

School Leaders' and Teachers' Perspective on Leadership Styles and Decision-Making: Basis for Teachers' Training Program

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Publication history: Received: May 8, 2026; Revised: May 24, 2026; Accepted: June 8, 2026

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Abstract

This study examined school leaders' and teachers' perspectives on leadership styles and decision-making as basis for a teachers' training program in public and private schools in Danao City during the 2025–2026 school year. Anchored on Distributed Leadership Theory, Transformational Leadership Theory, Participative Decision-Making Theory, and Republic Act No. 9155, the study used a quantitative descriptive-comparative design. Data were gathered through a structured questionnaire adapted from the Leadership Style Questionnaire by Northouse and the Decision-Making Questionnaire by Lizzaraga et al. The respondents were 30 school leaders and 353 teachers. Findings showed that authoritarian, democratic, and laissez-faire leadership styles were all evident in the school setting, but teachers consistently perceived these leadership behaviors more strongly than school leaders themselves. Significant differences were found between school leaders' self-perceived leadership styles and teachers' perceptions across the three leadership styles. In contrast, no significant differences were found in decision-making perceptions across task, subjective, and context factors, indicating shared understanding of decision-making practices. The study concludes that while leadership styles are experienced differently, decision-making practices are generally aligned, transparent, and commonly understood. It recommends active feedback, consultative meetings, leadership development programs, stronger teacher participation, and a leadership training program to improve participative decision-making. The study supports SDG 4, SDG 16, and SDG 17 by promoting quality education, collaborative school governance, and institutional partnerships. Its sustainability impact lies in strengthening educational, institutional, and governance sustainability through reflective leadership, teacher empowerment, and shared decision-making.

Keywords: Authoritarian Leadership, Decision-Making, Democratic Leadership, Laissez-Faire Leadership, Leadership Styles, School Leaders, Shared Governance, Teacher Participation, Teachers' Training Program

1. Introduction

School leadership plays a central role in shaping organizational effectiveness, teacher morale, school climate, student achievement, and the quality of decision-making within educational institutions (Papadakis et al., 2024; Song et al., 2025; Voelkel Jr. et al., 2024). In contemporary school governance, leadership is no longer viewed only as the responsibility of the school head but as a collaborative process that involves teachers in decisions related to curriculum, instruction, resource allocation, policy implementation, and school improvement (Khofi, 2024; Emiru & Berhanu, 2025). This study focuses on school leaders' and teachers' perspectives on leadership styles and decision-making as a basis for developing a teachers' training program that strengthens participative leadership, teacher readiness, and shared governance in schools.

School leaders influence how teachers perceive their professional roles, responsibilities, motivation, engagement, and readiness to participate in school-level decision-making (Cevik, 2025). Leadership approaches such as transformational, participative, and distributed leadership are associated with teacher motivation, professional growth, and engagement (Constantinou et al., 2025). These leadership styles help create a school environment where teachers are not merely implementers of directives but empowered partners in governance (Ma et al., 2025). Consequently, teacher preparation, including knowledge, skills, confidence, and readiness to participate in decision-making, becomes essential in enabling teachers to influence school policies and practices meaningfully (Galdames-Calderón, 2023). Despite the value of inclusive decision-making, many schools continue to experience hierarchical structures, limited teacher involvement, inadequate professional development, unclear decision-making channels, and resistance to shared leadership (Aquino, 2025). These issues highlight the need to examine how school leaders' leadership styles affect teacher preparation and participation in decision-making (Cevik, 2025).

The literature emphasizes that principals' leadership significantly affects teacher motivation, preparedness, performance, and involvement in school governance. Transformational leadership in education is characterized by idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. Principals who practice this style

