable of being fully resolved or eradicated; instead, maintaining dynamic equilibrium is regarded as the optimal means of propelling progress forward.

Insights from New Oriental’s leadership practices reveal that leadership is not a linear process but a distributed dynamic one. Various organizational sectors, such as strategy, systems, culture, and performance, interact, leading to interpersonal dynamics characterized by uncertainty or unpredictability. Leaders must possess the ability to respond to and accommodate these ambiguous, concurrently occurring events, thereby driving organizational development.

The findings show that relational leadership and transformational leadership play a more significant role in addressing the complex and uncertain dynamics within the organization and the changing external environment, as leadership styles at New Oriental Education embody these two leadership styles the most. Most members exhibit a strong attachment and identification with the organization, connecting through emotional and cognitive resonance rather than relying on titles and orders. Perspectives among participants collectively emphasize mutual growth among

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\(^7\) *Mao Dun*, spear-shield. A Chinese term refers to *irresistible force paradox*. This term originates from a story in the 3rd century BC philosophical book *Han Feizi*. A man trying to sell a spear and a shield claimed that his spear could pierce any shield, and then claimed that his shield was unpierceable. Then, asked about what would happen if he were to take his spear to strike his shield, the seller could not answer.
individuals rather than mere interaction between objects. Leaders inspire and motivate followers while exerting idealized influence and building emotional connections with other members. They also prioritize internal members’ personal development and future (Avolio, 2023; Dugan, 2017). The study also indicates that fostering leadership skills cannot be achieved through a mechanized standard but needs exploration, experimentation, and adaptation to individual circumstances and contexts. The organization’s mission and vision advancement relies on mutual influence and creativity rather than solely depending on predefined roles or formal authority for leadership allocation, aligning with the aforementioned organizational culture.

**Authorization.** The findings contribute to the discussion of authorization by indicating whether leaders are willing to acknowledge situations where their subordinates may be more successful or capable than themselves. Their motives and concerns regarding the authorization are intricately linked to their sense of security in their leadership position, directly impacting their willingness and the extent to which they authorize others. Effective internal communication and authorization emerge as critical factors for fostering trust, enhancing team cohesion, and promoting adaptability in uncertain environments.

The findings also indicate that effective communication not only sustains internal dynamism and flexibility but also facilitates connectivity with various stakeholders, including government entities, competitors, and customers. This permeable boundary proves invaluable in bolstering the team’s ability to navigate uncertainty and risk. Furthermore, the study advocates for a dialectical relationship between leaders and followers, wherein leaders refrain from directly instructing employees to solve problems but instead cultivate employee learning, growth, and autonomy within a supportive environment. This supportive approach fosters team cohesion and enhances resilience when confronted with external challenges. In this case study, authorization
exemplifies egalitarianism (Burke, 1986; Keller & Dansereau, 1995), as leaders discard traditional roles of authority, parental figures, or mentors, fostering a reciprocal empowerment process that enhances efficiency, facilitates goal attainment, and enriches organizational culture.

Conclusion

Organizational change is an essential response to external shocks, with organizational culture and collective identity serving as vital foundations for such transformations. Organizational culture embodies the organization’s mission, values, and distinctive traits, inspiring excellence, innovation, and adaptability. It nurtures emotional bonds, reciprocal support, and a growth mindset among organizational members. Meanwhile, collective identity signifies members’ sense of belonging and alignment with the organization and their endorsement and advocacy of its values and objectives.

The synergy between organizational culture and collective identity can bolster organizational resilience and recovery, enhance employee commitment and engagement, mitigate resistance and risks associated with change, and elevate the efficiency and effectiveness of change initiatives. Simultaneously, cultivating individuals’ and organizations’ capacity for adaptive learning of new knowledge and skills is pivotal for navigating external environmental shifts and challenges.

Leadership constitutes a central component that influences and propels organizational change. In this study, the cultivation and application of leadership necessitate an integration of Chinese indigenous leadership philosophy with Western leadership theories. Recognizing that there is no universally ideal leadership style, individuals should select leadership development approaches and practices that align with their respective roles, experiences, and requirements. Also, combining indigenous leadership philosophies with diverse leadership theories is crucial
for fostering innovation. Such intercultural amalgamation and innovation enable leaders to simultaneously pursue personal and collective leadership expectations, thereby attaining value and goals across diverse levels and roles.

**Implications and Recommendations**

**Implications from the Double Reduction Policy**

The Double Reduction policy, unique to China and aimed at the tutoring industry, has broad implications beyond its intended sector. It reveals hidden challenges masked by rapid growth and necessitates a proactive stance from leaders. Organizational leaders should remain vigilant and proactive in response to external changes, avoiding profit-driven approaches that overlook vulnerabilities. Moreover, private companies should harmonize with state regulations and societal demands, considering both immediate and future objectives. For example, in China, where educational equity is a national strategic priority, tutoring sector executives confront the conflict between national interests and financial gains, underscoring the urgency for sector-wide introspection. Despite the challenges posed by the policy, respondents’ strategic analyses and choices have led to widespread support for its long-term goals. It underscores the importance of aligning organizational development with the country’s overarching developmental trajectory while exploring innovative approaches.

**Implications for Organizational Leaders**

Reflecting on the leadership practices at New Oriental Education, the experiences of these leaders elucidate that leadership is not innate but rather a skill that can be honed through learning and development. Individuals can expand their leadership capabilities by adopting a proactive approach to learning and participating in leadership training programs. Prioritizing self-awareness and reflection allows organizational leaders to assess and improve their leadership
styles, enhancing effectiveness and influence. By establishing and communicating a clear vision, goals, values, and standards, leaders can guide and coordinate the diverse interests and needs within the organization, fostering creativity, performance, and impact. During external shocks or crises, leaders should proactively seek and capitalize on incremental opportunities, however small, to instill hope among employees, ensuring effective change management.

Leadership and organizational culture are inherently intertwined, and effective leadership enhances this culture and internal consensus, equipping teams to handle disruptions and foster unity and resilience. Leaders are responsible for empowering individuals, advancing their competencies, addressing their needs, and fostering dedication and professionalism. It is incumbent upon leaders to seek outcomes that are advantageous to all parties rather than exploiting or sacrificing them. Irrespective of circumstances, emphasizing members’ welfare and growth, equitable recompense, and promoting trust and respect are imperative for nurturing a collaborative and inventive team dynamic.

Leadership extends beyond formal roles and is attainable through open-mindedness, continuous learning, innovation, and personal growth. Effective communication and collaboration are crucial in change management, which requires active idea expression, participation in organizational initiatives, and experience sharing to attain goals. Supporting emerging businesses during organizational change is crucial, necessitating consideration of employees’ needs and perspectives, with attentive listening being especially important.

**Implications for Leadership Researchers and Scholars**

In the field of leadership studies, the importance of intercultural communication cannot be overstated. Epistemological and ideological disparities often lead to profound cognitive gaps in intercultural interactions. These gaps are particularly pronounced when they occur between
dominant epistemologies aligned with societal norms and marginalized cultures. Hence, there is a critical need for heightened awareness of these disparities. Moreover, it is imperative for leadership researchers to prioritize the exploration of indigenous leadership perspectives across diverse cultures. A comprehensive understanding of the diversity and unique attributes of these perspectives in comparison to dominant leadership paradigms is essential for evaluating their relevance and effectiveness across varied cultural contexts.

To achieve this goal, researchers need to adopt an inclusive approach that transcends cultural and disciplinary boundaries, integrating theoretical frameworks with practical applications. Furthermore, considering both local and global viewpoints is indispensable for generating nuanced insights. Effective bridging of the theory-practice gap necessitates active engagement with real-world contexts, facilitating the translation of research findings into actionable guidance. Embracing this approach yields more profound and compelling insights in the field of leadership research.

During interviews with former colleagues, I initially doubted the meaning of investing considerable time within academic circles, while my colleagues, experienced practitioners, had already gained this knowledge through practical experience, though not always immediately aware of their correctness. They likened their developmental journey to the Chinese proverb Mozhe Shitou Guohe\(^8\)[Crossing the river by feeling the stones]. The validation provided by my research affirmed their practices and ideas’ effectiveness and encouraged their personal growth and leadership development. This experience underscored the importance of practicing, learning,

\(^8\) Figuratively, this idiom conveys the idea of figuring things out as you go along, much like wading through a river by feeling the stones on the riverbed with your feet. It implies a cautious and experimental approach, where progress is made through trial and error.
and reflecting, reminiscent of Confucius’ saying: “To learn without thinking led to confusion; to think without learning led to lost.”

**Implications of Leadership Development Practice**

Organizations implementing internal leadership development systems should prioritize integrating theory and practice to enhance leadership capabilities. Insights from this study suggest that employees highly value the integration of real-life scenarios with theoretical concepts, indicating that combining theory and practice can enhance the effectiveness and satisfaction of leadership training initiatives. The leadership development approach should go beyond mechanically teaching concepts and foster a cyclical progression from practice to theory. Within this framework, leaders are expected to cultivate an environment conducive to members’ learning, growth, and personal goal achievement by providing necessary support and feedback, stimulating subordinate initiative and creativity, and fostering collective progress.

