Power and Politics in the Workplace: Input to Educational Leadership and Management Framework

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Abstract

This study investigates leadership competencies and the influence of power and politics among school heads in the Province of Quezon, Philippines. Using a mixed-methods design, data were collected through surveys of 58 school heads and 289 teachers, along with interviews with selected school leaders. The research examined perceptions of power and politics in schools, common leadership styles, and the influence of demographic factors. Findings reveal that most school heads were mid-career professionals with advanced qualifications. Gender was the only demographic variable significantly affecting perceptions, with male school heads perceived as more authoritarian. Participative and delegative leadership styles were predominant, promoting collaboration and shared decision-making; however, a perception gap emerged: teachers reported more political behaviors—such as favoritism and biased promotions—than school heads acknowledged. While school leaders emphasized fairness and ethics, teachers expressed concerns about transparency and equity. The findings highlight a misalignment between leadership intent and staff experience. The study recommends leadership development initiatives focusing on political literacy, ethical decision-making, and gender sensitivity. Strengthening communication, reinforcing merit-based systems, and integrating peer support and conflict resolution strategies are essential. These efforts will better prepare school heads for ethical and effective leadership within the complex political environment of the Philippine schools

Keywords: Educational Leadership, Leadership Styles, Power and Politics

1. Introduction

Leadership in education is increasingly recognized as a complex interplay of formal authority, informal power, and political maneuvering. Globally, educational leaders are expected not only to manage instruction and administration but also to navigate the political dimensions of their organizations. This demands technical proficiency, relational insight, and a strategic understanding of power and influence. Educational reforms, particularly decentralization, have intensified the complexity of school leadership. The shift of decision-making authority to local schools has expanded leaders' responsibilities and exposed them to greater political influences within their communities (Leithwood, Harris, & Hopkins, 2020). In the Philippines' Quezon Province, understanding how school heads perceive power and politics—and how teachers view their leadership—is essential to improving school effectiveness.

This study examines school heads' perceptions of power and politics alongside their leadership styles—authoritarian, participative, and delegative—and examines teachers' perceptions of these behaviors. It also

considers demographic factors to address gaps in local knowledge and inform leadership development programs focused on political literacy and inclusive governance. Ultimately, the study aims to support leadership practices that balance authority with collaboration, fostering transparent and equitable school environments.

2. Research Questions

This study aims to answer key questions regarding public secondary school heads in the Division of Quezon Province. It first seeks to describe their demographic profiles, including age, gender, marital status, educational attainment, position, length of service, experience as school heads, and relevant training. It then investigates the extent of power and politics as perceived by school heads and teachers, focusing on general political behavior, strategies like "go along to get ahead," and issues related to promotion, reward, and recognition. The study also examines leadership styles—authoritarian, participative, and delegative—and explores differences in perceptions of power, politics, and leadership styles based on demographics. Furthermore, it assesses the relationship between leadership styles and political behaviors among school heads. Lastly, it aims to develop a framework to enhance educational leadership and management.

3. Literature Review

Power dynamics significantly shape school decision-making, with principals and central office leaders exerting influence beyond formal policies. Wong et al. (2020) showed how central offices use shared norms in decentralized systems, noting that organizational climate also affects principals' decision power. Central leaders balance influence and principal autonomy to promote buy-in and sustainable decisions.

Leadership styles and power dynamics impact organizational commitment and innovation. Mahmutoğlu, Celep, and Kaya (2025) found that administrators' influence tactics increase teacher commitment, especially with high learning agility. Du, Li, and Luo (2020) noted that authoritarian leadership reduces support for change, though this weakens with low job mobility and trust in leaders. Psychological safety is essential for innovation, requiring environments where staff can speak freely (Mahdia, 2024). Sinha (2023) emphasized how power and emotion shape school culture and policy, underscoring authority's complexity.

Estacio and Estacio (2022) found that people-centered and strategic leadership enhance school performance in Bulacan. Mariano and Oco (2024) linked transformational and instructional leadership to teacher satisfaction in Jasaan North, especially in compensation and relationships. Precioso and Chua (2025) connected strong leadership, stakeholder engagement, and time management to high teaching performance in Bacolod City. Cubay (2020) found that while teachers and administrators align on power bases, they differ on leadership perceptions, stressing the need for alignment. Baloch et al. (2023) reported that democratic leadership fosters positive teacher views in Balochistan, highlighting the value of participative leadership.

