Research Article

The Impact of Design Thinking and Grit on Filipino Millennial Academic Supervisors’ Transformational Leadership Attributes: A Structural Equation Model

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ABSTRACT

The emergence of millennial teacher-leaders in organizations' strategic positions has promoted a culture of vitality among contemporary educational institutions. Albeit recent research depicts them as the catalyst towards a vibrant paradigm shift, other scholars far and wide have painted a contradicting portrait of their work ethic: professionals who either lack grit or possess a creative ideation. Alongside their ascent to the echelons of leadership is their subscription to one of the dominant leadership modalities that are said to be unique in a given culture and profession: Transformational Leadership. This quantitative study purported to investigate the impacts of Design Thinking and Grit behaviors to the derived factor dimensions of Transformational Leadership that is sensitive to the Filipino cultural configuration, millennial generation sensibilities, and professional distinction of educators. 204 academic supervisors from various public and private schools, colleges, and universities completed the robotfoto, Transformational Leadership Behavior Inventory, Creative Synthesis Inventory, and Short Grit Scale. Data gathered were analyzed using Exploratory Factor Analysis, Structural Equation Modelling, and Correlation Analysis. The EFA of Transformational Leadership derived two-factor dimensions, namely: Critical- and Reflexive-Synergism. Only Design Thinking positively impacts the evolved Transformational Leadership attributes ($\beta = 0.84$). The variables Design Thinking and Grit were found to be weakly correlated. The SEM was able to yield an emerging model with an acceptable fit ($C_{\text{min}}/df = 1.21$, $CFI = 0.99$, $RMSEA = 0.03$). The findings could serve as a basis for policy formulation and as future direction for methodological pluralism on the phenomenon.

Keywords: Millennials, Academic Supervisors, Design Thinking, Grit, Transformational Leadership
The Context of Problematizing

The rapid yet steady rise of millennials in strategic positions of organizations signaled positive inertia in the dynamic landscape of academic institutions (Huyler, Ding, Norelus, & Pierre, 2015; Weber, 2018). To date, these professionals were able to occupy the middle-tier of the organizational hierarchies in the academic sector (Alonso-Almeida & Llach, 2018). Tagged as the uprising generation, scholars far and wide have fielded in a forecast that in the year 2025, the majority of the critical positions in the upper echelons of management will be staffed by these young professionals (Holmberg-Wright, Hribar, & Tsegai, 2017). As they carry out the duties and responsibilities delegated to them, they tend to bring with them a unique schema of organizational citizenship behaviors (Williams, 2019), work ethic (Alexander, 2012), and generational temperaments (Anderson, Baur, Griffith, & Buckley, 2016; Gabriel, Alcantara, & Alvarez, 2020) that can aid their respective organizations in enacting paradigm shifts in the age of Volatility, Uncertainty, Contingency, and Ambiguity (VUCA) (Millar, Groth, & Mahon, 2018). Albeit portrayed in the codified body of knowledge as entitled, misinterpreted, and unable to hit the ground running whenever they are delegated with a task, studies have shown that these millennials can be transformed into high-flying talents (Henriksen, Richardson, & Mehta, 2017) provided that there are anchorage on appropriate avenues for mentoring for teacher development and leadership succession (Brown, 2018; Dunne, 2018).

Corollary to the portrayal of millennials in the literature as the much needed fresh legs to give the due vibrancy that most organization lacks (Gouldner, 2016; Alegado, 2018), a point of divergence exists in the literature as several researchers from the earlier generations also argue that the so-called new wave of professionals do not possess the headspace to focus on long-term tasks (Çetin & Halisdemir, 2019). Apparently, scholars depict them as confusing individuals with a
growth mindset but with questionable grit or the lack thereof (Pyöriä, Ojala, Saari, & Järvinen, 2017). Grit is defined in the literature as a complex, job-specific antecedent of passion and perseverance for the long-term goals and aspirations (Duckworth & Quinn, 2009; Stolarski, Zajenkowski, & Misenberg, 2013). Abbasi & Belhadjali (2016) observed that the lack of grit exhibited by millennial professionals could be traced back to the suppressive nature of their professional preparation and development. They further posited that their predecessors just treated them as passive recipients of practices during their induction and acclimatization. Coupled with the non-collaborative culture that plagued the organizations in the past, their experimental and creative tendencies have caused conflicts and lasting misunderstanding with their forerunners (Gray & Williams, 2011). In the field of education where several projects, programs, and change initiatives necessitate the incorporation of the common elements of grit such as hard work and dedicated service to materialize such endeavors, the millennials are oftentimes regarded as cohorts who are lost in the transition and unable to seize the opportunities and lessons arising from it due to their non-linear, progressive, unorthodox, and erratic nature (Hobbs & Tuzel, 2015).

Moreover, albeit they are cast as entities with limited attention span, commitment issues, 'What's in it for me?' mindset, and questionable quality of work; in the field of education, millennials are also esteemed as a catalyst of vitality in their respective organizations (Weber, 2018). As propagators of innovative and inventive acts in the age of digital divide (Greenhow, Walker, & Kim, 2010), industrial revolution 4.0 (Shahroom & Hussin, 2018), and the impending ASEAN integration (Ang, 2017), millennials also assume a critical role in maintaining the equilibrium of the organization by serving as implementors of evidence-based practices (Aguirre & Faller, 2018) and professionals who know the trends and fads of the academic enterprise and society (Kotz, 2016), thus ensuring the quantum leap on relevant undertakings. Presently, one of
the buzz words concerning breakthroughs in education is the concept of Design Thinking (Noel & Liub, 2017). Design Thinking is typified in the literature as applying out-of-the-box tendencies towards a task (Dosi, Rosati, & Vignoli, 2018). Through the years, its constructs also involved the fascination for ambiguity and risk-taking (Carlgren, Elmquist, & Rauth, 2016), problem-solving (Brenner & Uebernickel, 2016), critical questioning (Drews, 2009), and creative confidence (Lockwood, 2009). Being one of the trendsetters of the 21st century organizational development, millennials are also acknowledged to be propagators of Design Thinking behaviors to ascertain the praxis of reconstruction and re-appropriation of the longstanding policies in their workplace (Howard, Senova, & Melles, 2015).