Talent development overseers must recognize that training solely based on existing business practices may yield short-term benefits to individuals but may not drive long-term organizational transformation. Therefore, leadership training initiatives should prioritize equipping participants with skills to navigate uncertainty, including decision-making, analytical thinking, courage, resilience, and other essential abilities required for effective leadership in uncertain environments. In addition, organizations should prioritize individualizing talent development models within internal leadership development systems. Personalized talent development models address diverse member needs, fostering commitment and belonging. Establishing such a system cultivates an inclusive and diversified talent pool, enhancing skills and innovation and strengthening the organization’s competitiveness and innovative capacity.
Initiatives such as job rotations broaden perspectives and enrich experiences, fostering internal mobility and skill enrichment.

Supervisors for leadership training should prioritize understanding the needs of internal members. Accessible leadership theories and models can broaden trainees’ understanding and provide new perspectives and tools, while successful cases and experiences offer valuable learning opportunities. However, mindlessly replicating successful experiences without considering contextual factors, personalized scenarios, and member characteristics should be avoided. Moreover, cultivating self-awareness and reflective abilities is increasingly recognized as crucial in leadership development. Individuals value training that enhances self-awareness, encourages introspection, and updates perspectives. In conclusion, personalized talent development models complement internal leadership development systems, reflecting a growing trend in leadership development practices.

Limitations

While my study provides valuable insights into leadership studies, it is essential to acknowledge its limitations. These constraints shape the scope and generalizability of the findings. In this section, I discuss the key limitations encountered during our research:

Sample Size and Selection

The sample selection in this study may introduce bias, primarily influenced by time constraints and the feasibility of data acquisition. Since the sample comprises only current employees, the perspectives and experiences of those who left during organizational changes were not captured, potentially limiting understanding of their reasons for departure. These insights are crucial for analyzing organizational changes and employee turnover rates at New Oriental Education.
Additionally, due to the limited sample size and focus solely on employees from New Oriental Xi’an School, the study may not fully represent the organizational characteristics and trends of New Oriental Education nationwide. Consequently, the generalizability of the study results to other organizations or contexts may be limited, necessitating additional evidence and data for support and validation. Furthermore, the Xi’an school, as a subculture within New Oriental Education’s broader organizational culture, merits further investigation into its relationship with and impact on the overall organizational culture.

**Data Collection and Analysis**

The data collection and analysis process in this study were also constrained by time and resource limitations, leading to a reliance on descriptive statistics and thematic analysis methods. This reliance on such methods lacked depth and detail, posing challenges in uncovering complex causal relationships and mechanisms. While existing thematic analysis and descriptive statistics have revealed some patterns and trends in the data, employing inferential statistics could enhance the robustness of the findings. For instance, this study did not utilize advanced analytical methods such as structural equation modeling or multilevel linear modeling to examine the impact of New Oriental Education’s organizational culture and leadership on employee performance and satisfaction, preferences for different leadership paradigms and their influencing factors, as well as the moderating effects of external shocks on employee performance and satisfaction. These analytical approaches could offer additional insights, explanations, and robust causal inferences. Consequently, there may be issues regarding the quality and validity of the study data and the reliability and accuracy of the research findings, warranting further scrutiny and refinement.
Contextual Factors.

As the primary researcher in this study, my background and standpoint may lead to blind spots and omissions. My intercultural background could have a double-sided impact on the construction and design of the research questions. On one hand, it provides me with valuable perspectives to examine the nuances of viewing the same issues from different standpoints. On the other hand, it may also introduce blind spots in certain aspects. For instance, in discussions regarding identity issues, as members of the masses\textsuperscript{9} and having lived in the United States for a considerable period may have subconsciously led me to overlook the role of party membership in the daily lives of Chinese individuals, thus completely neglecting to inquire about the influence of political identity on interviewees when designing interview questions.

However, many interviewees spontaneously mentioned the role of their political identity in their daily and professional lives during the interviews. Political identity may have different meanings for individuals in different countries and under different systems, influencing their decisions and behaviors at critical moments. Although these decisions and behaviors may seem trivial, they can significantly affect the collective. Therefore, this study may not have fully considered the importance and influence of political identity, necessitating further attention and exploration.

Future Research

This case study explores organizational change amidst external shocks and examines the interplay between organizational culture and leadership development, mainly focusing on

\textsuperscript{9} The masses are a political identity that refers to ordinary citizens who have not joined the Communist Party of China or the Communist Youth League. There is usually no special political identity and influence or a specific political background.
integrating Chinese and Western leadership approaches. Through this analysis, several subthemes emerged, suggesting avenues for future research:

1. A deeper examination of diversity, inclusivity, and equity within the Chinese context is warranted. It entails investigating strategies to cultivate a diverse organizational environment and advance employee equity through inclusive policies and practices, thus refining local understandings of these concepts within a cross-cultural context.

2. Further investigation into the relationship between gender and leadership in Chinese enterprises is necessary. It encompasses exploring not only issues of gender equality but also how gender influences leadership development and performance, as well as identifying ways businesses can support the advancement of female leaders. This research should contextualize gender dynamics within cultural frameworks to contribute to the broader field of gender and leadership studies.

3. Quantitative analysis is needed to explore the relationship between individuals’ preferences for leadership theories and other factors identified in this study. This analysis will shed light on how leadership theories can be tailored to individual needs and effectively applied in practice, enhancing our understanding of leadership theory adoption and implementation.
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I. Purpose of the research study

Yihe Yang is a Student in the Department of Leadership Studies, School of Leadership and Education Science, the University of San Diego. You are invited to participate in a research study he/she is conducting. The purpose of this research study is to explore how the leaders of New Oriental manage organizational change in response to government policy change aimed at educational reform since 2021 and how the interplay of Western and Chinese leadership concepts shape their leadership approach to organizational change.

II. What you will be asked to do

If you decide to be in this study, you will be asked to:

Participate in an in-person or virtual interview, depending on your preference, about your experience with the organizational change process at New Oriental Xi’an School since the double reduction policy in 2021.

You will be recorded audio-only during an in-person interview. If the interview is conducted via Zoom, you will be requested to change your name to a pseudonym and turn off the camera feature to ensure that your face and real name do not appear on the screen. Also, the Zoom interview will be recorded audio-only.

Your participation in this study will take a total of 60 minutes.

III. Foreseeable risks or discomforts

Sometimes when people are asked to think about their feelings, they feel sad or anxious. If you would like to talk to someone about your feelings at any time, you can call toll-free, 24 hours a day:

Xi’an City Mental Health Center Hotline at 400896096

IV. Benefits

While there may be no direct benefit to you from participating in this study, the indirect benefit of participating will know that you helped researchers better understand how organizational leaders can effectively manage the organizational change process in the face of external shocks while also exploring the impact of intercultural leadership on organizational members. Your participation will also help identify strategies and practices to enhance leadership effectiveness during change and foster positive outcomes for organizational members.

V. Confidentiality

Any information provided and/or identifying records will remain confidential and kept in a locked file and/or password-protected computer file in the researcher’s office for a minimum of five years. All data collected from you will be coded with a number or pseudonym (fake name). Your real name will not be used. The results of this research project may be made public and information quoted in professional journals and meetings, but information from this study will only be reported as a group and not individually.

The information or materials you provide will be cleansed of all identifiers (like your name) and may be used in future research.
VI. **Compensation**
You will receive no compensation for your participation in the study.

VII. **Voluntary Nature of this Research**
Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You do not have to do this; you can refuse to answer any question or quit at any time. Deciding not to participate or not answering any of the questions will not affect any benefits you are entitled to, like your health care, or your employment, or grades. You can withdraw from this study at any time without penalty.

VIII. **Contact Information**
If you have any questions about this research, you may contact either:
1). Yihe Yang: yiheyang@sandiego.edu
2). Antonio Jimenez Luque: ajimenezluque@sandiego.edu
I have read and understand this form and consent to the research it describes to me. I have received a copy of this consent form for my records.