Demographic factors also shape leadership. Women often adopt collaborative styles that support positive school climates (Leithwood, Harris, & Hopkins, 2020). Leadership competence improves with experience, higher education, and ongoing professional development (Day, Gu, & Sammons, 2016; Leithwood et al., 2020).

4. Research Methodology

This study used a mixed methods design, collecting quantitative survey data from 58 school heads and 289 teachers using an open-access questionnaire, alongside qualitative data collected through interviews with 10 school heads, who were provided the interview guide questions online. Quantitative data were analyzed with nonparametric tests and correlation analyses, while qualitative data underwent thematic analysis. Purposive sampling targeted schools with observable organizational politics in Quezon Province.

5. Results and Discussion

Table 1.1: Demographic Profile of the School Heads

Profile	Category	Frequency	Percent
Age Group	30–39 years	13	22.4%
	40–49 years	22	37.9%
	50–59 years	21	36.2%
	60+ years	2	0.7%
Gender	Male	23	39.7%
	Female	35	60.3%
Marital Status	Single	10	17.2%
	Married	48	82.8%
Educational Attainment	With Units Masters	12	20.7%
	Master's degree	21	36.2%
	With Units Doctorate	10	17.2%
	Doctorate Degree	15	25.9%
Current Position	Teacher I-III	3	5.17%
	Head Teacher	17	29.31%
	Principal I	25	43.10%
	Principal II	9	15.52%
	Principal III	2	3.45%
	Principal IV	2	3.45%
Length of Service (LOS) in Public Schools	< 10 years	1	1.72%
	10–19 years	30	51.72%
	20–29 years	10	17.25%
	30+ years	17	29.31%
Length of Experience (LOE) as School Health	< 10 years	38	65.52%
	10–19 years	15	25.86%
	20+ years	5	8.62%
* Seminars and Trainings Attended	PESPA Training	17	-
	MATATAG Training	10	-
	School Heads Development Program (SHDP)	8	-
	ABC+ Instructional Leadership (ILT)	7	-
	Budget Preparation Fiscal Mangt. Training	4	-

* Data based on respondents' open-ended entries on seminars and training attended.

The demographic profile of the school heads revealed a leadership group that was predominantly in the 40–59 age range (74.1%), female (60.3%), and married (82.8%), suggesting a mature and stable workforce. A majority held advanced degrees, with 79.3% having completed or taken units in a master's or doctorate program, indicating a high level of academic preparation. Most were serving in mid- to senior-level leadership positions, with Principals I and II comprising 58.62% of the sample. Over half had 10–19 years of service in public schools, while 65.52% had less than 10 years of experience specifically as school heads, reflecting a relatively newer cohort in leadership roles. The most frequently attended training was the PESPA Training, followed by MATATAG and SHDP, based on open-ended responses. This suggested strong engagement in professional development, though likely influenced by department-mandated or widely promoted programs. These findings pointed to a leadership pool with solid professional and academic credentials but still in the process of accumulating direct leadership experience. This may call for targeted capacity-building efforts, mentorship programs, and sustained leadership development, particularly for newer principals.

Table 2.1: Extent of Powers and Politics Among School Heads in terms of General Political Behaviors as Perceived by the Teachers and School Heads: Mean, Standard Deviation, and Significance Levels

Statement	School Heads			Teachers			p-value	α = 0.05
	Mean	SD	Remark	Mean	SD	Remark		
I have felt the need to be firm in my leadership to maintain my position.	4.02	0.98	OP	3.47	0.98	OP	0.000	SD
There are influential individuals whose opinions strongly affect decision-making.	2.93	1.09	MP	3.06	1.03	MP	0.669	NSD
Decisions are often influenced more by personal connections than by merit.	2.48	1.06	SP	2.89	1.06	MP	0.014	SD
I sometimes feel pressured to align with powerful individuals to secure my position.	2.31	1.08	SP	2.75	1.08	MP	0.009	SD
Challenging authority can lead to negative consequences.	2.50	0.96	SP	2.69	1.13	MP	0.268	NSD
Certain individuals are given advantages due to their connections with those in power.	2.66	1.13	MP	2.82	1.14	MP	0.434	NSD
Speaking out against leadership decisions is often discouraged, even when constructive.	2.50	1.01	SP	2.75	1.15	MP	0.130	NSD
Promotions and rewards are sometimes based more on connections than on actual performance.	2.45	1.17	SP	2.75	1.19	MP	0.112	NSD