Cognizant to the emergence of these millennial teachers-leaders and the behavioral stereotypes that comes along with them, they also tend to subscribe to the best practices and modalities embodied in the literature as the scaffolding of their professional undertakings. Currently, one of the most dominant leadership styles that are being advocated in a global magnitude is the Transformational Leadership (Thompson, 2012). By and large, a great deal of researchers in the field of Teacher Education has asserted that the use of Transformational Leadership style is a conduit in forging a work sphere that is marked by the culture of excellence (Litz & Scott, 2016), tightly knitted workforce and personnel microdynamics (Youngs, 2017), fluid translation of a vision into a reality (Cetin & Kinik, 2015), future-proofing on disruptions (Khany & Ghoreishi, 2014), and the attainment of educational reforms (Elrehail, Emeagwali, Alsaad, & Alzghoul, 2018). Such research areas were already intensively examined from various educational personalities to wit: instructors (Ninković & Knežević Florić, 2016), principals (Yang, 2013; Arokiasamy, Abdullah, A Shaari, & Ismail, 2016), deans (Al-Mansoori & Koç, 2018), and curriculum engineers (Okoth, 2018), among others. Quantitative studies on Transformational
Leadership concerning middle-level managers such as supervisors and coordinators still appears to be a superficial activity and acutely underrepresented despite several researchers' clarion call for representation and methodological pluralism on the subject (Gkolia, Koustelios, & Belias, 2015; Andersen, Bjørnholt, Bro, & Holm-Petersen, 2017).

Jaiswal & Dhar (2015), for their part, have noted that Transformational Leadership capitalizes on novel problem-solving and radical decision-making processes to enact metamorphosis among organizations. They argued that it would require a specific set of creative ideation and state of resoluteness to sustain any prospective adjustments. Such interplay of Design Thinking and Grit on a leadership modality dwells naturally in the Western mindset, regardless of generation, due to their nature as an individualistic society (Lewis, Boston, & Peterson, 2017). Moreover, albeit prior researchers have extensively extrapolated the practical gains and noteworthy implications that academic leaders could potentially reap should they subscribe to the tenets of Transformational Leadership, several scholars also argue that continuous development and fine-tuning of conceptual underpinnings of the said leadership style must be continuously placed into the pedestal (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Berendt, Christofi, Kasibhatla, Malindretos, & Maruffi, 2012; Wang, 2018). Most especially that it is argued in the literature that the said multifaceted leadership style is unique in every culture and profession (House, 1995; Spreitzer, Pertulla, & Xin, 2005). Concomitantly, vital to our understanding of how the Transformational Leadership is enacted by the uprising millennial leaders in the educational domain is to understand the breadth and depth of its translation and execution in a given cultural reality. Studies across time and space have shown that cultural values can influence leadership concepts, styles, and practices (Gerstner & Day, 1994; House & Aditya, 1997; Hofstede, 2001 as cited by Gökhan-Bitmiş & Ergeneli, 2011) and cultures with different characteristics such as language, religious
mores, and societal beliefs are generally presumed to exhibit a distinct leadership approach (Ergeneli, Gohar, & Temirbekova, 2007). Therefore, it is also imperative to view the aforesaid leadership style using a lens sensitive to the Filipino cultural configuration and mindful of the uniqueness of middle-range executives from the field of education.

The arguments presented above, coupled with the dichotomous yet conflicting delineation of the millennials as professionals who fail to exhibit Grit and professionals who possess Design Thinking capabilities, is classified as a fertile ground that warrants an in-depth chronicling and investigation. Most especially that the concepts that proliferate and surrounds the blind spot identified in the literature were a by-product of knowledge propagation in industrialized nations, it is also crucial to understand how this schema fits and reverberates in the psyche of the millennial teachers-leaders hailing from collectivistic cultures in the far east who will soon face the daunting task of continuing the legacy of their respective organizations. To date, there is a paucity of empirical studies which places the watch glass on the impact of common behavioral generalizations rendered to the millennials, i.e. lack of Grit and inclination towards Design Thinking, on the Transformational Leadership practices in a developing country such as the Philippines and a service-oriented profession such as the field of education. Hence, this quantitative study purported to answer the following research questions: (1) What are the factor dimension(s) that best typify the Filipino millennial academic supervisor-sensitive Transformational Leadership attributes?; (2) What is the impact of Design Thinking-related behaviors on the derived Filipino millennial academic supervisors’ Transformational Leadership attributes?; (3) What is the impact of Grit-related behaviors on the derived Filipino millennial academic supervisors’ Transformational Leadership attributes?; (4) Is there a correlation between the Design Thinking- and Grit-related behaviors of Filipino millennial academic supervisors?
Theoretical Framework

The theoretical underpinnings of the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) (Azjen & Fishbein, 1980) served as the study's conceptual springboard. The said theoretical construct was preferred over other known schematic anchorages such as the Theory of Planned Behavior since it holds the critical assumption that individuals can exert total and pre-emptive self-control over their actions (Azjen, 1991). Considering the unpredictable nature of the millennials, it is but prudent to view their motives, deductions, operations, and inactions in light of various factors that could rationalize their behavioral manifestations. The TRA has been extensively used in various educational researches (de Castro & de Guzman, 2014). It indicates that an individual's Behavioral Intent is relative to his Attitude towards certain Subjective Norms and his Manifested Behaviors. To further elucidate, under its theoretical precepts, Behavioral Intent relates to the person's strength of intention to perform a specific behavior; whereas, Attitude comprises the individual's belief about the effects of executing a behavior. Subjective Norm is seen as the conglomeration of individually and collectively perceived expectations which affect the intention to comply with the expectations (Fishbein & Azjen, 1975 as cited by de Castro & de Guzman, 2014).

