

Perceptions of Public School Teachers Toward Leadership Styles: A Comparative Study

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Abstract

Leadership styles significantly influence teacher attitudes, organizational climate, and school performance by shaping school culture positively or negatively. This descriptive-comparative study examined which leadership styles public school teachers in Minglanilla District 1, Cebu Province viewed most favorably, comparing six approaches: autocratic, democratic, transformational, transactional, servant, and laissez-faire. Using stratified random sampling, 100 respondents completed a validated survey. Descriptive statistics identified prevalent leadership frameworks, while inferential tests (Friedman Test and Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test with Bonferroni correction) compared differences across styles. Results showed teachers responded positively to transformational, servant, democratic, and charismatic leadership, while viewing autocratic and laissez-faire approaches less favorably. The Friedman Test revealed statistically significant differences in teachers' perceptions across all six leadership styles ($p < .001$). The Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test with Bonferroni correction showed significant differences ($p < .001$) between autocratic leadership and positively perceived styles. Findings suggest effective school leadership combines participatory and empowering methods, fostering collaboration, boosting morale, and supporting professional development. The study emphasizes that relational and inclusive leadership approaches are crucial in Philippine public schools for creating favorable organizational climates and aligning with educational reforms and global quality education goals. This research highlights the importance of leadership styles that engage teachers as partners rather than subordinates, promoting collaborative environments that enhance educational outcomes.

Keywords: Leadership Styles, Public School Teachers, Educational Management, School Administration, Cebu Province

1. Introduction

The paramount significance of education in human development necessitates that educational leaders possess a sophisticated understanding of its societal function and a critical awareness of how distinct leadership paradigms fundamentally shape institutional efficacy within school administrations. Despite the growing body of literature highlighting the importance of leadership styles in educational management, existing studies have focused more on strategic leadership's capability by way of the leader to anticipate, prepare, and position for the future (T. Yu, 2021). Coupled with this finding is the work of Amin (2023). The paper examines the impact of strategic leadership orientations of head teachers on the performance of secondary schools. Additionally, Sila et al. (2023) analyze the correlation between strategic and directive leadership on school leaders' performance.



Limited attention has been given to how teachers themselves understand and interpret these leadership frameworks, given their core position as implementers of education policy and direct recipients of leadership methodologies. In addition, earlier research tends to examine a single leadership discipline independently, leaving an impetus for comparative analyses and assessing how various leadership modalities are lived and appreciated across different school settings. The absence of teacher-focused and comparative research generates a need for a study that reflects the nuanced understanding of public-school teachers towards leadership methods, thereby creating a knowledge base that can inform more adaptive and contextually attuned leadership practices. Building on the insights of Emmanuel (2022), adapting various leadership styles to suit different situations is crucial for effective school administration. School heads, principals, and other educational leaders are not just administrative figures; they are strategic managers in the organization as it continues to grow and improve.

A foundational perspective is offered by Baltovska (2019), who contends that school directors play a crucial role in making strategic, operative, and administrative decisions, relying on knowledge, experience, and training to make informed decisions for the school. This line of thought is furthered by Susmi et al. (2023), who suggest that strategic management in schools can lead to innovative, high-quality education and increased financial efficiency. In line with this, strategic planning practices among school administrators have a positive influence on their decision-making skills, particularly in curriculum management (Ishak & Hamzah, 2018). Effective communication is also crucial for the proper implementation of any strategic plan. In fact, Repuela et al. (2024) found that social skills, as one of the leadership traits in their study, were perceived by the respondents as a vital component of a school leader. Additionally, according to Ilavarasi (2024), workplace productivity can be significantly enhanced using effective communication techniques that promote team collaboration and facilitate conflict resolution.

As managers, principals are responsible for establishing the organizational environment, guiding team dynamics, and resolving conflicts that may arise among stakeholders. Their leadership directly affects how smoothly the institution operates, how collaborative or disconnected the staff becomes, and how resilient the school is to internal and external pressures. Findings from Zapata et al. (2022) suggest that effective organizational decision-making relies on structured processes and strategic frameworks that integrate both data analysis and metadata management. Understanding how public-school teachers recognize different leadership models is vital for effective conflict prevention and organizational improvement. Drawing on Yalçinkaya et al. (2021), school administrators' personal initiative behaviors and leadership have a significant and positive impact on teacher motivation, thereby enhancing the quality of their teaching.