Leaders use influence to shape decisions in ways that align with personal priorities.	2.22	1.11	SP	2.74	1.19	MP	0.003	SD
Politics plays a bigger role than competence in determining who gets leadership positions.	2.74	1.42	MP	2.88	1.19	MP	0.502	NSD

Legend: Slightly Practiced (SP), Moderately Practiced (MP), Often Practiced (OP), Significantly Different (SD),
Not Significantly Different (NSD)

There were significant differences between school heads and teachers' perceptions of political behavior in schools. Both groups agreed that firmness in leadership was often necessary to maintain one's position; however, school heads felt this more strongly (M = 4.02) than teachers perceived their leaders to feel (M = 3.47, p = .000). Teachers perceived that decisions were more influenced by personal connections than school heads reported (M = 2.89 vs. 2.48, p = .014), and they also believed that school heads experienced greater pressure to align with powerful individuals to secure their positions (M = 2.75 vs. 2.31, p = .009). Additionally, teachers believed that leaders used their influence to shape decisions based on personal priorities more than school heads acknowledged (M = 2.74 vs. 2.22, p = .003). These differences suggested that teachers were more aware of or concerned about political influences in school leadership, which may have affected trust and collaboration within the school environment.

Table 2.2: Extent of Powers and Politics Among School Heads in terms of Going Along to Get Ahead
as Perceived by the Teachers and School Heads: Mean, Standard Deviation, and Significance Levels

Statement	School Heads			Teachers			p-value	α = 0.05
	Mean	SD	Remark	Mean	SD	Remark		
Agreeing with powerful people is often the safest option.	2.45	1.08	SP	2.75	1.01	MP	0.051	NSD
Conforming to the views of influential individuals is sometimes necessary for career stability.	2.43	1.11	SP	2.69	0.99	MP	0.074	NSD
Following orders is expected, even when making independent decisions would be better.	2.81	1.03	MP	2.96	1.03	MP	0.372	NSD
It is better not to challenge the system to avoid conflict.	2.72	1.04	MP	2.63	1.10	MP	0.467	NSD
Staying silent is sometimes easier than speaking up against unfair practices.	2.74	1.04	MP	2.70	1.11	MP	0.634	NSD

Telling people what they want to hear can be more beneficial than telling the truth.	2.72	1.25	MP	2.61	1.15	MP	0.405	NSD
Employees are encouraged to speak openly, even if they challenge long-standing ideas.	3.09	1.08	MP	2.97	1.09	MP	0.448	NSD
Expressing opposing opinions can have negative consequences in this organization.	2.59	1.06	MP	2.59	1.10	MP	0.883	NSD
Challenging the status quo is often discouraged, even when improvements are needed.	2.53	1.00	SP	2.64	1.14	MP	0.687	NSD
Independent thinking is overlooked in favor of agreeing with those in authority.	2.45	1.08	SP	2.81	1.07	MP	0.029	SD

The data revealed that most actions related to "going along to get ahead" were moderately practiced by both school heads and teachers, with no significant differences for most statements. However, a significant difference was found regarding the perception that independent thinking was overlooked in favor of agreeing with authority. Teachers perceived school heads to exhibit this behavior more strongly (M = 2.81) than school heads reported themselves (M = 2.45, p = .029). This suggested that teachers viewed school heads as more inclined to favor conformity over independent thought. Overall, the findings indicated a culture in which conformity was somewhat normalized, potentially limiting open dialogue and innovation within the school environment.

Table 2.3: Extent of Powers and Politics Among School Heads in terms of Promotion, Award, and Recognition as Perceived by the Teachers and School Heads: Mean, Standard Deviation, and Significance Levels

Statement	School Heads			Teachers			p-value	α = 0.05
	Mean	SD	Remark	Mean	SD	Remark		
Personal connections sometimes matter more than performance.	2.28	0.93	SP	2.30	1.07	SP	0.918	NSD
Recognition is sometimes influenced by bias.	2.36	1.05	SP	2.23	1.06	SP	0.316	NSD
Some teachers feel they must please administrators to get recognized.	2.12	0.99	SP	2.24	1.07	SP	0.533	NSD
School policies on promotions and awards are not always followed.	2.00	0.90	SP	2.14	1.07	SP	0.557	NSD
Earning a promotion or award is not always based on merit.	2.10	1.04	SP	2.20	1.04	SP	0.494	NSD
Promotions, awards, and recognitions in this school are not always fair.	2.00	1.03	SP	2.12	1.07	SP	0.425	NSD