communicate a clear vision, support academic and personal development, and promote collaboration, innovation, and commitment among teachers and students (Sasan et al, 2023). Leadership approaches are also important in managing curriculum revisions, technological integration, inclusion initiatives, and global educational challenges by building trust and encouraging stakeholder engagement in decision-making (Musaigwa, 2023). Various leadership styles, including transformational, democratic, transactional, servant, instructional, and laissez-faire leadership, influence teacher motivation and governance participation. Democratic and transformational leadership create collaborative environments that improve teacher motivation and performance (Hadijah, 2024). Effective principal leadership explains a significant portion of teacher quality and performance variation, while supervision, professional development, and collaborative decision-making improve teacher motivation and teamwork (Surbakti & Aisyah, 2024; Causirhom et al., 2024). Teachers generally prefer transformational leadership because it emphasizes vision, inspiration, individualized support, and empowerment, which improve teacher motivation and job satisfaction (Brown & Harris, 2021). Transactional and servant leadership may also be useful in specific contexts because transactional leadership provides structure and rewards, while servant leadership emphasizes trust, service, and ethical practice (Eva et al., 2019). Democratic leadership also improves teacher performance because it encourages open communication, delegation, professional autonomy, and teacher participation in decisions on curriculum, instruction, and school policy (Raupu et al., 2021). However, while democratic leadership increases teacher engagement and job performance, laissez-faire leadership may reduce effectiveness when guidance and coordination are needed (Kamal & Ridwan, 2024). Instructional leadership is commonly practiced in schools and focuses on curriculum and instructional supervision, but its effect on teachers' emotional and social behaviors may be more limited than democratic and transformational leadership (Hassan et al., 2022; Hoque & Raya, 2023). Transformational and participative leadership styles promote teacher voice by establishing trust, clarifying roles, and strengthening communication channels (Schott et al., 2020; Kaya, 2024). In contrast, autocratic or laissez-faire styles may weaken teacher involvement and reduce shared responsibility (Dandan & Alias, 2025). The literature also recognizes that leadership theory remains complex. Eva, Robin, Sendjaya, Dierendonck, and Liden (2019) questioned the increasing number of leadership theories because of limited evidence showing that each theory is conceptually and practically distinct. Banks et al. (2018) and Hoch et al. (2018) presented empirical support for the incremental validity of servant leadership, although this remains difficult to establish due to endogeneity bias, measurement error, common method bias, limited sample sizes, and the small number of meta-analytic studies (Antonakis, et al., 2010; Hoch et al., 2018).

The study is situated within the Division of Danao City, where both public and private schools operate under the supervision of the Department of Education. This context provides a meaningful setting for examining similarities and differences in leadership practices, teacher participation, and school decision-making across institutional types. At the national level, Republic Act No. 9155, or the Governance of Basic Education Act of 2001, supports school-based management by decentralizing authority to schools and emphasizing the role of school leaders as instructional authorities who promote collaborative decision-making and collective accountability. Globally, educational systems increasingly emphasize participative leadership, distributed responsibility, teacher empowerment, and shared governance as strategies for school improvement. These priorities align with research showing that leadership effectiveness depends on context, school culture, stakeholder expectations, and the capacity of school leaders to adapt their approaches to teachers' professional needs.

This study is anchored on Distributed Leadership Theory, Transformational Leadership Theory, and Participative Decision-Making Theory. Distributed Leadership Theory, as advanced by Spillane and Halverson (2006), views leadership as a collaborative process rather than the sole responsibility of the school head. It emphasizes shared leadership duties among educators and administrators who work together to solve problems and promote innovation (O'Shea, 2021). Distributed leadership enhances teacher capacity, ownership, and willingness to engage in school-level decision-making by creating opportunities for shared leadership and collaborative problem-solving (Harris, 2017; Leithwood et al., 2020). Transformational Leadership Theory explains how school leaders inspire, empower, and develop teachers through shared vision, intellectual engagement, and individualized support. Transformational leaders create positive school climates by empowering educators, promoting creativity, and encouraging shared accountability (Permana and Yuslimah, 2025). This leadership style strengthens teacher motivation, self-efficacy, commitment, and professional development, which are essential for teacher preparation in decision-making (Leithwood & Sun, 2018; Ng et al., 2022). Participative Decision-Making Theory supports the study by emphasizing that employee participation in decisions affecting their work improves organizational effectiveness and commitment (Wang et al., 2022). In schools, participative leadership enables teachers to contribute to policy formulation, planning, problem-solving, instructional improvement, and governance. Research shows that participative leadership is linked to teacher job satisfaction and performance, reinforcing the need for school leaders to provide genuine avenues for teacher voice and participation (Somech, 2010) (Cheng & Szeto, 2019; Monono, 2023). The study's conceptual direction is also supported by RA 9155, which situates school leadership within the national policy framework of school-based management, shared accountability, and collaborative governance.