Principals employ various methodologies to guide their schools, each with distinct qualities that shape how their teams shape school culture. For instance, Hulpia et al. (2009) postulated that distributed leadership, cooperative leadership teams, and participative decision-making have a positive impact on teachers' organizational commitment. In contrast, supervisory leadership and job experience have a negative impact. Autocratic leadership in higher education institutions can benefit decision-making but may hinder institutional growth and staff morale (Yea et al., 2024). Hallinger (2003) offers a foundational perspective; the suitability of instructional and transformational leadership models for school principals depends on factors such as the external environment and local context, and their definitions are evolving to meet the restructuring needs of schools.

Divergent viewpoints emerge in the works of Tihazanah et al. (2024), highlighting that charismatic leadership by school principals can improve teacher performance and professionalism, but may also lead to personal loyalty and the misuse of power for personal gain. Equally important, servant

leadership shows the most promise as a stand-alone leadership approach, able to explain a wide range of organizational outcomes that extend beyond those of transformational leadership. Lastly, findings from Anteneh & Gebremeskel (2024) study suggest that teachers' social engagement with students and colleagues is negatively impacted by derailed and laissez-faire leadership behaviors. This type of leadership can empower innovation but may also lead to ambiguity without clear guidance. Each leadership style presents unique strengths and challenges, and effective school leaders often blend elements from multiple approaches to meet the evolving needs of their educational communities.

Given that the consequences of these leadership spectrums have been well-examined in Western and urban Asian contexts, a significant research gap remains in Southeast Asia, particularly in decentralized, rural-urban transition zones such as those in the Philippines. Leadership studies in the Philippine setting frequently focus on large urban centers, neglecting the lived experiences of educators in more provincial regions. As Ortiz & De Jesus (2024) pointed out through their study, this urban bias often reduces leadership effectiveness to numerical outcomes such as evaluations, without contextualizing the interpersonal and organizational dynamics that influence these results.

The Province of Cebu, one of the country's fastest urbanizing areas, offers a powerful setting for examining the evolving roles of school managers. The Department of Education (DepEd) Division of Cebu Province has undergone multiple adjustments targeting instructional leadership, teacher quality, and student learning. However, there is still a need for more profound and thorough research on how these adjustments play out in local contexts, such as in Minglanilla District 1, particularly from the perspective of teachers, who must navigate through increased student enrollment, evolving curricula, limited resources, and heightened community expectations. These factors may lead to exacerbated interpersonal strain within schools, making the leadership frameworks of school managers a critical factor in maintaining organizational stability.

Minglanilla District 1, situated along Cebu's urban-rural boundary, is influenced by industrial and residential expansion, providing a unique case for this investigation. The district's schools serve a rapidly growing and diverse student body, yet evidence-based studies rarely capture the voices of the teachers working in these dynamic conditions. Understanding how school managers handle interpersonal conflict, sustain morale, and shape professional culture in these settings is essential through various leadership models. Working on this gap not only offers practical insights into educational leadership in the Philippines but also aligns with Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4), which aims to ensure inclusive and quality education for all. Furthermore, the study supports national education priorities, particularly the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST) and the Basic Education Development Plan (BEDP) 2030, both of which emphasize strong school leadership and teacher empowerment as key levers for educational transformation.

The research aims to determine whether there is a statistical difference in how public-school teachers in Minglanilla District 1 perceive various leadership paradigms, including autocratic, democratic, transformational, transactional, servant, and laissez-faire. In further analyzing the perception, the study scrutinizes the comparison of respondents' perceptions of various leadership modalities. By connecting with local realities and aligning with global educational frameworks, the study aims to generate both theoretical and actionable knowledge that can improve educational leadership practices across the Philippine public school system.