Statement	Mean	SD	Remark	Mean	SD	Remark	p	Sig
Decisions about promotions and awards are not always transparent.	1.79	0.89	SP	2.09	1.04	SP	0.051	NSD
Outstanding teachers and staff do not always get the recognition they deserve.	2.57	1.35	MP	2.30	1.16	SP	0.214	NSD
Hard work is not always the main reason people get promoted.	2.78	1.39	MP	2.45	1.22	MP	0.101	NSD
I have seen people rewarded or promoted unfairly.	2.91	1.35	MP	2.55	1.27	MP	0.054	NSD

Perceptions of fairness in promotions, awards, and recognition were generally consistent between school heads and teachers, with both groups rating these practices as only slightly to moderately practiced. Neither group strongly perceived that personal connections, bias, or unfairness significantly influenced recognition or advancement, as reflected in low mean scores and the absence of significant differences between groups. However, teachers moderately agreed that school heads did not always give deserved recognition to outstanding staff and that unfair promotions occurred, suggesting some concerns about transparency and meritocracy in leadership practices. Overall, the results implied that while promotions and awards were mostly viewed as fair, there remained room to improve transparency and ensure equitable recognition within the school system.

Table 3.1: Extent of the Leadership Skills of the School Heads in terms Authoritarian Style as Perceived by Teachers and School Heads Themselves

Statement	School Heads			Teachers		
	Mean	SD	Remark	Mean	SD	Remark
I always have the final decision-making authority within my school.	4.22	0.75	Always True	4.20	0.84	Always True
I do not consider suggestions made by my employees/teachers as I do not have the time for them.	1.53	0.80	Never True	2.93	1.48	Occasionally True
I instruct my employees/teachers on what has to be done and how to do it.	4.02	0.89	Frequently True	4.10	0.90	Frequently True
When someone makes a mistake, I tell them not to ever do that again and make a note of it.	4.16	0.79	Frequently True	4.06	0.85	Frequently True
Newly hired employees/teachers are not allowed to make any decisions unless it is approved by me first.	3.17	1.35	Occasionally True	3.35	1.41	Occasionally True
When something goes wrong, I tell my employees/teachers that a procedure is not working correctly, and I establish a new one.	3.86	1.02	Frequently True	4.05	0.93	Frequently True

I closely monitor my employees/teachers to ensure they are performing correctly.	4.34	0.69	Always True	4.23	0.87	Always True
I like the power that my leadership position holds over my subordinates.	3.45	1.38	Frequently True	3.92	1.14	Frequently True
Employees/Teachers must be directed or threatened with punishment to get them to achieve the organizational objectives.	3.19	1.56	Occasionally True	3.75	1.34	Frequently True
Employees/Teachers primarily seek security.	4.41	0.73	Always True	4.39	0.72	Always True

Both school heads and teachers consistently perceived the use of an authoritarian leadership style, as indicated by high mean scores on statements related to decision-making authority, close monitoring, and directive behavior. Both groups strongly agreed that school heads had final decision-making authority (M = 4.22 and 4.20) and frequently instructed and monitored teachers closely to ensure proper performance (M = 4.02 to 4.34). However, a notable difference emerged in perceptions regarding the consideration of teachers' suggestions: school heads reported rarely dismissing suggestions (M = 1.53), whereas teachers perceived that their input was occasionally overlooked by school heads (M = 2.93). Both groups agreed that employees often sought security (M ≈ 4.4), and teachers perceived school heads as relying more heavily on direction or threats to achieve objectives compared to how school heads described their own behavior. These results suggested a predominantly authoritarian leadership style characterized by control and directive practices, which may have impacted teacher autonomy and morale.