Although the literature strongly supports participative, democratic, distributed, and transformational leadership, schools still encounter challenges in translating these ideals into actual practice. Persistent issues include hierarchical decision-making, limited teacher involvement, unclear participation structures, insufficient professional development, and varying levels of teacher readiness. These gaps justify the need to examine how school leaders and teachers perceive leadership

styles and decision-making processes in public and private schools. The study specifically addresses the need to determine whether school leaders' self-perceptions of leadership styles differ from teachers' perceptions, and whether both groups differ in their views of decision-making. By identifying these perceptual gaps, the study provides a basis for crafting a leadership training program that strengthens reflective leadership, teacher empowerment, open communication, and shared decision-making.

This study aligns most directly with SDG 4 – Quality Education because it focuses on improving school leadership, teacher participation, and decision-making practices that can contribute to better school governance, teaching quality, and learning environments. By examining leadership styles and teacher readiness, the study supports the development of professional practices that enhance educational quality and institutional effectiveness. It also relates to SDG 5 – Gender Equality in a limited but relevant way, particularly because leadership and teacher participation involve inclusive professional engagement within school systems. The study's emphasis on participative governance supports equitable involvement of teachers in decision-making regardless of role or background. The study further supports SDG 16 – Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions because it promotes transparent, participative, accountable, and collaborative decision-making within schools. Strengthening leadership practices and teacher involvement contributes to more responsive and democratic educational institutions. Finally, the study connects with SDG 17 – Partnerships for the Goals because shared leadership and collaborative decision-making require cooperation among school leaders, teachers, administrators, policymakers, and the wider school community.

The study contributes to educational sustainability by promoting leadership practices that strengthen teacher capacity, professional development, and decision-making readiness. When teachers are empowered to participate in school governance, schools become more adaptive, collaborative, and responsive to instructional and organizational needs. It also supports institutional sustainability by helping schools develop leadership systems that are not dependent solely on top-down authority. Through distributed, transformational, and participative leadership, schools can build stronger internal structures for communication, accountability, succession, and continuous improvement. The study contributes to policy and governance sustainability by providing evidence that can guide leadership training, school-based management practices, and teacher participation policies. Its findings may help policymakers and administrators design programs that support inclusive decision-making and improve school governance. Lastly, the study has relevance to socio-economic sustainability because effective school leadership and teacher participation can improve educational outcomes, strengthen school communities, and support students' holistic development. By improving leadership and decision-making practices, the study supports long-term educational improvement that benefits teachers, learners, school leaders, and the broader community.

2. Material and methods

2.1 Research Design

The study employed a quantitative descriptive-comparative research design to assess the leadership styles of school leaders and the participation of teachers in decision-making across public and private schools in Danao City, Cebu. The descriptive component was used to determine the perceived leadership approaches of school heads and teachers, while the correlative aspect examined the direction of the relationship among the study variables (Saro et al., 2023). A survey questionnaire was administered to school leaders and teachers during the 2025–2026 school year, and only respondents who voluntarily consented and completed the questionnaire were included.

2.2 Locale of the Study

The study was conducted in the Division of Danao City, which includes public and private elementary and secondary schools under the supervision of the Department of Education. This locale provided a suitable setting for examining differences and similarities in organizational structures, leadership practices, and teacher participation in school decision-making across school types.

2.3 Respondents of the Study

The respondents were school leaders and teachers from various public and private schools in Danao City during the 2025–2026 school year. They were considered appropriate participants because they are directly involved in school operations, leadership practices, and decision-making processes. The study included 30 school leaders and 353 teachers, for a total of 383 respondents.

2.4 Sample and Sampling Procedure

The respondents were selected from public and private schools within the Division of Danao City. The methodology section states that random sampling was used to ensure adequate and unbiased representation of both school leaders and teachers.

This sampling procedure supported the descriptive-comparative design by allowing the researcher to describe respondent characteristics and compare perspectives on school leadership and teacher participation in decision-making.