Since Transformational Leadership is a neo-charismatic modality that zeroes in on the creation of a compelling vision, going the extra mile to attain groundbreaking results, and capitalizes on team synergy to bring out the best in every organizational member (Strange & Mumford, 2006), it naturally follows that the ideal leadership style will require a certain set of behaviors and mindset as the launching pad for its execution. In connection to the study, the indispensable condition of the smooth execution of Transformational Leadership lies in the Behavioral Manifestation and mindset of the leader implementing it. If the leader possesses the creative mind and exhibits perseverance towards the attainment of terminal goals, then
Transformational Leadership behaviors are most likely to be actualized and flourish. However, other factors such as Subjective Norms in the form of the Filipino cultural configuration, millennial generational temperament, and professional trait of educators will also come into play since it is also asserted in the literature that albeit Transformational Leadership is a universal phenomenon (Bass, 1985; Northouse, 2006), it is contingent on the culture and profession where it is taking place.

The Problem and Research Hypotheses

To address the identified research gap, the uncharted aspects of the unique factor dimension(s) of Transformational Leadership that is sensitive to the Filipino cultural configuration, millennial generation temperament, and exclusive to the field of education; the impact of Design Thinking and Grit on the derived factor dimensions of Transformational Leadership; and the correlation between Design Thinking and Grit were all incorporated into the Hypothesized Model (See Figure 1).

![FIGURE 1: The Hypothesized Model](image-url)
The Causal Relationship between Design Thinking and Transformational Leadership attributes

The incessant pace changes in the organizational landscape prompted modern-day educational leaders to instill creativity and innovation in their workplaces (Termournejad & Elghaei, 2017). With the emergence of millennials, organizations are now staffed by critical minds who are always seeking out new platforms to test their alternative ideas (Moon, 2014). The construct of Design Thinking, initially as a concept in architecture and business sector, found its way to the field of education and was applied extensively to promote a culture of innovation across the educational continuum (Lapaniene & Dumcienie, 2014; Sipe, 2019). As early as the turn of the century, Eisenbach, Watson, & Pillai (1999) posited that leadership assumes an integral role in improving organizational citizens' creativity. Over the years, research has shown that creativity is not just seen as the by-product of Transformational Leadership, but the one directly improving its existence (O'Banion, Weidner, & Wilson, 2011; Elsbach & Stigliani, 2018). Studies like one conducted by Brahma (2019) contended that creative self-efficacy directly impacts the educators' leadership practices in higher education.

Meanwhile, Liedtka, Salzman, & Azer (2017) noted that risks and uncertainties in the social sector like the field of education could be potentially countered by a robust Transformational Leadership and Design Thinking tendencies of its employees. In the field of education, creativity inspired Transformational Leadership was seen as a channel to improve the pedagogy of the teachers in the basic education level (Kallapadee, Tesaputa, & Somprach, 2017). While commonly applied to the teaching-learning process, it is also interesting to note its impact on the domain of teacher leadership. Zhang, Zheng, & Darko (2018) pointed out that Transformational Leadership is among the few leadership styles existing that could legitimately promote the innovation climate in industries. Therefore, it is interesting to know how the creative friction experienced by the
millennials will come into play in the unexplored domain of Design Thinking and Transformational Leadership in the Philippine educational context. The foregoing discussions lead to the following hypothesis:

**Hypothesis 1:** The Filipino millennial academic supervisors who exhibit a higher degree of Design Thinking behaviors have a positive impact on their Transformational Leadership attributes.

**The Causal Relationship between Grit and Transformational Leadership attributes**

As the heart of the educative process, teachers are seen as the prime movers of the educational landscape (Fabelico & Afalla, 2020). Argon & Kaya (2018) expounded that positive polarity of traits such as grit, tenacity, resilience, and perseverance are infused to the academics as early as their pre-service training due to the high incidence of burnout and tensions experienced by educators in the in-service phase of their careers. These aspects are expected to be carried over in the leadership practices of the teacher-leaders. Albeit such is the case, the advent of millennial teacher-leaders brought things into a whole new level of discourse due to their stereotype as professionals branded as the culprit of value dilution and culture of indifference among organizations (Everrett, 2016). Miller & Mills (2019) associated the lack of perseverance of millennial educators to their sheltered nature. On the contrary, even if millennials are portrayed in such a way in organizational studies, other perspectives like the one conducted by Mart (2013) claimed that the nature of the teaching profession is classified as a natural breeding ground for professionals with passion and determination. Coupled with the exercise of Transformational Leadership, Eyal & Roth (2010) stated that it could strengthen teachers' self-determination. They further highlighted that the academy's immense and constant pressures would eventually take its toll on the well-being of teachers; thus, it is imperative to cancel out the detrimental effects of the
lack of sustained interest by utilizing people-oriented, power-sharing, and participative leadership styles. Moreover, Castillo, Alvarez, Estevan, Queralt, & Molina-Garcia (2017) explained that as the passion for the teaching profession and Transformational Leadership reaches a point of convergence, it then creates an environment where the teachers are determined to survive the growing demands of the field of education. Ninković & Knežević Florić (2018) also positioned Transformational School Leadership and individual Teacher Self-Efficacy as the predictors of Collective Teacher Efficacy. They further elaborated that when a highly efficacious and goal-oriented personnel collaborated with Transformational Leaders, it can lead the organization into great heights. Such contentions in the Western world has also traces in the Asian standpoint as evidenced in the study of Andriani, Kesumawati, & Krihaveawan (2018). According to them, teacher motivation and perseverance is an essential element of Transformational Leadership which then affects the school reforms. Therefore, it is interesting to determine how the Filipino millennials' passion for their craft and interest over long-term goals affect the Transformational Leadership attributes that reside in them. The preceding discussions lead to the following hypothesis:

**Hypothesis 2:** The Filipino millennial academic supervisors who embody Grit-related behaviors directly causes their Transformational Leadership attributes.