Table 3.2: Extent of the Leadership Skills of the School Heads in terms Participative Style as Perceived by Teachers and School Heads Themselves

Statement	School Heads			Teachers		
	Mean	SD	Remark	Mean	SD	Remark
I always try to include or consult one or a group of employees/teachers in determining what to do and how to do it. However, I still maintain the final decision-making authority.	4.19	0.85	Frequently True	4.13	0.90	Frequently True
I ask for teachers'/employees' ideas and input on upcoming plans and activities.	4.45	0.71	Always True	4.17	0.89	Frequently True
When things go wrong and I need to create a strategy to keep an activity or process running on schedule, I call a meeting to get my teacher's/employee's ideas.	4.36	0.77	Always True	4.19	0.83	Frequently True
I want to create a working environment where the employees/teachers take ownership of the activity. I allow them to participate in the decision-making process.	4.50	0.68	Always True	4.25	0.83	Always True

I ask employees/teachers for their vision of where they see their jobs going and then use their vision where appropriate.	4.28	0.70	Always True	4.13	0.86	Frequently True
I allow my employees/teachers to set priorities with my guidance.	4.29	0.75	Always True	4.14	0.84	Frequently True
When there are differences in role expectations, I work with them to resolve the differences.	4.45	0.63	Always True	4.28	0.80	Always True
I like to use my leadership power to help subordinates grow.	4.50	0.73	Always True	4.27	0.86	Always True
Employees/Teachers will exercise self-direction if they are committed to the objectives.	4.31	0.75	Always True	4.28	0.86	Always True
Employees/Teachers know how to use creativity and ingenuity to solve organizational problems.	4.66	0.55	Always True	4.50	0.70	Always True

Both school heads and teachers strongly perceived the use of a participative leadership style, as reflected by consistently high mean scores across all statements. School heads reported frequently consulting and including teachers in decision-making processes while maintaining final authority (M = 4.19 and 4.13). Both groups agreed that school heads sought teacher input on plans, encouraged ownership, and fostered a collaborative work environment (means generally above 4.2). Additionally, there was strong agreement that teachers were capable of self-direction and creative problem-solving when committed to objectives (M = 4.31 to 4.66). These findings suggested a leadership approach that valued collaboration, empowerment, and shared responsibility, which could have positively influenced teacher motivation and overall school effectiveness.

Table 3.3: Extent of the Leadership Skills of the School Heads in terms Delegative Style as Perceived by Teachers and School Heads Themselves

Statement	School Heads			Teachers		
	Mean	SD	Remark	Mean	SD	Remark
I and my employees/teachers always vote whenever a major decision has to be made.	4.29	0.79	Always True	4.10	0.88	Frequently True
For a major decision to pass in my school, it must have the approval of each individual or the majority of employees/teachers.	4.26	0.78	Always True	4.18	0.89	Frequently True
To get information out, I send it by e-mails, memos, or voice mails/texts; very rarely is a meeting called. My employees/teachers are then expected to act upon the information.	3.72	0.97	Frequently True	4.01	0.91	Frequently True

I allow my employees/teachers to determine what needs to be done and how to do it.	4.38	0.75	Always True	4.21	0.80	Always True
My employees/teachers have more expertise in their roles than I do, so I allow them to make decisions and carry out their work independently.	3.83	0.99	Frequently True	4.08	0.85	Frequently True
I delegate tasks in order to implement a new procedure or process.	4.47	0.65	Always True	4.21	0.81	Always True
Each individual is responsible for defining their job.	4.53	0.60	Always True	4.29	0.83	Always True
I like to share my leadership power with my subordinates.	4.50	0.66	Always True	4.25	0.87	Always True
Employees/Teachers have the right to determine their own organizational objectives.	4.48	0.68	Always True	4.36	0.78	Always True
My employees/teachers can lead themselves just as well as I can.	4.45	0.73	Always True	4.43	0.77	Always True

Both school heads and teachers perceived the delegative leadership style as frequently to always practiced in their schools, with high mean scores across all statements. School heads reported actively involving teachers in decision-making through voting and requiring approval for major decisions (M = 4.26 to 4.29), a perception that teachers generally echoed, though with slightly lower mean scores (M = 4.10 to 4.18). Both groups agreed that teachers were given significant autonomy to determine tasks, make independent decisions, and lead themselves (means generally above 4.2). Delegation of tasks and sharing of leadership power were also strongly affirmed, suggesting a culture that fostered teacher empowerment, trust, and self-management. This style likely promoted professional growth and ownership among teachers, contributing positively to organizational effectiveness.