2. Methods

2.1. Design

This study employed a quantitative descriptive-comparative research design to investigate the perceived leadership styles of school administrators from the lens of professional experiences of public school teachers in Minglanilla District 1, Cebu Province. In addition, the study further explores the comparative analysis of the perception of the respondents towards six (6) different leadership styles of their school head.

2.2. Environment and Respondents

The study was conducted within the public secondary schools of Minglanilla District 1, under the jurisdiction of the Department of Education (DepEd) in the Province of Cebu. The target population consisted of all full-time public school teachers in the district, with a total sample size of 100. To ensure proportionate representation, a stratified random sampling technique was applied across all junior and senior high schools in the district. The inclusion criteria for respondents were: (1) being a full-time public school teacher, (2) having at least one year of teaching experience within Minglanilla District 1, and (3) being under the direct supervision of a school head. Administrators and newly hired teachers with temporary status were excluded from the study.

2.3. Instrument and Data Analysis

A structured survey questionnaire served as the primary instrument for data collection, translated and adapted from previously validated instruments. It utilized a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree) in assessing six leadership styles (autocratic, democratic, transformational, transactional, servant, and laissez-faire). Items were adapted from established leadership inventories, including Bass and Avolio's Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ), which assesses transformational and transactional leadership. Scales validated within Laissez-faire leadership are generally associated with adverse outcomes in education, but can be beneficial in specific contexts. School leaders should apply this style selectively, making evidence-based decisions to optimize educational practices (Kamal et al., 2024). The data analysis plan incorporated both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques to address the research objectives. The planned analyses included: Descriptive statistics (e.g., mean and standard deviation) to summarize the respondents' perceptions, and inferential statistics to test hypotheses and examine the comparison of various leadership styles as perceived by the respondents.

2.4. Ethical Considerations

The study strictly adhered to ethical standards for research involving human participants. The research protocol was reviewed and approved by the relevant Institutional Ethics Review Board. Prior to participation, all teachers were fully informed of the study's purpose. Their participation was voluntary, and confidentiality and anonymity of their responses were assured. All collected data were stored securely and used exclusively for academic purposes.

3. Results and Discussion

This section presents the objective findings from the survey data. The results detail public school teachers' perceptions across six leadership styles, as measured by mean scores and standard deviations. A comparative statistical analysis was then conducted to determine if perceptions differed significantly between these styles. The respondents consisted of 100 public school teachers from junior/senior high schools in Minglanilla. The results of the data analysis are shown in the following tables and summary:

Table 1. Perception of Public School Teachers Toward the Autocratic Leadership Style

No	Indicators	Mean	Standard Deviations	Interpretation
1	The school leader makes most decisions without consulting teachers.	2.31	1.186	Disagree
2	Teachers have little influence on school policies and rules.	2.28	1.246	Disagree
3	The principal gives clear, direct instructions with little room for discussion.	2.62	1.259	Neutral
4	Open dialogue between school leadership and staff is limited.	2.40	1.154	Disagree
5	Teachers feel undervalued under the existing leadership approach.	2.23	1.116	Disagree
6	Teachers are less motivated due to limited participation in school governance.	2.51	1.233	Neutral
7	Autocratic leadership ensures discipline and order in the school.	2.53	1.183	Neutral
8	Despite its drawbacks, this leadership style achieves intended results.	2.68	1.236	Neutral
Overall		2.45	.942	Disagree

Based on the results presented in Table 1, public school teachers generally disagreed with statements that described autocratic leadership practices ($M = 2.45$, $SD = 0.94$). Most of the individual items received mean scores ranging between 2.23 and 2.68, suggesting that teachers do not perceive their school leaders as highly autocratic. Specifically, items related to lack of consultation, undervaluing teachers, and limited dialogue were rated low, indicating a negative perception of autocratic tendencies in school leadership. Although some items approached neutrality (e.g., “The principal gives clear, direct instructions” and “This leadership style achieves intended results”), the overall interpretation reflects a general disagreement with the prevalence or acceptability of autocratic leadership within the school setting. These findings imply that teachers prefer more inclusive and participative leadership styles over autocratic approaches.