2.5 Research Instrument

The study used a structured questionnaire designed to examine the relationship between school leaders' leadership approaches and teachers' preparation for participation in school decision-making. The instrument was adapted from established and validated tools to support reliability and construct validity. Items on decision-making were based on the Decision-Making Questionnaire developed and validated by Lizzaraga et al. (2009), while leadership-related items were adapted from the Leadership Style Questionnaire by Northouse (2009). The questionnaire had three major parts. The first part gathered demographic information, including age, sex, rank or position, years of experience, and highest educational attainment. The second part assessed school leaders' leadership approaches using items drawn from Northouse's (2009) Leadership Style Questionnaire, focusing on leadership behaviors associated with democratic, participative, and directive leadership. The third part measured teachers' preparation for decision-making using the Decision-Making Questionnaire of Lizzaraga et al. (2009), which views decision-making as a multidimensional construct involving cognitive, behavioral, and reflective components. Responses were rated using a 5-point Likert scale.

2.6 Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher first formulated the statement of the problem and prepared the questionnaire. After approval by the appropriate academic authorities, a request letter was submitted to the Department of Education, Division of Danao City, through the Office of the Superintendent, to seek permission to conduct the study among school leaders and teachers from public and private schools. After approval was granted, the research was conducted through an online platform. Respondents were oriented about the study, given sufficient time to answer the questionnaire, and their responses were collected, tabulated, analyzed, and interpreted.

2.7 Data Analysis Techniques

The gathered data were analyzed using appropriate statistical tools. Frequency and percentage were used to describe the respondents' profiles in terms of age, gender, rank or position, years of service, and highest educational qualification. Standard deviation and weighted mean were used to analyze the relationship between principals' leadership approaches and teacher preparation in school decision-making. Regression analysis was used to test the significant relationship between principals' leadership approaches and teacher preparation in school decision-making.

2.8 Ethical Considerations

The study observed ethical procedures by informing participants about the goals, scope, and implications of the research before obtaining their consent. Their identities and responses were kept confidential, participation was voluntary, and respondents were allowed to withdraw at any time without penalty. The manuscript also states that institutional review board or ethics committee approval was needed, and that data would be anonymized while maintaining accuracy and honesty in data collection, analysis, and reporting.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Demographic Profile of the Respondents

3.1.1 School Leaders

The demographic data showed that most school leaders were 41–50 years old, representing 21 respondents or 65.63%. Female school leaders comprised 65.63%, while males comprised 34.38%. In terms of position, most were Principal 1 at 46.88%, followed by School Heads at 31.25% and Principal 2 at 21.88%. Half of the school leaders had 11–15 years of experience, while most had pursued graduate or postgraduate studies, with only 6.25% holding only a baccalaureate degree. These results indicate that the school leaders were generally middle-aged, experienced, academically prepared, and positioned in key administrative roles. Their profile suggests that their leadership practices are shaped by professional maturity, formal training, and substantial school management exposure. Since they already possess basic leadership experience, the needed training should focus more on refining participative, reflective, and collaborative decision-making competencies rather than introductory leadership skills.

3.1.2 Teachers

The teacher respondents were mostly young to early mid-career professionals. The largest group was aged 21–30 years old at 41.36%, followed by those aged 31–40 years old at 35.98%. Female teachers comprised 67.99%, while male teachers represented 32.01%. Most were Teacher 1 at 31.16%, followed by Teacher 3 at 28.90% and part-time or contractual teachers at 17.00%. Most had 1–5 years of teaching experience at 41.64%, and 63.46% held a baccalaureate degree as their highest educational qualification. These findings show that many teachers were still in the early stages of professional growth and may need mentoring, leadership exposure, and structured support to participate meaningfully in school

decision-making. Their demographic profile strengthens the need for school leaders to apply leadership styles that build teacher confidence, competence, and readiness for shared governance.