Table 3.4: Comparison of Leadership Style Scores of School Heads Based on Teacher and School Head Perceptions with Significance Levels

Leadership Style	Mean Rank	Score Group								p-value	α = 0.05
		< 20		20-29		30-39		> 40			
		f	%	f	%	F	%	f	%		
Authoritarian	H=140.55	0	0.0	7	12.1	35	60.3	16	27.6	0.005	Significant
	T=180.71	11	3.8	81	28.0	106	36.7	91	31.5		
Participative	H=190.11	0	0.0	0	0.0	18	31.0	40	69.0	0.179	Not Significant
	T=170.77	7	2.4	49	17.0	69	23.9	164	56.7		

Delegative	H=177.50	0	0.0	0	0.0	14	24.1	44	75.9	0.770	Not Significant
	T=173.30	5	1.7	44	15.2	94	32.5	146	50.5		

Participative and delegative leadership styles were evident among school heads, as reflected by the high percentage of respondents who scored above 40—69.0% for participative and 75.9% for delegative styles. These findings suggested that school heads predominantly practiced leadership approaches that promoted collaboration, shared decision-making, and teacher empowerment. In contrast, only 27.6% of school heads scored above 40 in the authoritarian style, indicating that it was less evident overall. Furthermore, a significant difference was found in the authoritarian leadership style scores across groups (p = 0.005), suggesting variation in how strongly this style was exhibited among school heads. No significant differences were noted for participative and delegative styles, implying that these approaches were consistently evident across respondents. Overall, the results underscore a strong orientation toward participative and delegative leadership in schools, with authoritarian tendencies being less pronounced and more variable.

Table 4: Differences in Perceptions of Powers and Politics Among School Heads Across Demographic Variables

Demographic Profile	Dimensions	H (U)	p-value	α = 0.05
Age	General Political Behavior	1.932	0.699	NSD
	Going Along to Get Ahead	3.675	0.302	NSD
	Promotion, Award, and Recognition	0.750	0.909	NSD
Gender (male vs. female)	General Political Behavior	(195.500)	0.001	SD
	Going Along to Get Ahead	(281.500)	0.054	NSD
	Promotion, Award, and Recognition	(287.500)	0.067	NSD
Marital Status (single vs. married)	General Political Behavior	(228.500)	0.813	NSD
	Going Along to Get Ahead	(239.500)	0.992	NSD
	Promotion, Award, and Recognition	(195.500)	0.358	NSD
Educational Attainment	General Political Behavior	1.165	0.761	NSD
	Going Along to Get Ahead	1.020	0.796	NSD
	Promotion, Award, and Recognition	1.850	0.604	NSD
Current Position	General Political Behavior	7.342	0.196	NSD
	Going Along to Get Ahead	7.944	0.158	NSD
	Promotion, Award, and Recognition	7.286	0.200	NSD
	General Political Behavior	3.397	0.334	NSD

Length of Service in Public School	Going Along to Get Ahead	3.851	0.278	NSD
	Promotion, Award, and Recognition	0.423	0.935	NSD
Length of Experience as Public Heads	General Political Behavior	0.665	0.717	NSD
	Going Along to Get Ahead	0.686	0.710	NSD
	Promotion, Award, and Recognition	1.210	0.546	NSD

Gender was the only demographic variable with a statistically significant difference in perceptions of general political behavior (GPB), with a p-value of 0.001. This suggested that male and female respondents perceived political behaviors in school leadership differently. In contrast, all other demographic variables—including age, marital status, educational attainment, current position, length of service, and length of experience as school heads—showed no significant differences across the three political dimensions: GPB, Going Along to Get Ahead (GA), and Promotion, Award, and Recognition (PAR). These findings implied that perceptions of power and politics in schools were generally consistent across most demographic groups, with gender being the only factor influencing differing views, particularly regarding general political behavior.

Table 5: Differences in Perceptions of Leadership Skills Among School Heads Across Demographic Variables

Demographic Profile	Leadership Styles	H or (U)	p-value	$\alpha = 0.05$
Age	Authoritarian	3.844	0.279	NSD
	Participative	1.242	0.743	NSD
	Delegative	1.034	0.793	NSD
Gender (male vs. female)	Authoritarian	(257.000)	0.020	SD
	Participative	(346.500)	0.371	NSD
	Delegative	(318.000)	0.177	NSD
Marital Status (single vs. married)	Authoritarian	(228.000)	0.805	NSD
	Participative	(188.500)	0.287	NSD
	Delegative	(172.000)	0.159	NSD
Educational Attainment	Authoritarian	2.255	0.521	NSD
	Participative	1.905	0.592	NSD
	Delegative	4.722	0.193	NSD
Current Position	Authoritarian	3.048	0.693	NSD
	Participative	3.088	0.686	NSD
	Delegative	5.979	0.308	NSD
Length of Service in Public School	Authoritarian	2.050	0.562	NSD
	Participative	0.395	0.941	NSD
	Delegative	1.452	0.693	NSD
Length of Experience as Public Heads	Authoritarian	1.740	0.419	NSD
	Participative	0.041	0.980	NSD
	Delegative	2.662	0.264	NSD