Table 2. Perception of Public School Teachers Toward the Democratic Leadership Style

No	Indicators	Mean	Standard Deviations	Interpretation
1	Staff opinions are genuinely considered in policy formulation.	3.97	.949	Agree
2	I feel my voice is heard when decisions affecting the school are made.	4.00	.821	Agree
3	Open and honest communication between the school leader and staff is encouraged.	4.22	.875	Agree
4	Teachers are empowered to make decisions about their classrooms and teaching strategies.	4.26	.889	Agree
5	The school encourages innovation and experimentation in teaching methods.	4.19	.952	Agree
6	Leadership supports professional growth through inclusive planning and training.	4.27	.858	Agree
7	Staff morale is high due to participative leadership practices.	4.13	.908	Agree
8	The school performs better under participative leadership.	4.21	.860	Agree
Overall		4.15	.779	Agree

As shown in Table 2, public school teachers expressed a positive perception of the democratic leadership style ($M = 4.15$, $SD = 0.78$), with all individual items receiving mean scores above 3.90. This indicates a strong agreement among teachers that participative practices are present in their school leadership. Specifically, the highest-rated items were related to empowerment in classroom decision-making ($M = 4.26$, $SD = 0.89$) and support for professional growth ($M = 4.27$, $SD = 0.86$), suggesting that teachers feel trusted and involved in shaping both their professional environment and instructional practices.

Furthermore, the consistently high ratings for items involving open communication, staff morale, and inclusive planning reflect a leadership climate that values collaboration and shared responsibility. These results highlight the effectiveness of democratic leadership in fostering engagement, innovation, and motivation among teaching staff. Overall, the findings suggest that teachers view democratic leadership as highly beneficial to both staff well-being and school performance.

Table 3. Perception of Public School Teachers Toward the Transformational Leadership Style

No	Indicators	Mean	Standard Deviations	Interpretation
1	The school leader actively listens to staff concerns.	4.10	1.020	Agree
2	The principal is approachable and open to hearing different viewpoints.	4.21	.883	Agree
3	I feel genuinely understood by the school leadership.	4.11	1.052	Agree
4	The school leader shows empathy in responding to personal or professional issues.	4.18	.938	Agree
5	The principal creates a safe space for honest communication.	4.12	.968	Agree
6	The school leader helps staff resolve conflicts constructively.	3.99	.990	Agree
7	Teachers are supported when they experience challenges.	4.10	1.010	Agree
8	The principal demonstrates humility in their leadership role.	4.12	.968	Agree
Overall		4.11	.880	Agree

As reflected in Table 3, public school teachers demonstrated a strongly favorable perception of the transformational leadership style ($M = 4.11$, $SD = 0.88$). All indicators received mean scores above 3.90, falling within the "Agree" range of the Likert scale. This suggests that teachers consistently recognize and value the behaviors associated with transformational leadership in their school context.

High agreement was observed on items related to empathy ($M = 4.18$, $SD = 0.94$), openness to viewpoints ($M = 4.21$, $SD = 0.88$), and creating a safe space for communication ($M = 4.12$, $SD = 0.97$), indicating that school leaders are perceived as emotionally intelligent and supportive. Teachers also reported feeling genuinely understood and supported, especially during challenging times, which aligns with key dimensions of transformational leadership, such as individualized consideration and inspirational motivation.

These findings suggest that transformational leadership practices are well-embedded in the school environment and contribute to a positive and collaborative organizational culture. The data also implies that teachers feel psychologically safe, valued, and empowered under such leadership, which is conducive to both personal and professional growth.