**The Correlation between Design Thinking and Grit**

The inherent affirmative dispositions and responsiveness to organizational change are some of the driving forces that cultivate creativity (Gok & Erdogan, 2011). Grit is a generic but encompassing term that spurs a great degree of perseverance and passion for the long-term goals in the face of challenges (Fabelico & Afalla, 2020). Perkins-Gough (2013) underscored that grit supersedes talent due to the person's ability to adapt and endure in different unfavorable situations.
Considering the connection of grit and creativity, Ozkal (2014) hinted that teachers' creativity when fostered and enriched thoroughly, could lead to a self-efficacious belief that they, too, can create something novel to spark new ways of doing things in the organization. For his part, Davies (2000) established the link between confidence and design inclination in the creative teaching process. As Design Thinking becomes the new paradigm and gateway before the execution of various aspects in organizations such as the teaching profession, Luka (2014) pointed that Design Thinking is beyond the creation of innovative artifacts, it must also be examined as a reflexive practice that capitalizes on the human centeredness of the one embracing its precepts. Further, Baeck & Gremett (2012) also elucidated that Design Thinking is not just a process but also a mindset. They highlighted Design Thinkers must possess openness, perseverance, and passion in actualizing the "what is" to the "what might be" in the future. In effect, the willpower supplanted by Grit is what propels the Design Thinking-related propensity of a leader to create an eidetic and a lasting change. Therefore, it is interesting to uncover how the two commonly related variables that should go hand in hand manifests among the Filipino millennials in the study, which are often portrayed in the literature as professionals who lack the element of Grit but has an inclination for creativity. The previous discussions lead to the following hypothesis:

**Hypothesis 3:** The Filipino millennial academic supervisors' Grit-related behaviors are strongly correlated to their Design Thinking behaviors.

**Method**

**Research Design and Objectives**

The study employed the use of interconnected and advanced quantitative approaches framed as *descriptive-analysis* design (a) to derive the factor dimensions of Transformational Leadership attributes which are sensitive to the Filipino cultural configuration, the millennial
generational sensibilities, and the professional peculiarity of the academic supervisors through the use of Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA); *descriptive-evaluative* design (b) to examine the impact of the variables: Design Thinking and Grit on the Transformational Leadership attributes of the Filipino millennial academic supervisors through Structural Equation Modelling (SEM); and *descriptive-correlational* design (c) to determine the correlation between the variables: Design Thinking and Grit, as part of model determination in SEM.

**Subjects and Study Site**

The respondents of the study were recruited through the use of purposive sampling technique with the following inclusion criterion, to wit: (a) Natural born Filipino citizen, (b) belongs to the millennial generation, (c) presently holding a formal supervisory capacity in the organization where s/he can exhibit Transformational Leadership attributes, (d) holding the capacity of an academic supervisor and/or coordinator for at least five (5) years, and (e) willing to participate in the study. The study subjects hailed from the National Capital Region (NCR) and the Region IVA: CALABARZON. The study's said loci were selected due to its recognition as the intersection of educational, cultural, political, and economic strategic points in the Philippines. These regions described above are also a melting pot of ethnically and professionally diverse citizens. Hence, these study sites provided the study with a treasure trove of perspectives.

**Instrumentation**

The researcher utilized four-tier corpora of data derived from *A priori* constructs in the literature. The first part was solely dedicated to chronicle the respondents' personal profile through the use of a *robotfoto* (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002). This Dutch term means a cartographic sketch of the study subjects. The *robotfoto* which is made up of a checkbox with spaces were provided to be filled in with specific needed information. This part of the questionnaire was necessary to
indicate the respondents’ baseline characteristics such as age, gender, civil status, highest educational attainment, nature of employment, number of years serving as a supervisor, et cetera. Moreover, the study has utilized standardized questionnaires with excellent psychometric properties and extensive validation and cross-validation in the literature in conducting the survey. The second part was devoted to the Transformational Leadership Behavior Inventory (TLI)-Self-Report form developed by Podsakoff, McKenzie, Moorman, & Fetter (1990; $\alpha = 0.97$), the Creative Synthesis Inventory (CSI) developed by Badding (2017; $\alpha = 0.86$), and the Short Grit Scale (Grit-S) developed by Duckworth & Quinn (2009; $\alpha = 0.79$).

**Data Gathering Procedure**

The author initially pilot tested the four-tier instrument to the nonparticipating supervisors ($n = 9$) from various academic units in the educational institution that he is affiliated with to determine the understandability of the material and time allotted for the completion of the instrument. He then requested an audience with the respective school directors, principals, and deans in every locus of the study to submit the letter, questionnaires, and informed consent forms and formally sought their permission to conduct the study. Upon the approval of the school executives and their respective Ethics Review Committees (ERC), the respondents received the letter bearing the research objectives and its contribution to educational leadership. After securing the informed consent forms, the formal distribution of the four-tier instrument ensued. Each respondent was given sufficient time to accomplish the questionnaire to elicit carefully thought out responses and for systematic retrieval of questionnaires. The questionnaires were then checked for completeness thereafter, and out of the 220 questionnaires fielded, 92.73% ($n = 204$) were deemed usable.
**Data Analysis**

The study utilized the IBM Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 24 to facilitate the processing of the pertinent descriptive statistics used in constructing the respondents' profile of the study and determining the reliability coefficient of the adopted questionnaires. Additionally, the Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was employed using the same statistical software to derive the underlying factor dimensions of Transformational Leadership style that is sensitive to the Filipino culture, millennial generation temperament, and the Teacher Education profession which was later utilized as evolved dimensions of Filipino millennial academic supervisors' Transformational Leadership on the succeeding section of the study. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) is a data reduction statistical method aimed at clustering a set of variables into manageable constructs typically used in refining a scale and on theory-building (Reio & Shuck, 2014). Further, Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) was carried out through the IBM Analysis of Moment Structures (AMOS) version 24 to determine the impacts of the exogenous variables to the endogenous variable and to examine the relationship among the predictor variables present in the study. Hox & Bechger (2007, as cited by de Castro & de Guzman, 2014) posited that the SEM is a sophisticated multivariate modeling technique that can merge complicated path models bearing latent variables while taking into account the potential effect of non-positive definite values and confounding variables.