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研究项目名称：
《跨文化视角下的组织变革管理：以新东方教育集团的领导力为案例研究》

1. 研究目的
本研究由圣地亚哥大学领导研究部门的博士候选人杨一荷进行。邀请您参与此研究，旨在探索自 2021 年以来，新东方教育领导者在应对旨在教育改革的政府政策变化时，如何管理组织变革，并探究西方和中国领导理念的相互作用对他们在组织变革中的领导方式产生的影响。

2. 研究参与要求
如果决定参与本研究，将需要进行以下操作：
根据您的偏好，参加面谈或线上访谈，并谈谈您对新东方西安学校自 2021 年双减政策以来的组织变革过程的体验。
当面访谈时，您将被录音。如果通过视频进行访谈，您将被要求将您的姓名改为化名，并关闭摄像功能，以确保您的脸和真实姓名不会出现在屏幕上。此外，视频访谈将只录制音频。访谈预计需要 60 分钟。

3. 可能的风险或不适
在被要求思考自己的感受时，有时人们可能会感到悲伤或焦虑。如果您随时希望与他人交谈倾诉自己的感受，可以随时拨打免费电话：
西安市卫生中心热线电话：400896096

4. 研究带来的益处
尽管您参与本研究可能没有直接的个人利益，但通过参与，您有助于研究人员更好地了解组织领导者如何有效管理组织变革过程，应对外部冲击，并探索跨文化领导力对组织成员的影响。您的参与还将有助于确定在变革时期提升领导力效能、促进组织成员积极结果的策略和实践。

5. 保密性
您提供的任何信息和身份记录将保持机密，并存放在研究人员办公室的锁定文件和/或受密码保护的计算机文件中，至少保存五年。您提供的所有数据将通过编号或化名进行编码，不会使用真实姓名。研究项目的结果可能会公开，并在专业期刊和会议上引用信息，但只会以群体的方式报告，不会逐个个体报告。
您提供的信息或材料将被去除所有标识符（如姓名），并可能在未来的研究中使用。

6. 报酬
您参与本研究不会获得任何报酬。
7. 研究的自愿性质

参与本研究完全是自愿的。您无需参与，可以拒绝回答任何问题或随时退出。您决定不参与或不回答任何问题不会对您享受的任何权益产生影响，例如医疗保健、就业或绩效。您可以随时自由退出本研究，不会受到任何处罚。

8. 联系信息

如果您对此研究有任何疑问，可以联系以下任一人员：
1). 研究员：杨一荷，yiheyang@sandiego.edu
2). 导师：安东尼奥·吉门内斯·卢克，ajimenezluque@sandiego.edu

我已阅读并理解本同意书，同意参与描述的研究。我已收到本同意书的副本供我查阅。

参与者签名

日期

参与者姓名（正楷）

调查员签名

日期
University of San Diego Institutional Review Board

Research Participant Adult Consent Form

For the research study entitled:
Intercultural Perspectives on Managing Organizational Change in Response to Government Policy Reform: A Case Study on the Leadership of New Oriental Education

I. Purpose of the research study
Yihe Yang is a Student in the Department of Leadership Studies, School of Leadership and Education Science, the University of San Diego. You are invited to participate in a research study he/she is conducting. The purpose of this research study is to explore how the leaders of New Oriental manage organizational change in response to government policy change aimed at educational reform since 2021 and how the interplay of Western and Chinese leadership concepts shape their leadership approach to organizational change.

II. What you will be asked to do
If you decide to be in this study, you will be asked to:
Complete one online questionnaire that asks you questions about your basic demographic information and how you experienced the organizational change process at New Oriental Xi’an School since the double reduction policy in 2021.
Your participation in this study will take a total of 20 - 30 minutes.

III. Foreseeable risks or discomforts
Sometimes when people are asked to think about their feelings, they feel sad or anxious. If you would like to talk to someone about your feelings at any time, you can call toll-free, 24 hours a day:
Xi’an City Mental Health Center Hotline at 400896096

IV. Benefits
While there may be no direct benefit to you from participating in this study, the indirect benefit of participating will know that you helped researchers better understand how organizational leaders can effectively manage the organizational change process in the face of external shocks while also exploring the impact of cross-cultural leadership on organizational members. Your participation will also help identify strategies and practices that can enhance leadership effectiveness in times of change and foster positive outcomes for organizational members.

V. Confidentiality
Any information provided and/or identifying records will remain confidential and kept in a locked file and/or password-protected computer file in the researcher’s office for a minimum of five years. All data collected from you will be coded with a number or pseudonym (fake name). Your real name will not be used. The results of this research project may be made public and information quoted in professional journals and meetings, but information from this study will only be reported as a group and not individually.
The information or materials you provide will be cleansed of all identifiers (like your name) and may be used in future research.

VI. Compensation
a). You will receive no compensation for your participation in the study.

VII. Voluntary Nature of this Research
Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You do not have to do this; you can refuse to answer any question or quit at any time. Deciding not to participate or not answering any of the questions will not affect any benefits you are entitled to, like your health care, or your employment, or grades. You can withdraw from this study at any time without penalty.

VIII. Contact Information
If you have any questions about this research, you may contact either:
1). Yihe Yang: yiheyang@sandiego.edu
2). Antonio Jimenez Luque: ajimenezluque@sandiego.edu

I have read and understand this form and consent to the research it describes to me. I have received a copy of this consent form for my records.

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| Signature of Investigator | Date |
APPENDIX D Informed Consent Form For Survey (Chinese)

圣地亚哥大学机构审查委员会 研究参与者成人同意书

研究项目名称：
《应对政策改革时组织变革管理的跨文化视角：关于新东方教育领导力的案例研究》

1. 研究目的
本研究由圣地亚哥大学领导研究部门的学生杨一荷进行。邀请您参与此研究，旨在探索自2021年以来，新东方教育领导者在应对旨在教育改革的政府政策变化时，如何管理组织变革，并探究西方和中国领导理念的相互作用对他们在组织变革中的领导方式产生的影响。

2. 研究参与要求
如果您决定参与本研究，将需要进行以下操作：
完成一份问卷，其中包括关于您的基本人口统计信息以及您在新东方西安学校自2021年“双减”政策以来的组织变革过程中的经历。
参与此研究预计需要30分钟。

3. 可能的风险或不适
在被要求思考自己的感受时，有时人们可能会感到悲伤或焦虑。如果您随时希望与他人交谈倾诉自己的感受，可以随时拨打免费电话：
西安市心理卫生中心热线电话：400896096

4. 研究带来的益处
尽管您参与本研究可能没有直接的个人利益，但通过参与，您有助于研究人员更好地了解组织领导者如何有效管理组织变革过程，应对外部冲击，并探索跨文化领导力对组织成员的影响。您的参与还将有助于确定在变革时期提升领导力效能、促进组织成员积极结果的策略和实践。

5. 保密性
您提供的任何信息和身份记录将保持机密，并存放在研究人员办公室的锁定文件夹/或受密码保护的计算机文件中，至少保存五年。您提供的所有数据将通过编号或化名进行编码，不会使用真实姓名。研究项目的结果可能会公开，并在专业期刊和会议上引用信息，但只会以群体的方式报告，不会逐个个体报告。
您提供的信息或材料将被去除所有标识符（如姓名），并可能在未来的研究中使用。

6. 报酬
您参与本研究不会获得任何报酬。

7. 研究的自愿性质
参与本研究完全是自愿的。您无需参与，可以拒绝回答任何问题或随时退出。您决定不参与或不回答任何问题不会对您享受的任何权益产生影响，例如医疗保健、就业或绩效。您可以随时自由退出本研究，不会受到任何处罚。

8. 联系信息
如果您对此研究有任何疑问，可以联系以下任一人员：
1). 杨一荷：yiheyang@sandiego.edu
2). 安东尼奥·吉门内斯·卢克：ajimenezluque@sandiego.edu
我已阅读并理解本同意书，同意参与描述的研究。我已收到本同意书的副本供我查阅。

参与者签名

参与者姓名（正楷）

调查员签名

日期
**Introduction**
Hello, Mr./Ms. X,

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. My name is Yihe Yang, a former employee of New Oriental Xi’an School and a doctoral student at the University of San Diego. I am conducting a study on leadership responses to policy changes in New Oriental Education. This research aims to investigate the leadership styles, strategies, and actions adopted by New Oriental in response to government policy changes, as well as how the interaction of Chinese and Western leadership philosophies influences the organization’s response to change.

Your participation in this interview is voluntary and confidential. You may choose to answer or skip any questions you wish. Your responses will be used solely for research purposes and will not affect your relationship with New Oriental Education. The interview is expected to take approximately 60 minutes to complete. With your consent, I will record the interview and transcribe it later for analysis.

If you have any questions or concerns about the interview or the research, please feel free to ask me.

**Basic Information**
Before we begin, I would like to ask you some questions about your basic information.
1. What is your position at New Oriental Xi’an School?
2. How long have you been working at New Oriental Xi’an School?
3. What are your primary responsibilities or roles in your position?
4. How do you understand the difference between a leader and a manager? Do you see yourself more as a leader or a manager most of the time?
5. Have you participated in various forms of leadership development programs, such as training, workshops, lectures, etc., since joining New Oriental? How do you evaluate these programs? What do these programs mainly teach? Are they more Chinese-oriented or Western-oriented?
6. How familiar are you with leadership theories or research from both Eastern and Western perspectives?

**Leadership Style**
Now I would like to ask you some questions about your leadership style and how it influences the organizational change process.
1. How would you describe your overall leadership style?
2. How does your leadership style change or adapt to constantly changing situations and challenges?
3. How do you communicate your vision and goals for the organization to employees? How do you motivate employees to identify with your vision and values?
4. How do you involve employees in decision-making and problem-solving?
5. During the organizational change process, how do you provide feedback and recognition for employees’ achievements/how do you empower employees and instill a sense of responsibility?
   • How does this practice align or conflict with your personal or professional values?
   • How does this practice reflect your consistent leadership style or differ from it?

**Communication Strategies**

Next, I would like to ask you some questions about the communication strategies you use or encounter during the organizational change process.