Gender was the only demographic variable with a statistically significant difference in perceptions of the authoritarian leadership style among school heads, with a p-value of 0.020. This suggested that male and female school heads differed in how they perceived or implemented authoritarian leadership behaviors. In contrast, no significant differences were found across the three leadership styles—authoritarian, participative, and delegative—when grouped according to age, marital status, educational attainment, current position, length of service in public schools, and length of experience as school heads. These findings indicated that leadership style perceptions and practices were generally consistent across most demographic groups, with gender being the sole factor linked to variation, particularly in the authoritarian dimension.

Table 6: Relationships Between Leadership Styles of the School Heads and Their Practice of Power and Politics

Leadership Styles	General Political Behavior (GPB)		Going Along to Get Ahead (GA)		Promotion, Award, & Recognition (PAR)		Interpretation
	ρ (rho)	p-value	ρ (rho)	p-value	ρ (rho)	p-value	
Authoritarian	0.485	0.000	0.294	0.025	0.632	0.000	Significant
Participative	-0.206	0.120	-0.136	0.309	-0.040	0.767	Not Significant
Delegative	-0.067	0.616	-0.094	0.481	0.090	0.503	Not Significant

The authoritarian leadership style had significant positive correlations with all three dimensions of power and politics: general political behavior (ρ = 0.485, p = 0.000), going along to get ahead (ρ = 0.294, p = 0.025), and promotion, award, and recognition (ρ = 0.632, p = 0.000). This indicated that school heads who displayed more authoritarian tendencies were more likely to be associated with political behaviors in school leadership. In contrast, participative and delegative leadership styles showed no significant relationships with any of the political dimensions, suggesting that these more collaborative approaches were less tied to political practices. Overall, the findings implied that authoritarian leadership may have reinforced or coexisted with political dynamics in schools, while participative and delegative styles appeared to support more neutral or transparent environments.

Qualitative Insight: How do school heads perceive power and politics in their leadership roles?
Analysis of interview data revealed that school heads perceive leadership as fundamentally about empowerment, ethical integrity, and political awareness. They described power as a tool to inspire and support teachers rather than exert control, while acknowledging the necessity for assertiveness and firmness in challenging situations. Political dynamics were frequently mentioned, with school heads recognizing the influence of both internal and external political pressures. They emphasized maintaining neutrality and collaborating fairly with stakeholders. Ethical leadership practices—such as transparent promotions, merit-based recognition, and integrity in decision-making—were consistently highlighted. Conflict resolution approaches focused on fairness, active listening, respect, and open communication, illustrating a leadership style balancing authority with inclusivity and moral responsibility.

Qualitative Insight: What leadership practices do school heads implement based on their leadership style?

School heads aligned their leadership practices with styles such as democratic, transformational, and servant leadership, emphasizing shared decision-making and staff empowerment. They fostered inclusive and accountable environments by encouraging teacher autonomy supported with guidance. Transformational leaders inspired through a shared vision, while servant leaders focused on personal support and emotional intelligence. Ethical behavior, leading by example, and clear communication-built trust. Conflicts were resolved empathetically through restorative dialogue. Motivation was driven by recognition and the creation of a positive school climate. Overall, these practices promoted inclusive, motivated, and ethical school communities.

6. Conclusions

School heads in the study are experienced, well-educated, predominantly female, and married, providing a stable base for leadership. While both school heads and teachers acknowledge political behavior in schools, teachers report greater pressure and less transparency, signaling a need for clearer communication and fairness. Leadership tends to mix authoritarian, participative, and delegative styles, though teachers often perceive it as more rigid. Gender influences these perceptions, with male school heads seen as more authoritarian; other demographic factors have minimal impact. Authoritarian leadership correlates with political behavior, while participative and delegative styles do not. School heads view power as a tool for empowerment, aiming to lead ethically and fairly amid political pressures. To address these issues, the study recommends integrating political literacy and ethics into leadership training, adopting gender-sensitive approaches, strengthening merit-based systems, and promoting participative leadership. Enhancing communication, fostering feedback, providing conflict resolution training, and building peer support networks can further improve trust, accountability, and school leadership effectiveness.

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