**Ethical Considerations**

Nonproprietary instruments allowed for non-commercial distribution and educational research purposes covered by the fair use policy were considered by the researcher in adopting the instruments. Moreover, appropriate ethical clearance was secured from the Ethics Review Committee (ERC) in every locus of the study. All participants have received written and verbal
information accentuating the study's purposes, procedures, recruitment, benefits, and potential risks. The participants were also oriented that they could withdraw from the study at any given time. Utmost privacy and confidentiality were upheld throughout the study.

Results and Discussion

Profile of the Respondents

Respondents of the study consisted of 204 Filipino millennial academic supervisors from various schools, colleges, and universities in the National Capital Region (NCR) (76.47%) and Region 4A: CALABARZON (26.53%). The said middle-level leaders were selected in consonance with the dearth of studies that represents them on empirical studies concerning Transformational Leadership and the scarcity of its translation in a communitarian and highly particular society such as the Philippines. The majority of the respondents were affiliated to the Private Secondary sector (30.39%), followed by the Private Tertiary sector (21.08%). Millennials with the age range of 24-28 years old (60.78%) and those coming from the female gender (54.90%) dominated the respondents. 109 (53.43%) of the study subjects reported that they are single, and a great deal of respondents mentioned that they belong to Christian-related denominations such as Iglesia ni Cristo (27.94%) and Roman Catholicism (25.98%). It is also interesting to note that an equal number of respondents reported that they are baccalaureate degree (27.45%) and master’s degree (27.45%) holders. Further, cognizant of the inclusion criterion of the study, the respondents were all holding academic supervisors’ capacity for five years and above.
TABLE 1: Demographic Profile of the Respondents (n = 204)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROFILE</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>24-28</td>
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<tr>
<td>29-33</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>39.22</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Female</td>
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<td>54.90</td>
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<tr>
<td>Civil Status</td>
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<td>Single</td>
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<td>53.43</td>
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<tr>
<td>Married</td>
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<td>3.43</td>
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<td>22.06</td>
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<tr>
<td>Others</td>
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<td>2.45</td>
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<td>Region of Residence</td>
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<td>National Capital Region</td>
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<td>Region 4A: CALABARZON</td>
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<td>23.53</td>
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<td>Highest Educational Attainment</td>
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<td>Bachelor’s Degree</td>
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<td>Master’s Degree</td>
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<td>Nature of Employment</td>
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<td>10.78</td>
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<td>Public Tertiary</td>
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<td>13.24</td>
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<tr>
<td>No. of Years Working in the Institution</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>93.63</td>
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<tr>
<td>10-14 Years</td>
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<td>6.37</td>
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<tr>
<td>No. of Years Serving as Academic Supervisor</td>
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<tr>
<td>5-7 Years</td>
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<td>91.18</td>
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<td>8-10 Years</td>
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<td>8.82</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Exploratory Factor Analysis of Filipino millennial academic supervisor-sensitive Transformational Leadership Attributes

The Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) accorded the study with a fresh and alternative look into the popular and ideal modality that was a brainchild of the Western school of thought, the Transformational Leadership, that reverberates to the psyche of the respondents of the study.
The processing and interpretation of the EFA were guided by specific decision rules that will be extensively tackled in the paper's succeeding portions (Hayton, Allen, & Scarpello, 2004).

Factor analysis using the principal component method with varimax rotation was applied to the 23 Transformational Leadership-related statements to identify the underlying dimensions of the said leadership modality as contextualized to the psyche of Filipino millennial academic supervisors (See Table 2). Prior to factor analysis, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity were applied to test the data's fitness. The KMO was found to be 95% adequate and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was found to be 5580.87, with significance lower than 0.001. Both statistical data supported the use of factor analysis. The reliability coefficient (Cronbach's alpha) was computed for each factor dimension to determine the items' internal consistency in each scale. Decision rules dictate that all factors with 60% and above reliability coefficients were considered acceptable in the study. Relatively high coefficients ranging from 96-97% were indicated by all factors. Final reduction in the number of items was scrutinized by discarding all items of the factor loadings and communalities which are less than 0.40. Decision rules resulted in retaining all items in the survey questionnaire measuring two dimensions. Both the factors yielded an eigenvalue of above 1 and the two dimensions were labeled in the order of increasing explained variance (See the Factor Loading column).