1. How do you assess the frequency of communication within the leadership team during the organizational change process (such as meetings, emails, communications)?
2. How do you assess the clarity of communication within the leadership team (such as goals, expectations, reasons)?
3. How do you assess the consistency of communication within the leadership team (for example, information, tone, style)?
4. How do you assess the transparency of communication within the leadership team during the organizational change process (such as honesty, openness, feedback)?
5. How do you assess the communication responsiveness of the leadership team (such as listening, answering questions, addressing concerns)?
6. What examples have you observed or experienced of effective or ineffective communication methods?
   Some possible follow-up questions or explorations for this section are:
   • How does this practice align or conflict with your communication preferences or expectations?
   • How does this practice reflect or differ from your usual communication style?

**Change Management Process**

Now I would like to ask you some questions about the change management processes you have implemented or participated in during the organizational change process.

1. How do you assess the overall situation of the change management process?
2. How does the change management process align with the organization’s vision and mission?
3. How do you involve employees and other stakeholders in the change management process? (Provide training and support?)
4. How do you address potential risks and challenges of the change management process and its outcomes?
5. What successful or unsuccessful change management practices have you observed or experienced during the organizational change process?
   Some possible follow-up questions or explorations for this section are:
   • How does this practice affect your level of preparedness or resistance to change?
   • How does this practice align or conflict with your goals or expectations for change?
   • How does this practice reflect or differ from your usual change management style?

**Organizational Performance**

I would like to ask you some questions about the impact of organizational change on the performance of New Oriental Xi’an School.
1. How do you evaluate the impact of organizational change on the leadership capacity and potential of New Oriental Xi’an School?
2. How do you evaluate the impact of organizational change on the social and environmental responsibility of New Oriental Xi’an School?
3. How do you evaluate the impact of organizational change on the quality of products and services provided by New Oriental Xi’an School?
4. How do you evaluate the impact of organizational change on customer satisfaction and loyalty at New Oriental Xi’an School?
5. How do you evaluate the impact of organizational change on the financial performance and sustainability of New Oriental Xi’an School?
6. How do you evaluate the impact of organizational change on the competitive advantage and market position of New Oriental Xi’an School?
7. How do you evaluate the impact of organizational change on the organizational culture and atmosphere of New Oriental Xi’an School?
8. How do you evaluate the impact of organizational change on employee engagement and retention at New Oriental Xi’an School?

**Intercultural Impact on Leadership Concepts**

1. Which leadership concepts or theories from Western or Chinese traditions have influenced your leadership decisions and actions?
2. Do you think we should integrate or use Western and Chinese leadership concepts separately? If the former, what are the benefits and challenges?
3. In the change management process, which major achievements or successes do you attribute to the use of Western and Chinese leadership concepts?
4. In the change management process, what are the main challenges or difficulties you think are brought about by the use of Western and Chinese leadership concepts?
5. How do you learn about Western and Chinese leadership concepts? Through what channels or resources?
6. In your work, what opportunities or experiences do you have to practice and apply Western and Chinese leadership concepts?
7. What feedback or support have you received to improve your leadership skills and knowledge based on Western and Chinese leadership concepts?

Some possible follow-up questions or explorations for this section are:
- How do you balance the use of Western and Chinese leadership concepts in different situations or contexts?
- How did you become familiar with these leadership concepts or theories?
- How do you choose which leadership concepts or theories to use in different situations or contexts?
- How do you handle conflicts or contradictions between Western and Chinese leadership concepts?
- How do you adjust or modify Western and Chinese leadership concepts to fit your organization and its needs?
- How do you communicate and motivate your followers using Western and Chinese leadership concepts?
- How do you view the effectiveness and outcomes of Western and Chinese leadership concepts on the change management process?
• How do you measure or evaluate the impact of Western and Chinese leadership concepts on the change management process and its outcomes?
• How do you learn and develop your leadership skills and knowledge based on Western and Chinese leadership concepts?

**Concluding Questions**

• Who do you think has played the most important role in leading New Oriental Xi’an School to respond to the “Double Reduction” policy and achieve organizational change?
• Do you think the introduction of the “Double Reduction” policy was an unforeseeable or unexpected event?
• Do you think New Oriental and Xi’an School would have made similar organizational changes to the current stage without the “Double Reduction” policy?
• Do you think this organizational change has altered the mission and vision of New Oriental Education?
• Do you consider this organizational change at New Oriental Xi’an School successful?

Thank you for completing this interview. Your answers are valuable to this research and will be kept confidential and anonymous.
新东方西安学校管理者在组织变革中的领导实践与经验访谈指南

**简介**

X 老师您好，

感谢您同意参加这次采访。我叫杨一荷，是新东方西安学校的前员工，也是圣地亚哥大学的博士生。我正在进行一项关于新东方教育的领导力应对政策变化的研究。该研究旨在调查新东方在应对政府政策变化时采取的领导方式、策略和行动，以及中西方领导理念的相互作用如何影响该组织对变化的反应。

您对本次访谈的参与是自愿的和保密的。您可以选择回答或跳过任何您想回答的问题。您的回答将只用于研究目的，不会影响您与新东方教育的关系。访谈将需要大约 30-60 分钟来完成。在征得您的同意后，我将对访谈进行录音，并在稍后转录以供分析。

如果您对访谈或研究有任何问题或担忧，请随时向我提出。

1. 在我们开始之前，您有什么问题吗？
2. 您是否同意参加这次访谈？
3. 您是否同意对这次采访进行录音？

**基本信息** 在我们开始之前，我想问您一些关于您的基本信息。

1. 您在新东方西安学校的职务是什么？
2. 您在新东方西安学校工作了多长时间？
3. 您在您的职位上的主要职责或角色是什么？
4. 您如何理解领导者和管理员的区别？您认为自己更多时候承担的角色是一个领导者还是一个管理者？
5. 您在加入新东方后是否有参与过各种形式的领导力发展项目，例如培训，工作坊，讲座等？您如何评价这些项目？这些项目主要教授什么内容？偏中式还是西式？
6. 您对中西方各自的领导力理论或研究了解情况如何？

**领导风格** 现在我想问您一些关于您的领导风格以及它是如何影响组织变革进程的问题。

1. 您如何描述您的总体领导风格？
2. 您的领导风格是如何改变或适应不断变化的情况和挑战的？
3. 您是如何向员工传达您对组织未来的愿景和目标的？您是如何激励员工认同您的愿景和价值观的？
4. 您是如何让员工参与决策和解决问题的？
5. 在组织变革过程中，您是如何对员工的成就进行反馈和认可的/如何赋予员工主动权和责任感的？
**沟通策略** 接下来，我想问您一些关于您在组织变革过程中使用或遇到的沟通策略的问题。
1. 您如何评价组织变革过程中领导团队的沟通频率（如会议、电子邮件、通讯）？
2. 您如何评价领导团队沟通的清晰度（如：目标、期望、理由）？
3. 您如何评价领导团队沟通的一致性（例如，信息、语气、风格）？
4. 您如何评价领导团队在组织变革过程中的沟通透明度（如诚实、开放、反馈）？
5. 您如何评价领导团队的沟通反应能力（如倾听、回答问题、解决疑虑）？
6. 您观察到或经历过哪些有效或无效的沟通方式的例子？

**变革管理过程** 现在我想问您一些关于您在组织变革过程中实施或参与的变革管理过程的问题。
1. 您如何评价变革管理过程的总体情况？
2. 变革管理过程是如何与组织的愿景和使命相一致的？
3. 在变革管理过程中，您是如何让员工和其他利益相关者参与其中？（提供培训和支持？）
4. 您是如何应对变革管理过程及其结果的潜在风险和挑战的？
5. 在组织变革过程中，您观察到或经历过哪些成功或不成功的变革管理实践案例？

**组织绩效** 我想问您一些关于组织变革对新东方西安学校绩效的影响的问题。
1. 您如何评价组织变革对新东方西安学校的领导能力和潜力的影响？
2. 您如何评价组织变革对新东方西安学校的社会和环境责任的影响？
3. 您如何评价组织变革对新东方西安学校所提供的产品和服务质量的影响？
4. 您如何评价组织变革对新东方西安学校的客户满意度和忠诚度的影响？
5. 您如何评价组织变革对新东方西安学校的财务业绩和可持续性的影响？
6. 您如何评价组织变革对新东方西安学校的竞争优势和市场地位的影响？
7. 您如何评价组织变革对新东方西安学校的组织文化和氛围的影响？
8. 您如何评价组织变革对新东方西安学校的员工参与度和保留率的影响？
**对领导力概念的跨文化影响**

1. 来自西方或中国传统的哪些领导理念或理论影响了您的领导决策和行动？
2. 您认为我们应该结合还是单独使用西方和中国的领导力概念，如果是前者，其好处和挑战是什么？
3. 在变革管理过程中，您将哪些主要成就或成功归功于西方和中国领导力概念的使用？
4. 在变革管理过程中，您认为使用西方和中国的领导力概念带来的主要挑战或困难是什么？
5. 您通过什么渠道或资源来学习西方和中国的领导力概念？
6. 在工作中，您有哪些机会或经历来实践和运用中西方领导力概念？
7. 您得到了哪些反馈或支持来提高您的领导技能和基于中西方领导理念的知识？