3.2 School Leaders' and Teachers' Perceptions of Leadership Styles

3.2.1 Authoritarian Leadership

The results showed that authoritarian leadership was evident in the school setting, with teachers perceiving it more strongly than school leaders. School leaders rated authoritarian leadership with an overall mean of 4.19, while teachers rated it higher at 4.53. Both groups strongly agreed that effective leaders give orders and clarify procedures, that members need close supervision, and that rewards or punishments are used to motivate achievement of organizational objectives. These findings suggest that teachers experience stronger directive and supervisory leadership than school leaders may recognize. This supports Harms et al. (2018), which emphasized directive leadership, clear instructions, and close supervision to ensure compliance and task performance. The findings also align with contemporary descriptions of authoritarian leadership that emphasize leader dominance, strict regulation of subordinates' behavior, and reliance on extrinsic motivation to achieve organizational goals (Cheng et al., 2020; Puni, Mohammed, & Asamoah, 2020). Although authoritarian practices may provide structure, they may also limit teacher autonomy and confidence in participative decision-making.

3.2.2 Democratic Leadership

The results indicated that democratic leadership was strongly evident, with school leaders obtaining an overall mean of 4.50 and teachers rating it higher at 4.67. Both groups strongly agreed that members want to be part of decision-making, that guidance without pressure is important, and that supportive communication, shared responsibility, and trust in teacher competence are practiced in the school context. These findings imply that democratic leadership supports teacher involvement, shared responsibility, and professional autonomy. Bush (2018) and Northouse (2021) affirm that democratic leadership promotes member involvement in decision-making and open communication. Harris (2019) also highlights that participative leadership empowers teachers by recognizing their competence and encouraging shared accountability. Studies by Leithwood, Harris, and Hopkins (2020) further support that collaboration and distributed authority contribute to positive school climates and teacher engagement, while Cheng and Szeto (2019) and Nguyen, Malik, and Budhwar (2021) confirm that democratic leadership strengthens teacher autonomy, motivation, and professional growth.

3.2.3 Laissez-Faire Leadership

The results showed that laissez-faire leadership was also perceived in the school setting, with teachers giving a higher overall mean of 4.52 compared with school leaders' mean of 4.12. Both groups strongly agreed that leaders allow members to solve problems independently, evaluate their own work, and exercise freedom in task completion. Teachers' higher ratings suggest that they experience greater autonomy and less direct intervention than school leaders may intend. These findings show that autonomy is present, but it must be balanced with proper guidance. Northouse (2021) explains that laissez-faire leaders provide limited guidance and allow subordinates substantial freedom in decision-making and task execution. Harms et al. (2018) further notes that laissez-faire leadership is often perceived more strongly by followers than by leaders themselves. Bush (2018) suggests that this style may empower experienced teachers, but excessive reliance on it may cause ambiguity, poor coordination, and limited support when guidance is needed (Skogstad et al., 2017; Paais & Pattiruhu, 2020). Thus, while autonomy can encourage independence, excessive freedom may negatively affect teacher preparation for decision-making, particularly among early-career teachers.

3.3 Decision-Making Factors

3.3.1 Task Factor

3.3.1.1 Uncertainty

The results showed that both school leaders and teachers strongly agreed that they could manage uncertainty in decision-making. School leaders obtained an overall mean of 4.58, while teachers obtained 4.53. Both groups agreed that they could overcome doubtful aspects, adjust when circumstances change, appraise risks, and understand what decisions involve. These findings imply that both groups demonstrate adaptability, risk awareness, and readiness to respond to complex situations. Northouse (2021) explains that effective leaders demonstrate flexibility, situational awareness, and informed decision-making under changing conditions. Mumford, Todd, Higgs, and McIntosh (2017) also argue that leaders who anticipate consequences, assess risks, and adjust strategies are better prepared for complex organizational challenges. In educational settings, Bush (2018) notes that school leaders operate in ambiguous and changing environments, while shared perceptions of uncertainty management contribute to resilience, trust, and positive school climate (Hannah, Sweeney, & Lester, 2019; Kapucu, Ustun, & Demiroz, 2020).

3.3.1.2 Time, Money, and Pressure

The results indicated that both groups strongly agreed that time, money, and pressure were effectively managed in decision-making. School leaders obtained an overall mean of 4.68, while teachers obtained 4.52. Both groups recognized the

importance of evaluating available time, organizing actions based on time constraints, acting quickly and precisely, matching costs with available funds, and comparing results with time and money spent. These findings show strong competencies in planning, resource management, and accountability. Northouse (2021) asserts that effective leaders prioritize tasks, manage limited resources, and make timely decisions under pressure. Mumford et al. (2017) highlight that strategic planning and alignment with time and financial constraints are critical cognitive skills for effective leadership decision-making. Bush (2018) explains that school leaders must balance instructional demands, financial limitations, and accountability pressures, while aligned perceptions of resource management strengthen organizational efficiency and trust (Salas-Vallina, Simone, & Fernández-Guerrero, 2020; Nguyen et al., 2021).