Factor 1, labelled as Critical Synergism, typifies Filipino millennial academic supervisors' discerning attributes that are channeled towards enhancing the programs, projects, and change initiatives of the organization. This factor also involves being meticulous while striving to forge an atmosphere of dynamism, collaboration, and solidarity. The scholarship of discovery on Transformational Leadership has well elucidated that vision is the point of departure of its execution (Bass, 1985). As the academic supervisors become immersed in the translation of vision
TABLE 2: Exploratory Factor Analysis Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Filipino Millennial Academic Supervisors’ Transformational Leadership Factors and Items</th>
<th>Factor Loading</th>
<th>Eigenvalue</th>
<th>Variance (%)</th>
<th>Reliability Coefficient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>CRITICAL-SYNERGISM ATTRIBUTES</strong></td>
<td>9.74</td>
<td>44.40</td>
<td>0.97</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I tell the group to work together for the same goal</td>
<td>0.845</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have ideas on how to challenge them to reexamine their basic assumptions about our work</td>
<td>0.833</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I show others that I expect a lot from them</td>
<td>0.823</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I behave in manner thoughtful to their personal needs</td>
<td>0.820</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I encourage them to be “team players”</td>
<td>0.814</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I treat them with consideration of the organizational needs</td>
<td>0.812</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I show respect to their personal beliefs</td>
<td>0.792</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whenever I act, I consider their feelings</td>
<td>0.772</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I stimulate them to rethink the way they do things</td>
<td>0.764</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I develop a team attitude and spirit among colleagues</td>
<td>0.761</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I insist to others to do only the best performance</td>
<td>0.753</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I lead by example</td>
<td>0.710</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I foster collaboration among work groups</td>
<td>0.709</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I will not settle for second best</td>
<td>0.704</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I challenge them to think about old problems in new ways</td>
<td>0.698</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I ask them questions which prompt them to think</td>
<td>0.674</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>REFLEXIVE-SYNERGISM ATTRIBUTES</strong></td>
<td>4.91</td>
<td>31.61</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I inspire others with my plans of the future</td>
<td>0.882</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am always seeking new opportunities for the organization</td>
<td>0.864</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am able to get others become committed to my vision</td>
<td>0.858</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I lead by “doing” rather than simply by “telling”</td>
<td>0.853</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I paint an interesting picture of the future for our group</td>
<td>0.846</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have a clear understanding to where we are going</td>
<td>0.790</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I provide a good model for them to follow</td>
<td>0.764</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Explained Variance</strong></td>
<td>76.01</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy = 0.95; Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity = 5580.87
into reality, they tend to be discerning with their plans, actions, and reactions that could potentially affect the trajectory of the organization and the organizational climate that their subordinates could experience. In effect, they tend to be critical and mindful of their courses of action. Proper educational planning is seen as an avenue where vision could be effectively conveyed (Alexander, 2015). Neigher (2003) rationalized that this is due to the vastly changing landscapes that could have a domino effect on other phases of leadership and management. Strategic planning as to what version of vision to portray while keeping the fold stimulated and engaged are suggested to combat the unexpected and drastic changes among organizations (Dibrell, Craig, & Neubaum, 2014). Not to mention that educators are conditioned early on in their careers to be good planners due to the various instances that warrant the creation and evaluation of learning objectives (Baldwin & Rosier, 2016). This feat is carried over as they assume leadership roles. Moreover, albeit millennials are portrayed as professionals who normalize bumpy moments (Romano, 2006) and constructive conflict (Bickmore & Parker, 2014), they are still bound to their professional and cultural backdrop. Landa-Jocano (2006) averred that embedded in the culture of Filipinos, regardless of professions, is the concept of *Halaga*. He portrayed it as the evaluative core of the Filipino culture. Thus, it is not surprising that Filipino leaders will place a premium on stepping back to assess any repercussion of their move, most especially if it will affect not just the sum of the parts, but the whole.

Factor 2, indicated as *Reflexive Synergism*, pertains to Filipino millennial academic supervisors' introspecting attributes geared towards the organizational aspects that warrant contemplation to ride the waves of change. This factor involves the conscious effort in converting inspirational rhetoric into a concrete reality through exemplary attitude, proactive disposition, and role-modeling. In the literature, Transformational Leadership naturally capitalizes on the
introspective tendencies of the leader to set the direction of the organization and its affiliates (Bass, 1985). In the Philippine setting, Landa-Jocano (2006) stressed that deeply etched within the Filipino mind are layers upon layers of contemplation that compels them to be modest in their thoughts, feelings, and actions. Even if the millennials are frequently sketched as self-centered, risk-takers, and radical, their culture can apparently delimit if not negate any stereotypical casting thrown at them. Landa-Jocano (2006) further imparted the notion of Asal as the expressive core of the Filipino culture. For him, it lies deep in the subconscious of Filipinos. Landa-Jocano (2008) also explicated that among the work values of Filipinos, they tend to ascribe to the relational traits such as marunong makisama (able to get along with others), marunong makitungo (flexible), and marunong makiramay (empathetic). In a way, this Bayanihan spirit and prosocial behaviors of Filipino leaders and workers mirrors the natural traits expected to a Transformational Leader. Hence, it is never out of league and/or out of reach in a collectivistic society like the Philippines. Not to mention the values and standards expected to a professional belonging to the teaching vocation as they are often esteemed and placed on the pedestal. Hence, their acts should reflect whatever they have in mind (Jiang & Cheng, 2016).

**SEM of the Hypothesized Model**

The study purported to test a Hypothesized Model that portrays the impact of Design Thinking and Grit-related behaviors to the Filipino millennial academic supervisor-sensitive Transformational Leadership attributes and to determine the type of correlation that exists in the independent variables used in the study. The processing of the dataset utilizing the IBM AMOS version 24 generated interesting results that warrant an in-depth analysis and resonance with the codified body of knowledge. All regression weights were fixed at $\beta = 1.000$ as the point of compa-
-rison used on the Path Diagram in connection to the processing of Maximum Likelihood Estimates. The evolved factor dimensions lifted from the Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) part of the study which now makes up the dependent variable: Transformational Leadership attributes both yielded favorable results, Factor 1 (Critical Synergism) with $\beta = 1.05$; p-value = 0.00) and Factor 2 (Reflexive Synergism) with $\beta = 0.67$; p-value = 0.00, respectively. Considering the sub-scale dimensions of Design Thinking, it was revealed that only the dimensions of Imagining ($\beta = 0.98$; p-value = 0.00) and Prototyping are ($\beta = 0.86$; p-value = 0.00) are contributory to the Design Thinking facets which can be associated to the collective dimensions of Transformational Leadership. The other two dimensions of Design Thinking produced a negative value: Visualizing ($\beta = - 0.08$; p-value = 0.21) and Evaluating ($\beta = - 0.01$; p-value = 0.81). Meanwhile, in terms of

**FIGURE 2:** The SEM of the Hypothesized Model
the collective dimensions of Design Thinking that is being tested as part of the Hypothesized Model, the processing revealed that the independent variable Design Thinking positively impacts the Transformational Leadership attributes ($\beta = 0.84; p\text{-value} = 0.00$). Hence, there is a sufficient evidence to accept the Hypothesis 1. From these deductions, it can be concluded that the Filipino millennial academic supervisors who exhibit a higher degree of Design Thinking behaviors have a positive impact on their Transformational Leadership attributes.