本节的一些可能的后续问题或探究是：
- 您是如何在不同的情况或背景下平衡使用西方和中国的领导理念的？
- 您是如何熟悉这些领导力概念或理论的？
- 您是如何选择在不同场合或背景下使用哪些领导力概念或理论的？
- 您是如何处理中西方领导力概念之间的冲突或矛盾的？
- 您是如何调整或修改西方和中国的领导力概念以适应您的组织及其需求的？
- 您是如何运用中西方的领导力概念与您的追随者进行沟通和激励的？
- 您是如何看待中西方领导力理念对变革管理过程的有效性和结果的影响？
- 您是如何衡量或评估中西方领导力理念对变革管理过程及其结果的影响的？
- 您是如何在中西方领导力概念的基础上学习和发展您的领导技能和知识的？

**总结性问题**
- 您认为谁在带领新东方西安学校响应双减政策实现组织变革中发挥了最重要的作用？
- 您认为双减政策的出台是否是一个难以预料或意外的事件？
- 您认为如果没有双减政策，新东方及西安学校是否会做出与现阶段类似的组织变革？
- 您认为这次组织变革是否改变了新东方教育的使命和愿景？
- 您认为新东方西安学校这一次组织变革成功吗？

感谢您完成这次访谈。您的回答对这项研究很有价值，并且将是保密和匿名的。
APPENDIX G Survey Questions (English)

Survey on Organizational Change and Leadership Experience at New Oriental After the Double Reduction Policy

Hello,
We sincerely invite you to participate in a survey regarding the implementation of organizational changes and leadership practices at New Oriental Xi’an School following the Double Reduction policy. This research aims to investigate the leadership methods, strategies, and actions adopted by the leadership team of New Oriental Xi’an School during this transformation, employee responses, and how the interaction of Eastern and Western leadership philosophies influences leaders’ responses to change.

This study is initiated by Yang Yihe, a former employee of New Oriental Xi’an School and currently a doctoral candidate in the Leadership Studies Department of the School of Leadership and Education Sciences at the University of San Diego.

Your participation in this research is voluntary and confidential. You may choose to answer or skip any questions in the questionnaire. Your individual responses will be used solely for research purposes and will only be disclosed to the principal investigator and their supervisor, without affecting your relationship with New Oriental Education. The survey is expected to take approximately 15 to 20 minutes to complete.

If you have any questions or concerns about this research, please contact:
Principal Investigator (PI): Yang Yihe, yiheyang@sandiego.edu
Supervisor: Antonio Jimenez Luque, ajimenezluque@sandiego.edu
Thank you for your time and cooperation!

Clicking “Next” indicates that you have read the above information, are at least 18 years old, and are entering the “Research Participant Consent Form.”

In this section, we would like to gather some basic information about you.

What is your gender? [Single Choice Question] [Required]
Male
Female
Prefer not to disclose

What is your year of birth? [Dropdown Question] [Required]

What is your ethnicity? [Single Choice Question] [Required]

What is your political affiliation? [Dropdown Question] [Required]

Do you have a religious belief? [Single Choice Question] [Required]
Yes, I have a religious belief (please specify)____
No, I do not have a religious belief
What is your highest level of education attained (including current enrollment)? [Single Choice Question] [Required]
Junior high school or below
High school/Technical school
College diploma
Bachelor’s degree
Master’s degree
Doctoral degree or above

Which of the following describes your experience? [Single Choice Question] [Required]
I have studied abroad
I have participated in international study programs
I have participated in international academic exchange programs
I have served as an international visiting scholar
None of the above options apply to my experience (please specify)____
Prefer not to disclose

Are you currently an employee of New Oriental Xi’an School? [Single Choice Question] [Required]
Yes, I am a current employee
No, I work at New Oriental, but at another school or branch
No, I have left New Oriental

What was/were your position(s) at New Oriental Xi’an School? [Single Choice Question] [Required]
President
Assistant President
First-level Supervisor
Senior Manager
Manager
Teacher
Administrative Staff
Other (please specify)____

Have you ever or are you currently also serving as a teacher? [Single Choice Question] [Required]
Yes
No

How long have you worked at New Oriental? [Single Choice Question] [Required]
Less than one year
1-3 years
4-6 years
7-9 years
10 years or more
In this section, we would like to gain a better understanding of the **leadership style** you experienced while working at New Oriental. Please reflect on your experiences and indicate the frequency with which you observed or perceived the following behaviors from managers at the Xi’an school since the implementation of the Double Reduction policy.

[Scale Question] [Required]: 1 (Strongly Disagree) - 5 (Strongly Agree)
- My leaders communicated a clear vision for the future of the organization.
- My leaders encouraged our involvement in decision-making.
- My leaders provided feedback and recognition for our achievements.
- My leaders fostered a culture that values innovation and creativity.
- My leaders demonstrated integrity and ethical behavior.
- My leaders showed concern and care for our well-being.
- My leaders balanced the interests of different stakeholders (e.g., clients, shareholders, government).
- My leaders were able to adjust and adapt to changing circumstances and challenges.
- My leaders inspired us to share our visions and values.
- My leaders empowered us to take action and responsibility.
- I believe my leaders rely more on Western leadership research findings than on indigenous Chinese leadership.

I believe my leaders have incorporated both Eastern and Western leadership research perspectives and practices into their work [Single Choice Question] [Required]
Yes, my leaders tend to combine the strengths of both
No, my leaders favor one over the other
I’m not sure, as my leaders have their own leadership style
Other (please specify)____

How would you describe the overall leadership style of leaders at the Xi’an School during the organizational change process since the adjustment of the Double Reduction policy? (Please mention at least one aspect; you can choose to summarize or provide examples. For instance, whether you believe your leaders are more focused on talent development or performance growth, if they are driven by personal charisma to accomplish tasks, or if they set common goals to drive tasks. This question is about your subjective opinion, so please share your feelings as much as possible.) [Multi-line Text Question] [Optional]

In this section, we would like to understand more about the **communication strategies** adopted by New Oriental Xi’an School regarding the policy changes in 2021. Please indicate your satisfaction with the leaders’ communication in the organizational change process in the following aspects.

[Matrix Scale Question] [Required]: 1 (Very Dissatisfied) - 5 (Very Satisfied)
- Clarity of communication (e.g., goals, expectations, reasons)
- Consistency of communication (e.g., messages, tone, style)
- Transparency of communication (e.g., honesty, openness, feedback)
- Responsiveness of communication (e.g., listening, answering questions, addressing concerns)
[Multi-line Text Question] [Optional]
- What do you think are the main strengths of the communication strategies and practices of leaders at New Oriental Xi’an School since the policy changes in 2021? (Please mention at least one aspect; you can choose to summarize or provide examples.)
- What do you think are the main challenges of the communication strategies and practices of leaders at New Oriental Xi’an School since the policy changes in 2021? (Please mention at least one aspect; you can choose to summarize or provide examples.)
- What expectations or requirements do you have for the communication strategies and practices of leaders at the Xi’an school so that everyone can work more effectively? (Please mention at least one aspect; you can choose to summarize or provide examples.)

In this section, we would like to gather more information about the change management process. Based on your experiences and perceptions, please indicate your level of agreement with the statements regarding the change management process implemented by leaders at New Oriental Xi’an School in response to the policy changes in 2021.

[Matrix Scale Question] [Required]: 1 (Strongly Disagree) - 5 (Strongly Agree)
- The change management process provided sufficient training and support for employees.
- The change management process was carefully planned and organized.
- The change management process was consistent with the organization’s vision and mission.
- The change management process is effectively conveyed to all employees.
- The change management process involved full negotiation and participation of employees.
- The change management process provided sufficient training and support for employees.
- The change management process was regularly monitored and evaluated.
- The change management process was flexible and able to adapt to changing circumstances.
- The change management process addressed potential risks and challenges brought by the changes.
- The change management process recognized and rewarded employees’ contributions to the change.
- Overall, the change management process has had a more positive impact on my career development than negative.

[Multi-line Text Question] [Optional]
- What do you think are the main strengths of the change management process at New Oriental Xi’an School since the policy changes in 2021? (Please mention at least one aspect; you can choose to summarize or provide examples.)
- What do you think are the main weaknesses of the change management process at New Oriental Xi’an School since the policy changes in 2021? (Please mention at least one aspect; you can choose to summarize or provide examples.)
- What expectations or requirements do you have for the leaders at Xi’an school in terms of organizational change management practices so that everyone can work more effectively?
the following statements regarding the impact of organizational changes on the performance of
New Oriental Xi’an School.

[Matrix Scale Question] [Required]: 1 (Strongly Disagree) - 5 (Strongly Agree)
- I am aware of when my organization underwent organizational changes.
- The organizational changes have improved the quality of products and services at New
  Oriental Xi’an School.
- The organizational changes have increased customer satisfaction and loyalty at New Oriental
  Xi’an School.
- The organizational changes have improved the financial performance and sustainability
  capability of New Oriental Xi’an School.
- The organizational changes have strengthened the competitive advantage and market position
  of New Oriental Xi’an School.
- The organizational changes have nurtured a positive, collaborative organizational culture at
  New Oriental Xi’an School.
- The organizational changes have increased employee dedication and retention at New
  Oriental Xi’an School.
- The organizational changes have enhanced the leadership capabilities and potential at New
  Oriental Xi’an School.
- The organizational changes align with the social and environmental responsibilities of New
  Oriental Xi’an School.