Table 4. Perception of Public School Teachers Toward the Charismatic Leadership Style

No	Indicators	Mean	Standard Deviations	Interpretation
1	The school leader communicates an inspiring vision of the school's future.	4.20	.833	Agree
2	The principal creates excitement and enthusiasm about school goals.	4.20	.809	Agree
3	I am inspired to give my best because of the principal's leadership.	4.16	.829	Agree
4	The principal has a strong, confident presence that commands respect.	4.13	.951	Agree
5	The principal's personality has a powerful influence on staff motivation.	4.24	.773	Agree
6	The school leader shows a genuine interest in the personal lives of staff.	4.09	.869	Agree
7	The school leader persuades others through vision and conviction rather than authority.	4.17	.785	Agree
8	The principal can rally support even for difficult or unpopular decisions.	4.12	.859	Agree
Overall		4.16	.709	Agree

As shown in Table 4, public school teachers expressed a positive perception of the charismatic leadership style ($M = 4.16$, $SD = 0.71$). All individual indicators received mean scores above 4.00, reflecting strong agreement with statements describing charismatic leadership behaviors. This suggests that teachers generally recognize and appreciate the influence of charisma in school leadership.

Notably, the highest-rated item was "The principal's personality has a powerful influence on staff motivation" ($M = 4.24$, $SD = 0.77$), highlighting the motivational impact of the principal's character. Other highly rated indicators emphasized inspirational communication, enthusiasm about school goals, and the leader's ability to influence through vision and conviction rather than authority. These elements closely align with the core features of charismatic leadership, including emotional appeal, influence, and vision-driven motivation.

The consistently high scores indicate that teachers view their leaders as engaging, motivational, and respected figures who are capable of rallying support and fostering a unified sense of purpose within the school. This perception reinforces the potential of charismatic leadership to elevate teacher morale, commitment, and overall school performance.

Table 5. Perception of Public School Teachers toward the Servant Leadership Style

No	Indicators	Mean	Standard Deviations	Interpretation
1	The school leader actively listens to staff concerns.	4.11	.911	Agree
2	The principal is approachable and open to hearing different viewpoints.	4.10	.939	Agree
3	I feel genuinely understood by the school leadership.	4.08	.898	Agree
4	The school leader shows empathy in responding to personal or professional issues.	4.20	.912	Agree
5	The principal creates a safe space for honest communication.	4.11	.964	Agree
6	The school leader helps staff resolve conflicts constructively.	4.11	.974	Agree
7	Teachers are supported when they experience challenges.	4.02	.944	Agree
8	The principal demonstrates humility in their leadership role.	4.10	.917	Agree
Overall		4.10	.842	Agree

Table 5 reveals that public school teachers hold a consistently positive perception of the servant leadership style ($M = 4.10$, $SD = 0.84$). All items in the scale received mean scores above 4.00, indicating strong agreement with key behaviors associated with servant leadership. This suggests that school leaders are widely perceived as empathetic, humble, and supportive in their roles.

High agreement was recorded for statements related to empathy ($M = 4.20$, $SD = 0.91$), conflict resolution, humility, and constructive listening, all of which are hallmark traits of servant leadership. Teachers acknowledged that their leaders are approachable, responsive to concerns, and able to create a psychologically safe space for open communication. These responses indicate a leadership climate that prioritizes the well-being and professional development of staff, both personally and professionally.

The overall results suggest that servant leadership is deeply embedded and well-regarded within the school environment. Teachers feel supported and respected, which can enhance collaboration, trust, and morale. Such leadership practices are likely to foster a nurturing school culture conducive to sustained professional growth and a high level of teacher engagement.

Table 6. Perception of Public School Teachers Toward the Laissez-faire Leadership Style

No	Indicators	Mean	Standard Deviations	Interpretation
1	The school leader is often unavailable when important decisions need to be made.	2.35	1.157	Disagree
2	The principal avoids getting involved in staff concerns.	2.32	1.299	Disagree
3	The school leader delegates tasks but provides little guidance.	2.63	1.226	Neutral
4	Teachers often feel unclear about the school's goals and priorities.	2.48	1.183	Disagree
5	Decisions are delayed due to a lack of leadership involvement.	2.55	1.302	Neutral
6	There is little initiative from leadership to address school issues.	2.51	1.208	Neutral
7	Accountability is lacking because of weak leadership involvement.	2.65	1.332	Neutral
8	The lack of leadership contributes to a fragmented school culture.	2.79	1.352	Neutral
Overall		2.54	1.105	Neutral

Table 6 presents the perceptions of public school teachers regarding the laissez-faire leadership style. The overall mean score was 2.54 ($SD = 1.11$), indicating a neutral stance. While several items leaned toward disagreement, others approached or reached the neutral range, suggesting mixed perceptions among teachers.