It is interesting to note that in the results of the first hypothesis, only the construct of Imagining and Prototyping are contributory to the collective Design Thinking dimension that could impact Transformational Leadership. Putting aspects into perspective, in the growing body of literature, millennials are often described as experimentative and innovative (Behrstock & Matthew, 2009). Hence, the sub-scale of Prototyping can be easily linked to their relentless pursuit and diligence in committing trial-and-error mechanisms in order to offer new solutions to the persisting problems of academic organizations (Dunne, 2018). Upon scrutiny, these are some of the qualities that are expected to a Transformational Leader and Design Thinker (Podsakoff et al., 1990; Badding 2017). Imagining, being one of the essential elements of envisioning an exciting road map for the organization, is seen to thrive in the fierce academic environment as long as it endowed with transparency and resources, and integrated with technology (Akyel, KorkusuzPolat, & Arslankaya, 2012). While millennials are often tagged by society that they will turn against the tides when things go unfavorable, it is possible that they are just scouting for new ground rules to resolve an issue by being imaginative. Lopes & D'Ambrioso (2016) underscored the concept of Creative Insubordination. It is a conscious effort that prevents organizational entropy when concerned organizational citizens cease and desist in subscribing to the norm as they tweak policies for the benefit of the constituents of the organization.
Moreover, in terms of the sub-scale dimensions of Grit, it was revealed that the **Consistency of Interest** ($\beta = 1.67; \ p\text{-value} = 0.00$) and **Perseverance of Effort** ($\beta = 0.25; \ p\text{-value} = 0.00$) are both contributory to the overall Grit dimension which can be associated with the collective dimensions of Transformational Leadership. Albeit such is the case, the independent variable Grit does not impact the Transformational Leadership attributes as evidenced by the $\beta = 0.15; \ p\text{-value} = 0.38$. Hence, there is sufficient evidence to reject the Hypothesis 2. From these deductions, it can be concluded that the Filipino millennial academic supervisors who embody Grit behaviors do not directly cause their Transformational Leadership attributes.

Inasmuch as the concepts of **Consistency of Interest** and **Perseverance of Effort** are expected to be the common denominators among Transformational Leaders to bring a complete metamorphosis to academic organizations, it is surprising that the collective dimension of Grit does not impact the Transformational Leadership attributes in the second hypothesis of the study. Northouse (2006) rationalized that even if Transformational Leadership has a universal applicability, it must be clear-cut that it was a product of the Western mind: straightforward, outspoken, argumentative, and liberal. As juxtaposed with the typical characteristics associated with the millennials which were discussed in the previous sections of the paper, logic dictates that Grit will really be associated to Transformational Leadership in the Western world as their interest is highly visible and remarkably felt. As opposed to such pattern of behaviors, the Filipino leaders are stamped as professionals who are more reserved to lead the charge (Andres, 2001), perhaps due to their non-individualistic and communitarian background (Trompenaars & Turner, 1998). Thus, the author argues it may be misconstrued that the inactive and non-participative front of some Filipino leaders are telltale signs of the lack of grit or conviction. Hornedo (2002) as seconded by Timbreza (2003) pointed that it all boils down to the reticent nature of Filipinos.
Therefore, either inward-looking or outward tending, their constant loop of conservative demeanor must never be dismissed as lack of interest and freeload. As primed by their culture, asserting change and leading the consensus-building makes it challenging for them to advocate for change and resist the perilous phenomenon called 'Group Think' (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2012). Once it plagues the organization, it places the educational institution into a disadvantaged position as the bandwagon tendency overshadows the natural proactive and reactive tendency to challenge the status quo.

Further, in terms of the correlation between the two independent variables used in the study, the dataset was first subjected for inspection of collinearity. When the data were deemed to be intact, processing using the IBM AMOS version 24 ensued. The results yielded the value of $r = 0.11$ or weak correlation coefficient. This condition is indicative that albeit both independent variables tend to go up in response to one another, the relationship that exists can be classified as minimal (Obilor & Amadi, 2018). Hence, there is sufficient evidence to reject the Hypothesis 3. From these deductions, it can be concluded that the Filipino millennial academic supervisors' Grit-related mindset is not strongly correlated to their Design Thinking behaviors. Rojas (2015) thoroughly researched Sternberg & Lubart's (1996) Investment Theory of Creativity in the educational context. According to her, creative ideation requires the proclivity to take risks, to be deeply engrossed, and to defy the programmed decisions. In forming the habit of creative thought, Sternberg (2012) mentioned that an individual is expected to show willingness and perseverance. Sternberg also touched on the premise that creative functioning, such as Design Thinking, will only occur if and only if there are building blocks of risk-taking and intrinsic motivation in the equation. Analogous with the preceding discussions, one potential rationale for the low-key creativity and grit exhibited by the Filipino leaders regardless of generation is their native lifeways
in the Philippine milieu. As Landa-Jocano (2006) would declare, the Filipino cultural epistemology dictates the would-be actions of its inhabitants in the place of work, study, and worship. He used the term Kalinangan (way of life) to expound the lifeworld of Filipinos that is filled with subtle strokes in their undertakings that is often misinterpreted as being idle.