3.3.1.3 Information and Goals

The results showed very high agreement regarding information and goals, with school leaders obtaining an overall mean of 4.71 and teachers obtaining 4.53. Both groups strongly agreed that school leaders assess decision difficulty, organize action sequences, gather and identify key information, recognize missing information, define goals, analyze goal conflicts, and choose appropriate actions. These findings indicate a structured and strategic decision-making culture. Northouse (2021) explains that effective leaders rely on accurate information gathering, careful analysis, and goal clarification. Yukl (2017) highlights that clear objectives and relevant information reduce ambiguity and help leaders anticipate consequences. Bush and Glover (2019) assert that successful school leadership requires strategic thinking and alignment of decisions with institutional goals, while collaborative goal analysis strengthens teacher confidence and organizational alignment (Leithwood, Harris, & Hopkins, 2020; Nguyen et al., 2021).

3.3.1.4 Consequences of Decision-Making

The results revealed strong agreement that consequences are carefully considered in decision-making. School leaders obtained an overall mean of 4.72, while teachers obtained 4.49. Both groups agreed that leaders foresee consequences, address negative outcomes, determine long-term effects, accept responsibility, and consider the impact of decisions on other people and society. These findings suggest that decision-making is reflective, ethical, and accountable. Northouse (2021) highlights that responsible leaders anticipate short- and long-term consequences and accept accountability for outcomes. Yukl (2017) emphasizes that effective leaders evaluate the impact of decisions on multiple stakeholders. Bush (2018) adds that school leaders must uphold ethical standards and promote the well-being of teachers, learners, and the community. Leaders who reflect on decision consequences foster trust, moral responsibility, and organizational commitment (Leithwood et al., 2020; Shapira-Lishchinsky, 2020).

3.3.2 Subjective Factor

3.3.2.1 Motivation

The results showed a very high level of motivational readiness in decision-making. School leaders obtained an overall mean of 4.72, while teachers obtained 4.52. Both groups strongly agreed that decision-makers are motivated, aware of the importance of decisions, able to sustain interest, aware of personal achievement, and capable of choosing attractive alternatives. These findings imply that motivation is a major subjective factor in school decision-making. Northouse (2021) highlights that motivated leaders show initiative, perseverance, and purpose. Yukl (2017) notes that intrinsically motivated leaders maintain focus, evaluate alternatives thoughtfully, and persist despite challenges. Bush (2018) observes that school leaders' motivation influences teacher engagement, professional growth, and decision quality. Empirical studies further indicate that motivated leaders and teachers show greater awareness of decisions, stronger interest in outcomes, and proactive problem-solving (Leithwood et al., 2020; Ng et al., 2022).

3.3.2.2 Self-Regulation

The results showed strong self-regulatory capacity in decision-making. School leaders obtained an overall mean of 4.66, while teachers obtained 4.56. Both groups strongly agreed that leaders know their desired outcomes, trust their experience and capacity, plan actions, use efficient strategies, monitor the decision process, appraise achievements, and identify errors. These findings suggest that school leaders practice reflective and strategic decision-making. Northouse (2021) emphasizes that self-regulated leaders plan, monitor, and evaluate their actions. Yukl (2017) notes that leaders with strong self-regulatory skills manage uncertainty, maintain focus under pressure, and adjust decisions based on reflection and feedback. Bush (2018) observes that self-regulation helps school leaders guide teachers, foster professional growth, and align decisions with organizational objectives. Self-regulated leaders also promote reflective practice, continuous improvement, and adaptive problem-solving (Leithwood et al., 2020; Ng et al., 2022).