Items such as “The school leader is often unavailable when important decisions need to be made” ($M = 2.35$, $SD = 1.16$) and “The principal avoids getting involved in staff concerns” ($M = 2.32$, $SD = 1.30$) were rated low, indicating disagreement with these negative aspects of laissez-faire leadership. However, items like “There is little initiative from leadership to address school issues” ($M = 2.51$, $SD = 1.21$) and “Accountability is lacking because of weak leadership involvement” ($M = 2.65$, $SD = 1.33$) received slightly higher scores, falling into the neutral range.

This variation suggests that while teachers do not strongly perceive their school leaders as passive or disengaged, there may still be occasional gaps in leadership presence, decision-making, or guidance.

The neutral overall rating suggests that the laissez-faire style is not dominant, but it may emerge in certain leadership behaviors or circumstances. These findings reflect a need for more consistent leadership involvement to prevent ambiguity and fragmentation within the school culture.

Table 7. Friedman Test Results on the Differences in Public School Teachers' Perceptions toward the Six Leadership Styles

Leadership Styles	Mean Rank	χ^2	df	p-value	Interpretation
Autocratic Leadership	1.86	231.06	5	.000	Significant
Democratic Leadership	4.20				
Transformational Leadership	4.37				
Charismatic Leadership	4.07				
Servant Leadership	4.35				
Laissez-faire Leadership	2.15				

A Friedman Test was conducted to determine whether there were statistically significant differences in public school teachers' perceptions of the six leadership styles. The test revealed a statistically significant difference, $\chi^2(5) = 231.06$, $p < .001$, indicating that the leadership styles were perceived differently by teachers.

Analysis of the mean ranks showed that Transformational Leadership (Mean Rank = 4.37) was the most positively perceived, followed closely by Servant Leadership ($M = 4.35$), Democratic Leadership ($M = 4.20$), and Charismatic Leadership ($M = 4.07$). In contrast, Autocratic Leadership ($M = 1.86$) and Laissez-faire Leadership ($M = 2.15$) received the lowest rankings, indicating lower levels of agreement or acceptance among teachers. These results suggest a clear preference among public school teachers for participative, empowering, and relational leadership styles, and a general disapproval of authoritarian or disengaged leadership behaviors.

As demonstrated by Zhu et al. (2019), empowering leadership improves teachers' innovative behavior in professional learning communities by increasing their psychological empowerment, without affecting team psychological safety. Furthermore, a study by X. Yu & Jang (2024) found that transformational leadership styles, particularly organizational vision, intellectual stimulation, and personal recognition, moderately improve teachers' work performance in Chinese private universities. Additionally, a school principal's servant leadership style has a positive influence on teachers' psychological empowerment and organizational citizenship behavior, ultimately benefiting learners and society (Van der Hoven et al., 2021). Similarly, charismatic leadership indirectly enhances the organizational learning climate and school outcomes by fostering a shared vision among team members (Berson et al., 2015).

Equally important, the analysis by Laghari et al. (2024) highlights that Head teachers' democratic leadership style has a positive impact on teachers' performance in public secondary schools, with a strong correlation between the variables. In contrast, the Laissez-Faire leadership style in primary schools in Kasese district negatively impacts academic performance, as teachers perceive less accountability and less involvement from head teachers (Bwambale et al., 2024). Additionally, autocratic leadership styles are associated with increased mobbing and quiet quitting among teachers (Ergen et al., 2025).