The Emerging Model

![Diagram of the Emerging Model]

**FIGURE 3: The Emerging Model**

The traces of acceptability in the fit indices (*See Table 3*) of the Hypothesized Model prompted the author to further probe into the model fit of the Emerging Model once the non-contributory sub-scales of the independent variables were removed. The deletion of these facets accorded the study with a model that could potentially unlock future research inquiries, discourse
platforms, and policy reconceptualization among educational organizations. As elaborated from the previous section of the paper, the sub-scale dimensions: Visualizing ($\beta = -0.08; p\text{-value} = 0.21$) and Evaluating ($\beta = -0.01; p\text{-value} = 0.81$) under the Design Thinking variable, and the collective dimension of the other variable, Grit ($\beta = 0.15; p\text{-value} = 0.38$), does not infer an impact to the Transformational Leadership attributes. Hence, they were omitted outright. The author argues on the inclusion of the correlation between the variables Design Thinking and Grit as the findings succinctly showed minimal correlation and not the absence of correlation between the two independent variables. Therefore, the author opted to include it in the processing of the emerging model.

**TABLE 3:** Model Fit Indices of the Hypothesized and Emerging Models

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MODEL FIT INDICES</th>
<th>HYPOTHESIZED MODEL</th>
<th>EMERGING MODEL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cmin/df (p-value)</td>
<td>9.99 (p &lt; 0.00)</td>
<td>1.21 (p &lt; 0.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparative Fit Index (CFI)</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>0.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incremental Fit Index (IFI)</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>0.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tucker – Lewis Index (TFI)</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td>0.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RMSEA</td>
<td>0.21</td>
<td>0.03</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table above depicts the model fit summaries of the Hypothesized and Emerging Models. As can be gleaned from the tabular representation: the Cmin/df of the Hypothesized Model generated the value of 9.99, whereas the Emerging Model produced 1.21. Shi, Lee, & Maydeu-Olivares (2018) noted that the acceptable range of the Cmin/df must be less than 3. It can be deduced that the Emerging Model bested the Hypothesized Model in this index criterion. Moreover, in terms of the incremental fit indices, the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) and the Incremental Fit Index (IFI) of the Hypothesized Model both yielded the value of 0.83. On the other hand, the CFI and IFI of the Emerging Model, both bears the value of 0.99. It is also noteworthy
to mention the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) of the Hypothesized Model yielded the value of 0.72, while the Emerging Model produced the value of 0.99. Considering that the acceptable level of the incremental fit indices like CFI, IFI, and TLI should be above 0.90 to signify acceptability (Schreiber, Stage, King, Nora, & Barlow, 2006), it can be deduced that the Emerging Model performed better than the Hypothesized Model as the latter yielded values notches below the acceptable range. Further, considering the absolute fit index in terms of the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), the Hypothesized Model produced the value of 0.21, whereas the Emerging Model yielded the value of 0.03. If decision rules dictate that the RMSEA must be less than 0.08 to weigh relevance (De Carvalho & Chima, 2014), then it is indicative that the Emerging Model is more acceptable in the modelling standards and statistical standpoint.

Conclusion

Transformational Leadership might be a universal phenomenon, but we must also bear in mind that it is also a cultural encounter and an organizational reality (Muenjohn & Armstrong, 2007; Jogulu & Ferkins, 2012). Akin to the analogy of the teaching-learning process, the leadership development in the field of education need not be a paradox as it must also be receptive to the prism of cultural, professional, and generational angles that could affect the overall lens of the leadership practice being accentuated in this study. As the panorama of these thematic discourses remains a research imperative in the field of education, empirical efforts must be intensively elucidated on how to imbibe ownership and convert the Filipino millennial academic supervisors' positional lethargy into work productivity, their silent predilection into a roaring immersion, and their creative juices into something substantive in communal and organizational level. The present study contributed to the growing body of literature by drawing the Transformational Leadership attributes directly from the respondents' perspectives that are sensitive to their generational
temperament, cultural eccentricities, and occupational distinction through the Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA). The two-fold evolved typologies from the EFA that resonate with their psyche invites the need to become both critical and reflexive as they remain grounded on the organization's metamorphosis amidst the complex educational landscape and as they redirect their efforts toward the solidarity of the organization that they represent. Through the Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) of the impact of the dichotomous yet conflicting independent variables of Design Thinking and Grit into those derived factor dimensions, it was revealed that only the former's precepts significantly impact the two-fold synergistic Transformational Leadership facets. The reflective resonance from the literature accounted for these results as the Filipino cultural configuration naturally delimits creativity borne risk-taking behaviors and primes reserved dispositions even if a professional hail from a progressive generation. This premise also rationalizes the weak correlation that existed among the independent variables of the study.

More than ever, the indigenous consciousness, generational sensibilities, and professional preparation of academic supervisors are integral to their actualization of a leadership modality that could revolutionize their practices. As it is infused with the nexus of the millennials' creative facets and willpower, it could bring the organization into greater heights. Summarily, this pioneering study paved the way for an Emerging Model that mapped the spectrum of contributory elements present in the causal relationships that could lead to our better appreciation and insightful understanding of a misunderstood generation from a collectivistic culture as juxtaposed to a highly revered leadership modality. This marvel study could serve as guideposts for policy development and praxis formulation among educational organizations and as an evidence-based springboard for future research on the area of generational and cultural avenues that dynamically alter the contemporary academic landscape. Such organizational reality encompasses an eclectic discourse
and systemic organizational investment on the incessant development of the organizational culture among educational organizations through generational behaviors. Knowing how to better coach, challenge, and care for these uprising talents at the forefront of the educational sector pipeline will set the tone in creating a vibrant organizational culture today and even far-reaching their generation. The researcher now signifies a clarion call for educational researchers to use the salient *emic* concepts contained in this scholarly work as a future direction for qualitative studies in order to generate rich and thick accounts that could offer complementary or alternative expedition on this layer of experience.

**Disclosure statement**

No potential conflict of interest declared by the author.

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