[Multi-line Text Question] [Optional]
- What do you think are the main benefits that the organizational changes have brought to New
  Oriental Xi’an School? (Please mention at least one aspect; you can choose to summarize or
  provide examples.)
- What do you think are the main challenges that the organizational changes have brought to
  New Oriental Xi’an School? (Please mention at least one aspect; you can choose to
  summarize or provide examples.)

In this section, we would like to gather more information about your opinions on the future
development of the New Oriental Education & Technology Group and Xi’an School. Please rate
your agreement with the following statements based on your experiences and feelings.

[Scale Question] [Required] (10 indicates Strongly Agree, 1 indicates Strongly Disagree, lower
scores indicate lower agreement)
- The series of response measures and organizational change practices adopted by the group
  after the implementation of the Double Reduction policy makes me optimistic about the
  future development prospects of the New Oriental Education & Technology Group.
- The leadership team and the leadership displayed by the group after the implementation of
  the Double Reduction policy make me optimistic about the future development prospects of
  the New Oriental Education & Technology Group.
- The series of response measures and organizational change practices adopted by Xi’an
  School after the implementation of the Double Reduction policy make me optimistic about
  the future development prospects of Xi’an School.
The leadership team and the leadership displayed by Xi’an School after the implementation of the Double Reduction policy make me optimistic about the future development prospects of Xi’an School.

In New Oriental’s current business, I believe the most promising areas for future development are [Multi-choice Question] [Required] (Please select the top three business sectors you believe have the most promising future development among the following businesses)
- Quality Education Sector. Such as Children’s Literacy and Intelligence Centers, Middle School Smart Learning Centers, High School Project Centers, International Study Tours, Domestic Research Tours, Camp Education, and Neighbor by New Oriental.
- University Education Sector. Such as the New Oriental University Learning and Development Center.
- Smart Education Sector. Such as New Oriental Smart Education.
- New Business Sector. Such as New Oriental Cultural Tourism.
- Other (please specify)____

[Scale Question] [Required] (10 indicates Strongly Agree, 1 indicates Strongly Disagree, lower scores indicate lower agreement)
- The expansion of new businesses such as Oriental Selection and New Oriental Cultural Tourism has positively contributed to the organizational development of New Oriental.
- The expansion of new businesses, such as Oriental Selection and New Oriental Cultural Tourism, has positively contributed to my personal career development. [Scale Question] [Required] (10 indicates Strongly Agree, 1 indicates Strongly Disagree, lower scores indicate lower agreement)
- I believe New Oriental will expand into more non-traditional fields in the future.
- If given the opportunity, I am willing to try new business sectors within the New Oriental Group, even if they are not the types of work or positions I excelled in the past.

In this section, we would like to understand more about your views on leadership. Please reflect on your understanding of this concept and try to recall any leadership development practices you have experienced or undergone. Then, select the option that best fits your personal situation from the choices below.

[Scale Question] [Required] (10 indicates Strongly Agree, 1 indicates Strongly Disagree, lower scores indicate lower agreement)
- I can accurately distinguish between the concepts of leadership and management.
• I can clearly define the concept of leadership.
• Leadership development projects I participated in before joining New Oriental were helpful for my career.
• The leadership development projects I underwent at New Oriental Education helped me become a better leader.
• I can see or experience effective leadership at New Oriental Xi’an School.

Could you define leadership in your own words? [Single-line Text Question] [Required]

I have participated in leadership development projects (such as leadership training, seminars, lectures, etc.) [Single Choice Question] [Required]
More than once before joining the New Oriental Xi’an School
More than once, after joining the New Oriental Xi’an School
I have never participated in any leadership development training before
I am not sure if I have participated in any leadership development projects before
I have never participated in any leadership development projects before, but I would like to if given the opportunity
Other (please specify) ____

The leadership development projects I have participated in are mainly based on the following theoretical or practical guidance: [Single Choice Question] [Required]
Western classical leadership theories, such as ancient Greek philosophers (Plato, Aristotle, or similar)
Modern Western leadership studies, such as contemporary research by American or European scholars
Chinese classical leadership theories, such as ancient philosophers (Confucianism, Taoism, various military strategies)
Modern Chinese leadership studies, such as research in the years after the founding of the People’s Republic of China
They are more likely a combination of all the above factors
I am not very familiar with them
Other (please specify) ____

Please select any theories or viewpoints you are familiar with or endorse from the options below [Multi-choice Question] [Required] (If theories/viewpoints you are familiar with or endorse are not listed below, please specify in the “Other” option to enrich the researcher’s knowledge base)
Great Man Theory (1840s) - This theory suggests that great leaders are born, not made.
Trait Theory of Leadership (1930s - 1940s) - This theory suggests that people are born with certain traits that make them more suitable for leadership.
Skill-Based Leadership Theory (1940s - 1950s) - This theory suggests that people can learn to be effective leaders through training and experience.
Leadership Style Theory (1940s - 1950s) - This theory suggests that different leadership styles are more effective in different situations.
Situational Leadership Theory (1960s) - This theory suggests that the most effective leadership style depends on the situation.
Contingency Theory (1960s) - This theory suggests that the most effective leadership style depends on the situation and the leader’s adaptability.

Transactional Leadership Theory (1970s) - This theory suggests that leaders motivate followers by exchanging rewards for performance.

Transformational Leadership Theory (1970s) - This theory suggests that leaders inspire followers to achieve their full potential and create a vision for the future.

I’m not very familiar with these.

Other (please specify)____

Please list any Chinese indigenous leadership theories or theorists you are familiar with. [Multi-line Text Question] [Optional] (These could include Confucius, Sun Tzu’s Art of War, Mao Zedong Thought, Huawei’s leadership philosophy, New Oriental spirit, etc. You can be creative and list as many as you can.)

[Scale Question] [Required] (10 indicates Strongly Agree, 1 indicates Strongly Disagree, lower scores indicate lower agreement)

- I believe that the results of Western leadership research are more advanced and mature than those of Chinese indigenous leadership research.
- I believe that the results of Western leadership research are more practical in practice than those of Chinese indigenous leadership research.
- I believe that the results of Western leadership research are more useful in terms of ideology than those of Chinese indigenous leadership research.
- I believe that the results of Western leadership research have a greater impact on my personal understanding and practice of leadership than Chinese indigenous leadership views.

Please briefly describe one person or theory that has had the greatest influence on your personal understanding or viewpoint on leadership. [Multi-line Text Question] [Optional] (This could be your parents, a teacher from your school days, or a leader from your work; it could also be a book or a movie that had a significant impact on you. Be creative and elaborate on why this person or entity had such a profound influence on you.)

In this section, we would like to understand more about your views on the Xin Dongfang Ren/New Oriental Spirit. Please reflect on your understanding of this concept and try to recall your personal experiences. Then, select the option that best fits your personal situation from the choices below.

[Scale Question] [Required] (10 indicates Strongly Agree, 1 indicates Strongly Disagree, lower scores indicate lower agreement)

- I understand very well what the New Oriental Spirit represents.
- If someone asked you what the New Oriental Spirit is, how would you answer? [Multi-line Text Question] [Required] (This could be adjectives, slogans, mottos, or a person. Be creative and list as many as you can.)
- I believe the New Oriental Spirit plays an important role in the organizational change process at New Oriental Xi’an School.
- I believe the New Oriental Spirit is well reflected in my leadership.
- I believe the New Oriental Spirit is well reflected in myself.
If someone asked you, “Who are you?”, please select the three identity labels that best represent you from the options below [Multi-choice Question] [Required] (You can select multiple options, up to three, or as few as one)
Teacher
Educator
Education industry practitioner
Xin Dongfang Ren
Corporate employee
Manager
Professional worker
Employee
Leader
Other (please specify)____

[Scale Question] [Required] (10 indicates Strongly Agree, 1 indicates Strongly Disagree, lower scores indicate lower agreement)
• I strongly identify with being a Xin Dongfang Ren.
• Being a Xin Dongfang Ren gives me confidence in the organization’s ability to overcome external shocks and crises.
• Being a Xin Dongfang Ren makes me maintain a high level of loyalty to the organization.
• Being a Xin Dongfang Ren gives me an open and flexible mindset towards role adjustments within the organization. For example, transitioning from a business position to an operations position or from a teacher role to a live streaming host.

Please briefly describe what it means to be a Xin Dongfang Ren in your opinion. [Multi-line Text Question] [Optional] (This could be adjectives, slogans, mottos, or a person. Be creative and describe in as much detail as possible.)

Thank you for patiently answering all of these questions. Here are the final five summary questions.