3.3.2.3 Cognition

The results indicated very high cognitive engagement in decision-making. School leaders obtained an overall mean of 4.67, while teachers obtained 4.56. Both groups strongly agreed that leaders process information, reflect on the need to decide, identify decision factors, recall previous strategies, solve emerging problems, and relate multiple aspects of decisions. These findings show that school decision-making is analytical, systematic, and informed. Northouse (2021) highlights that leaders with strong cognitive skills analyze information, anticipate outcomes, and integrate diverse perspectives. Yukl

(2017) asserts that cognitive engagement enables leaders to reflect on prior experiences, evaluate alternatives, and solve emerging problems. Bush (2018) notes that principals' cognitive competence supports strategic planning and adaptive problem-solving. Cognitive decision-making also fosters reflective practice, analytical reasoning, and evidence-based decisions among teachers (Leithwood et al., 2020; Ng et al., 2022).

3.3.2.4 Emotion

The results showed a high level of emotional regulation in decision-making. School leaders obtained an overall mean of 4.68, while teachers obtained 4.56. Both groups strongly agreed that leaders generate helpful emotions, remain calm, overcome fear, control impulsiveness, and anticipate feelings of guilt associated with decision outcomes. These findings indicate that emotional awareness and self-control are important in leadership decision-making. Northouse (2021) notes that emotionally competent leaders manage their emotions, maintain composure, make rational decisions, and inspire confidence. Goleman et al. (2017) emphasize that emotional awareness and self-control help leaders manage fear, stress, and the emotional consequences of decisions. In schools, emotional competence influences teacher trust, collaboration, and commitment (Mayer et al., 2018; Ciarrochi et al., 2020). Leaders who regulate emotions sustain focus, encourage reflection, and reduce impulsivity in complex decision-making (Ng et al., 2022; Permana & Yuslimah, 2025).

3.3.3 Context Factor

3.3.3.1 Social Pressure

The results showed that both school leaders and teachers strongly agreed that social pressure is effectively managed in decision-making. School leaders obtained an overall mean of 4.67, while teachers obtained 4.58. Both groups agreed that leaders avoid unnecessary conflict, make decisions without excessive external pressure, adapt to the required pace, listen to others' opinions, and consider whether decisions are socially acceptable and respectful of social rules. These findings suggest that school leaders are sensitive to social dynamics while maintaining independence in decision-making. Northouse (2021) asserts that leaders attuned to social dynamics and stakeholder expectations can navigate pressures while maintaining autonomy and ethical judgment. Yukl (2017) notes that effective leaders balance organizational goals with social norms, expectations, and stakeholder interests. In school leadership, managing social pressure supports inclusive decision-making, collaboration, and conflict reduction (Bush, 2018; Ng et al., 2022). Leaders who manage social pressure effectively build trust, positive relationships, and socially acceptable decisions (Leithwood et al., 2020; Permana & Yuslimah, 2025).

3.3.3.2 Work Pressure

The results indicated that work pressure is effectively considered in school decision-making. School leaders obtained an overall mean of 4.72, while teachers obtained 4.61. Both groups strongly agreed that leaders connect work rules with personal interests, follow work rules, comply with legal demands, consider organizational goals, and favor workers. These findings imply that school leaders balance organizational demands, legal requirements, and employee welfare. Northouse (2021) emphasizes that effective leaders balance competing priorities, follow institutional rules, and align decisions with organizational goals and employee needs. Yukl (2017) notes that leaders who manage work pressure effectively demonstrate professionalism and ethical compliance. In schools, managing work-related demands supports morale and organizational operations (Bush, 2018; Ng et al., 2022). Leaders who integrate organizational requirements with staff interests foster stability, fairness, commitment, and improved school performance (Leithwood et al., 2020; Permana & Yuslimah, 2025).