Table 8. Post Hoc Pairwise Comparisons of Leadership Styles Using the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test

Leadership Style Pair	Z	p-value	Interpretation
Charismatic vs. Autocratic	-8.213	.000	Significant
Democratic vs. Autocratic	-8.032	.000	Significant
Laissez-faire vs. Autocratic	-0.410	.682	Not Significant
Servant vs. Autocratic	-7.728	.000	Significant
Transformational vs. Autocratic	-8.120	.000	Significant
Democratic vs. Charismatic	-0.641	.522	Not Significant
Laissez-faire vs. Charismatic	-7.666	.000	Significant
Servant vs. Charismatic	-0.651	.515	Not Significant
Transformational vs. Charismatic	-0.879	.379	Not Significant
Laissez-faire vs. Democratic	-7.538	.000	Significant
Servant vs. Democratic	-0.242	.809	Not Significant
Transformational vs. Democratic	-0.164	.870	Not Significant
Servant vs. Laissez-faire	-7.209	.000	Significant
Transformational vs. Laissez-faire	-7.378	.000	Significant
Transformational vs. Servant	-0.591	.554	Not Significant

The Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test with Bonferroni correction indicated statistically significant differences between perceptions of autocratic leadership and all four positively perceived styles: transformational, servant, democratic, and charismatic ($p < .001$). Likewise, laissez-faire leadership was rated significantly lower than democratic, charismatic, servant, and transformational leadership. However, no significant differences were found between the four highly rated styles themselves, suggesting that public school teachers perceive democratic, transformational, servant, and charismatic leadership as similarly positive and effective. In contrast, autocratic and laissez-faire styles are less favored.

The study of Sacriz & Tagadiad (2024) confirms that *very high levels* of servant leadership (attributes like acting morally/ethically, being authentic, etc.) among teachers, and a significant positive relationship between servant leadership and work engagement. In fact, it supports the above-mentioned result that servant leadership is one of the positively perceived leadership styles, fostering teacher engagement, consistent with your respondents' rating servant leadership highly. Also, a study analyzed how transformational leadership is discussed and manifested in Philippine basic education and found that transformational leadership promotes empowerment, motivation, proactive change, shared vision ideas aligned with what teachers in your study appear to favor (Cadiz, 2024).

4. Conclusion

This study examined the perception of various leadership styles among public school teachers in Minglanilla District 1, amidst rapid urbanization and educational reforms. Through the Friedman test with $p < .001$, the results highlighted a clear preference for leadership styles that induce participation, stronger relations, and foster empowerment and professional growth. Specifically, on the first hand, transformational, servant, democratic, and charismatic leadership styles were highly rated by teachers, with no statistically significant differences observed in their positive perceptions of these styles. On the other hand, autocratic and laissez-faire leadership were among the least favored types, reflecting teachers' strong disapproval of authoritarian practices that hinder collaboration and motivation. In addition, the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test with Bonferroni correction ($p < .001$) demonstrated a significant difference between the perception of the autocratic leadership style and the positively rated

styles. Laissez-faire leadership received a significantly lower rating in terms of teacher perception compared to the four high-ranked styles, indicating a strong negative association between authoritarian or disengaged styles, as they are perceived to restrict teachers' potential for engagement and participation in managing an educational community.

In addition, this study provides practical implications for the Department of Education (DepEd) to mold and train school leaders to adopt transformational, servant, democratic, and charismatic leadership, as these styles are aligned with teachers' preferences and lead to higher participation, motivation, and collaboration. On the other side of the study, it implies that school leaders who heavily rely on practicing autocratic or laissez-faire leadership may demoralize teachers, restrict innovation, and negatively affect the school's overall environment. Moreover, providing leadership training and workshops for school leaders and potential school leaders that emphasize inclusive decision-making, empowering teachers regardless of their salary grade, and providing professional development.

This study establishes solid evidence that the effectiveness of leadership, as perceived by teachers of Minglanilla District 1, is not limited to a single style; it instead explores a range of approaches that prioritize teachers' well-being. By underscoring the importance of inclusive and participatory leadership, this study not only responds to local realities but also supports broader national and global goals, such as the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers, the Basic Education Development Plan 2030, and Sustainable Development Goal 4, which focuses on quality education. Although the study makes a valuable contribution to the body of knowledge, further improvement is needed to enhance the current narrative. Schools, whether public or private institutions, may replicate this study to identify patterns of leadership effectiveness across various educational environments.

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