Who do you believe has played the most important role in leading New Oriental Xi’an School to respond to the Double Reduction policy and achieve organizational change? [Ranking Question] [Required]
CEO of New Oriental Education Group/Mr. Yu Minhong
The senior leadership team of New Oriental Education Group
President of Xi’an School/Mr. Yao Zhenhua
Assistant president and first-level management team of Xi’an School
Senior managers and managers of various departments at Xi’an School
Colleagues/teachers at Xi’an School
Administrative staff at Xi’an School
All employees as a collective force
External environment (such as government policies, era background, customer demands, etc.)
In addition to the above options, if you believe other roles or groups have also played important roles, please list them here. [Single-line Text Question] [Optional]

[Scale Question] [Required] (10 indicates Strongly Agree, 1 indicates Strongly Disagree, lower scores indicate lower agreement)

- Do you think the introduction of the Double Reduction policy was an unexpected or unforeseen event?
- Do you think that without the Double Reduction policy, New Oriental and Xi’an School would have made organizational changes similar to the current stage?
- Do you think this organizational change has altered the mission and vision of New Oriental Education?
- How do you evaluate the organizational change at New Oriental Xi’an School this time?

Upon completion of this questionnaire, researchers may design follow-up interviews based on the results to gain a more accurate and in-depth understanding of your experiences and thoughts. If convenient, would you be willing to participate in follow-up interviews? [Single Choice Question] [Required]

Willing
Unwilling

Please leave your preferred contact information [Single-line Text Question] [Required] (Please leave your WeChat, phone number, or email)
APPENDIX G Survey Questions (Chinese)

双减后对新东方组织变革及领导力体验的调查

您好，
诚邀您参与有关新东方西安学校在“双减”政策后实施组织变革及其领导力实践的调研。
本研究旨在调查新东方西安学校领导团队在本次变革中采取的领导方法、策略和行动，
员工的反应，以及中西方领导理念的相互作用如何影响领导者对变革的反应。
该研究由新东方西安学校前员工、目前就读于圣地亚哥大学领导力与教育科学学院，领导
力研究系的博士候选人杨一荷发起。
您参与本研究是自愿且保密的。您可以选择回答或跳过问卷中的任何问题。您的个人回复
仅用于研究目的，并仅对首席研究员及其导师披露，不会影响您与新东方教育的关系。该调查大
约需要 15 到 20 分钟完成。
如果您对本研究有任何疑问或疑虑，请联系：
首席研究员（PI）：杨一荷, yiheyang@sandiego.edu
导师：安东尼奥·希门尼奥·卢克，ajimenezluque@sandiego.edu
感谢您的时间与合作！
点击”下一页”，即表示您已阅读上述信息，年满 18 岁，并进入”研究参与者同意
书”。

在本节中，我们想要了解一些关于您的基本信息。

您的性别是？[单选题][必答]
男
女
不愿透露

您的出生年份是？[下拉题][必答]

您的民族是？[单选题][必答]

您的政治面貌是？[下拉题][必答]

您是否有宗教信仰？[单选题][必答]
是的，我有宗教信仰（请注明）____
否，我没有宗教信仰
到目前为止，您的最高学历(包括在读)是？[单选题][必答]
初中及以下
高中/中专/技校
大学专科
大学本科
硕士学位
博士学位及以上

下列哪一项做能描述您的经历？[单选题][必答]
我曾出国留学
我曾参加过国际游学项目
我曾参与过国际学术交流项目
我曾担任国际访问学者
以上选项均不符合我的经历（请注明）____
不愿透露

您是新东方西安学校的现任员工吗？[单选题][必答]
是的，我是现任员工
不，我在新东方工作，但在其他学校或分支机构
不，我离开了新东方

您现在/离开前在新东方西安学校担任什么职务？[单选题][必答]
校长
校长助理
一级主管
高级经理
经理
教师
行政员工
其他（请注明）____

您是否曾经或仍然兼任教师岗位？[单选题][必答]
是
否

您在新东方的工龄是？ [单选题] [必答]
不到一年
1-3年
4-6年
7-9年
10年或以上

在本节中，我们想更多地了解您在新东方工作时所感受到的**领导风格**。请回顾您的经历，并说明自双减政策发布以来，您观察或察觉到西安学校的管理者出现以下行为的频率。

[量表题] [必答]: 1(非常不认同)-5(非常认同)
我的领导向我们传达了对组织未来的清晰愿景。
我的领导鼓励我们参与决策。
我的领导对我们的成就提供了反馈和认可。
我的领导致力于营造一种重视创新和创造力的文化。
我的领导表现出了正直和道德行为。
我的领导对我们的福祉表示在意和关心。
我的领导平衡了不同利益相关者（例如客户、股东、政府）的利益。
我的领导能够调整并适应不断变化的形势和挑战。
我的领导鼓励我们分享我们的愿景和价值观。
我的领导放权给我们采取行动并承担责任。
我认为我的领导更加依赖西方领导力研究的成果而非中国本土领导力

我认为我的领导在工作中同时结合了中西方领导力研究的观点与实践 [单选题] [必答]
是，我的领导倾向于结合二者的长处
否，我的领导更偏爱其中的某一方
我说不好，因为我的领导有他/她个人的领导力风格
其他（请注明）____

您如何形容自 2021 年双减政策调整以来西安学校的组织变革中领导者的整体领导风格？ [多行文本题] [选答] [请至少列出一个方面，您可以选择概述或举个例。例如您认为您的领导更符合人才发展导向，还是您的领导更符合业绩增长导向；又或者您认为您的领导是靠个人魅力推动任务，还是您的领导是靠设立共同目标推动任务。本问题关注您的主观意见，因此请尽您所能谈谈您的感受。]
在本节中，我们想了解更多新东方西安学校针对 2021 年政策变化采取的沟通策略。

请指出您对领导者在以下方面在组织变革过程中针对沟通的满意度。

矩阵量表题[必答]1(非常不满意)~5(非常满意)

沟通的清晰度（例如目标、期望、理由）
沟通的一致性（例如消息、语气、风格）
沟通的透明度（例如诚实、开放、反馈）
沟通的响应能力（例如，倾听、回答问题、解决疑虑）

您认为自 2021 年政策变化以来，新东方西安学校领导者在沟通策略及实践中的主要优势是什么？[多行文本题][选答](请至少说出一个方面，您可以选择总结或举个例子。)

您认为自 2021 年政策变化以来，新东方西安学校领导者在沟通策略及实践中的主要挑战是什么？[多行文本题][选答](请至少说出一个方面，您可以选择总结或举个例子。)

您对西安学校的领导者的沟通策略及实践有什么期待或要求，从而大家可以更有效的进行工作？[多行文本题][选答](请至少说出一个方面，您可以选择总结或举个例子。)

在本节中，我们想了解有关变革管理流程的更多信息。请结合您的经历和感受，对以下关于新东方西安学校领导在应对 2021 年政策变化的组织变革过程中实施的变革管理流程的表述的认同程度。

矩阵量表题[必答] 1(非常不认同)~5(非常认同)

变革管理流程为员工提供了足够的培训和支持。
变革管理流程经过精心规划和组织。
变革管理流程与组织的愿景和使命保持一致。
变革管理流程能够有效传达给所有员工。
变革管理流程涉及员工的充分协商和参与。
变革管理流程为员工提供了足够的培训和支持。
变革管理流程被定期监控和评估。
变革管理流程灵活且能够适应不断变化的情况。
变革管理流程解决了变化带来的潜在风险和挑战。
变革管理流程认可并奖励员工对变革的贡献。
总的来说，变革管理流程对我的职业发展产生的积极影响多于消极影响。

您认为自 2021 年政策变化以来，新东方西安学校变革管理流程的主要优势是什么？[多行文本题][选答](请至少说出一个方面，您可以选择总结或举个例子。)

您认为自 2021 年政策变化以来，新东方西安学校变革管理流程的主要劣是什么？[多行文本题][选答](请至少说出一个方面，您可以选择总结或举个例子。)

您对西安学校的领导者在组织变革管理方面的实践有什么期待或要求，从而大家可以更有效的进行工作？[多行文本题][选答]

在本节中，我们想了解更多有关 2021 年政策变更以来新东方西安学校的**组织绩效**的信息。请表明您对以下有关组织变更对新东方西安学校绩效影响的陈述做出评价。

[矩阵量表题][必答] 1(非常不认同)~5(非常认同)
我知道我的组织何时发生了组织变革。此次组织变革提升了新东方西安学校的产品和服务质量。此次组织变革提高了客户对新东方西安学校的满意度和忠诚度。此次组织变革提高了新东方西安学校的财务绩效和可持续发展能力。此次组织变革强化了新东方西安学校的竞争优势和市场地位。此次组织变革培育了新东方西安学校积极、协作的组织文化。此次组织变革提高了新东方西安学校的员工敬业度和保留率。此次组织变革提升了新东方西安学校的领导能力和潜力。此次组织变革符合新东方西安学校的社会和环境责任。

您认为这次组织变革给新东方西安学校带来的主要好处是什么？[多行文本题][选答](请至少说出一个方面，您可以选择概括或举个例子。)

您认为这次组织变革给新东方西安学校带来的主要挑战是什么？[多行文本题][选答](请至少说出一个方面，您可以选择概括或举个例子。)