3.4 Significant Difference Between School Leaders' and Teachers' Perceptions of Leadership Styles

The results showed statistically significant differences between school leaders' self-perceived leadership styles and teachers' perceptions across authoritarian, democratic, and laissez-faire leadership. Teachers rated authoritarian leadership higher than school leaders, with means of 4.53 and 4.19, respectively, and the difference was significant at $t = 4.036$, $p = 0.000$. Teachers also rated democratic leadership higher than school leaders, with means of 4.67 and 4.50, and the difference was significant at $t = 2.129$, $p = 0.041$. The largest difference was found in laissez-faire leadership, where teachers rated it at 4.52 compared with school leaders' 4.12, with $t = 3.236$, $p = 0.003$. These findings reveal a consistent perceptual gap between how school leaders view their leadership and how teachers experience it. Northouse (2021) notes that leaders' self-assessments often differ from subordinates' perceptions due to differences in expectations, experiences, and interpretations of leadership behavior. Yukl (2017) explains that discrepancies between perceived and enacted leadership may arise from different understandings of authority, decision-making, and autonomy. Empirical studies further indicate that teachers may perceive leadership behaviors more intensely than leaders report, especially in authoritarian, democratic, and laissez-faire contexts (Leithwood et al., 2020; Ng et al., 2022). These results emphasize the need for reflective practice, teacher feedback, and participatory evaluation.

3.5 Significant Difference Between School Leaders' and Teachers' Perceptions of Decision-Making

The results showed no statistically significant differences between school leaders' self-perceived decision-making and teachers' perceptions across task, subjective, and context factors, although the source label indicated "Significant." For the

task factor, school leaders obtained a mean of 4.70, while teachers obtained 4.51, with $t = 1.328$ and $p = 0.194$. For the subjective factor, school leaders obtained 4.67, while teachers obtained 4.56, with $t = 1.621$ and $p = 0.115$. For the context factor, school leaders obtained 4.71, while teachers obtained 4.60, with $t = 1.337$ and $p = 0.191$. Since all p -values were greater than 0.05, the differences were not statistically significant. These findings indicate alignment between school leaders' and teachers' perceptions of decision-making practices. Northouse (2021) highlights that shared perceptions of decision-making enhance organizational coherence, trust, and effectiveness. Yukl (2017) notes that perceptual alignment reduces conflict, promotes collaboration, and supports consistent implementation of school policies and practices. Bush (2018) asserts that similar perceptions between teachers and leaders foster participatory governance, collective responsibility, and professional engagement. Coherence between leaders' self-assessments and teachers' perceptions is also associated with stronger organizational commitment, smoother task execution, and improved school outcomes (Leithwood et al., 2020; Ng et al., 2022).

4 Conclusion & Recommendations

Multiple leadership styles characterized school leadership in the study, with authoritarian, democratic, and laissez-faire styles all evident in the school setting; however, teachers consistently perceived these leadership behaviors more strongly than school leaders themselves, showing a significant perceptual gap between leadership self-assessment and teachers' actual experiences. In contrast, school leaders and teachers shared aligned perceptions of decision-making practices across task, subjective, and context factors, including uncertainty, time and resources, motivation, cognition, emotion, social pressure, and work pressure. Overall, the findings indicate that while leadership styles are experienced differently, decision-making practices are generally transparent, consistent, and commonly understood, emphasizing the need for reflective leadership, continuous feedback, and open communication to strengthen collaborative school leadership.

Based on the findings, school leaders and teachers should work collaboratively through active feedback to improve leadership practices, while feedback and monitoring mechanisms such as feedback sessions, consultative meetings, and random surveys should be institutionalized to address perceptual gaps. Continuous leadership development programs should be adopted to promote adaptive leadership and participative decision-making, and teacher participation in planning and policy formulation should be strengthened to support democratic practices and professional commitment. Future researchers may conduct similar studies in other locales to further examine the relationship between school leaders' leadership approaches and teacher preparation for decision-making, while a leadership training program should be crafted to enhance good leadership practices and promote participative decision-making in schools.

The study was limited to school leaders and teachers from public and private schools in Danao City during the 2025–2026 school year, involving 30 school leaders and 353 teachers selected through convenience sampling. Its findings therefore reflect the leadership and decision-making perceptions of the participating respondents within this specific educational context and serve as the basis for the proposed leadership training program.

Compliance with ethical standards

This study complied with institutional ethical standards in the conduct of research involving school leaders and teachers in public and private schools in Danao City. Participation was voluntary, informed consent was secured, and all responses were treated with confidentiality and used only for academic research purposes. Permission and ethical clearance were obtained from the concerned authorities before data gathering. The authors declare no conflict of interest, acknowledge all individuals and institutions that contributed to the completion of the study, and affirm that authorship responsibility, data integrity, and copyright ownership were properly observed.

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