在本节中，我们想了解更多有关您对新东方教育科技集团及西安学校**未来发展**的一些观点。请结合您的经历和感受，对以下表述的认同程度做出评价。
双减政策颁布后，集团采取的一系列**应对措施和组织变革实践**，让我对新东方教育科技集团未来发展前景看好。

双减政策颁布后，集团的**领导团队及其施展的领导力**，让我对新东方教育科技集团未来发展前景看好。

双减政策颁布后，西安学校采取的一系列**应对措施和组织变革实践**，让我对西安学校未来发展前景看好。

双减政策颁布后，西安学校的**领导团队及其施展的领导力**，让我对西安学校未来发展前景看好。

在新东方的现有业务中，我认为未来最有发展前景的是[多选题][必答](请在下列业务中选出您心目中最有发展前景的三项业务板块)

- 素质教育板块。如：儿童素养智学中心，中学智慧学习中心，高中项目中心，国际游学·国内研学·营地教育，新东方比邻
- 国际教育板块。如：新东方国际教育，新东方前途出国，斯芬克国际艺术教育
- 大学生教育板块。如：新东方大学生学习与发展中心
- 智慧教育板块。如：新东方智慧教育
- 图书文创板块。如：新东方大愚文化，私库云书
- 基础教育板块。如：新东方满天星，新东方扬州外国语学校，新东方国际双语学校
- 教育服务板块。如：新东方英语学习，新东方教师发展研究院，新东方乐词，新东方家庭教育，新东方公益基金会，新东方教育文化产业基金
- 直播电商平台板块。如：东方甄选，新东方直播间
- 新型业务板块。如：新东方文旅
- 其他（请注明）____

[量表题][必答](10 分表示非常认同，1 分表示非常不认同，分值越低表示认同度越低)

我认为新东方在未来还会向更多非传统领域拓展业务。

如果有机会，我愿意在新东方集团内部尝试新的业务板块，即使它们并非我过去所擅长的工作类型或岗位。
在本节中，我们想更多地了解您对**领导力**这一概念的看法。请回顾您对这一概念的理解，并尝试回忆您经历过或接受过的任何领导力发展实践。然后，从选项中选择最适合您个人情况的一项。

[量表题][必答](10分表示非常认同，1分表示非常不认同，分值越低表示认同度越低)
我能准确地区分**领导力**和**管理**的概念。
我能清楚地定义**领导力**的概念。
我在加入新东方之前参与过的领导力发展项目对我的职业生涯很有帮助。
我在新东方教育接受的领导力发展项目帮助我成为一名更好的领导者。

您能用您的话来定义**领导力**吗？[单行文本题][必答]

我能够在新东方西安学校看到或体验到有效领导力。

我之前参与过领导力发展项目（例如领导力培训、研讨会、讲座等）[单选题][必答]
加入新东方西安学校之前不止一次
加入新东方西安学校后不止一次
我以前从未接受过任何领导力发展培训
我不确定我是否参与过任何领导力发展项目
我以前从未参与过任何领导力发展项目，但如果有机会我想参加
其他（请注明）____

我认为我参与过的领导力发展项目主要基于以下方面的理论或实践指导：[单选题][必答]
西方古典领导理论，如古希腊哲学家（柏拉图，亚里士多德或类似）
现代西方领导力研究，例如美国或欧洲学者的当代研究成果
中国古典领导理论，例如古代哲学家（儒家思想、道家思想，或各类兵法）
现代中国领导力研究，例如建国后这些年的研究
他们更有可能是以上所有因素的组合
我也不太了解
其他（请注明）____

请从下列选项中选择您熟悉的或认可的理论或观点[多选题][必答](如果下列选项中没有列出您熟悉的或认可的理论/观点，请在“其他”选项中注明，以便丰富研究者的知识范围)
伟人理论（1840年代）——该理论认为伟大领袖是天生的，而非后天培养的思想
领导特质理论（1930年代 - 1940年代）——该理论认为，人们生来就具有某些使他们更适合领导的特质
领导技能理论（1940年代 - 1950年代）——该理论表明人们可以通过培训和经验学习成为有效的领导者
领导风格理论（1940年代 - 1950年代）——该理论表明，不同的领导风格在不同情况下更有效
情境领导理论（1960年代）——该理论表明，最有效的领导风格取决于情境
权变理论（1960年代）——该理论表明，最有效的领导风格取决于情况和领导者的适应能力
交易型领导理论（1970年代）——该理论认为，领导者通过用奖励换取绩效来激励追随者
变革型领导理论（1970年代）——该理论认为，领导者激励追随者充分发挥潜力并创造未来愿景

这些我都不太熟悉
其他（请注明）

请在下面列出您熟悉的任何中国本土领导力理论或理论家。[多行文本题][选答][可以是孔子、孙子兵法、毛泽东思想、华为的领导理念，新东方精神等，您可以发挥创意，并尽可能多的列举]

[量表题][必答](10分表示非常认同，1分表示非常不认同，分值越低表示认同度越低)
我认为西方领导力研究的成果比中国本土领导力研究更先进成熟
我认为西方领导力研究的成果比中国本土领导力研究在实践方面更有用
我认为西方领导力研究的成果比中国本土领导力研究在思想层面更有用
我认为西方领导力研究的成果对个人有关领导力认知与实践的影响，大于中国本土领导力观点对我的影响

请简要描述对您个人领导力认知或观点带来最大影响的一个人或理论。[多行文本题][选答][可以是您的父母，中学时代的某位老师，或是工作后的某位领导；它也可以是为您带来重大影响的一本书或一部电影。您可以发挥创意，并尽可能详细的谈谈为什么这个人或物对您带来如此大的影响。]

在本节中，我们想更多地了解您对**新东方人/新东方精神**这一概念的看法。请回顾您对这一概念的理解，并尝试回忆您的个人经历，从选项中选择最适合您个人情况的一项。
[量表题][必答](10分表示非常认同，1分表示非常不认同，分值越低表示认同度越低)
我十分了解**新东方精神**所代表的含义是什么
假如有人问您什么是**新东方精神**，您如何回答？[多行文本题][必答][可以是一些形容词，口号，标语，或某个人。您可以发挥创意，并尽可能多的列举。]
我认为新东方精神对于新东方西安学校的组织变革过程起到重要作用
我认为新东方精神在我的领导身上得到很好的体现
我认为新东方精神在我本人身上得到很好的体现

假如有人问您“你是谁？”，请从下列选项中选出最能代表您的三个身份标签[多选题][必答](可多选，最多选三个，最少选一个)
教师
教育工作者
教培行业从业者
新东方人
企业员工
管理者
职业打工人
社畜
领导者
其他（请注明）___

[量表题][必答](10 分表示非常认同，1 分表示非常不认同，分值越低表示认同度越低)
我对新东方人这个身份的认同程度很高
**新东方人**这个身份给予了我对组织能够克服外部冲击和危机的信心
**新东方人**这个身份使我对组织保持较高的忠诚度
**新东方人**这个身份让我对组织内部的角色调整抱有开放和灵活的心态。例如，从业务岗转变为运营岗，或者从教师身份转变为直播主播

请您简要描述，**新东方人**是什么样？[多行文本题][选答](可以是一些形容词，口号，标语，或某个人。您可以发挥创意，并尽可能细致地描述。)

感谢您耐心回答所有这些问题。这里只剩下最后五个总结性的问题。
您认为谁在带领新东方西安学校响应双减政策实现组织变革中发挥了最重要的作用？[排序题][必答]
新东方教育集团的 CEO/俞敏洪老师
新东方教育集团的高层领导团队
西安学校校长/姚振华老师
西安学校的校长助理及以及一级管理者团队
西安学校各部门的高级经理和经理们
西安学校的教师同事们
西安学校的行政同事们
全体员工作为一个集体的力量
外部环境（例如政府政策，时代背景，客户需求等）

除了上述选项，如果您认为有其他角色或群体亦发挥重要作用，请在此列出。[单行文本题][选答]

[量表题][必答](10 分表示非常认同，1 分表示非常不认同，分值越低表示认同度越低)
您认为双减政策的出台是否是一个难以预料或意外的事件？
您认为如果没有双减政策，新东方及西安学校是否会做出与现阶段类似的组织变革？
您认为这次组织变革是否改变了新东方教育的使命和愿景？
您如何评价新东方西安学校这一次组织变革？

在该问卷信息统计完成后，研究者可能会根据结果设计后续访谈，以便更准确，更深入的了解您的体验和想法。如果方便的话，您是否愿意接受后续访谈？[单选题][必答]
愿意
不愿意

请留下您偏好的联系方式[单行文本题][必答](请留下您的微信，电话或电子邮件)
IRB #: IRB-2023-424
Title: Intercultural Perspectives on Managing Organizational Change in Response to Government Policy Reform: A Case Study on the Leadership of New Oriental Education
Creation Date: 5-15-2023
End Date: 
Status: Approved
Principal Investigator: Yihe Yang
Review Board: USD IRB
Sponsor: 

Study History

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Key Study Contacts

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