

Leadership Competence On School Operations And Teacher Empowerment: A Proposed Innovation Plan

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Abstract

The effectiveness of schools significantly relies on the leadership competence of administrators, particularly school leaders, who play a central role in shaping the institution's culture, performance, and overall success. However, in many educational settings, there is a gap between leadership practices and the desired outcomes in teacher empowerment.

This study examined the relationship between school administrators' competence in school operations and teacher empowerment among 215 public elementary school teachers. Specifically, it assessed the levels of teacher empowerment and administrators' competence, determined the relationship between these variables, identified differences in teacher empowerment according to selected demographic characteristics, and explored teachers' perceptions of leadership competencies and experiences that influence their empowerment.

A convergent mixed-methods research design was employed. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Spearman's rank-order correlation, Mann-Whitney U Test, and Kruskal-Wallis H test, while qualitative responses were analyzed through content analysis.

The findings revealed that teachers exhibited a very high level of empowerment, while school administrators demonstrated a very high level of competence in school. A significant moderate positive relationship was found between school administrators' competence and teacher empowerment, indicating that higher administrative competence was associated with greater teacher empowerment. Significant differences in teacher empowerment were observed according to age, years of teaching experience, career position, and highest educational attainment, whereas sex and marital status showed no significant differences. Qualitative findings highlighted communication, active listening, integrity, decision-making, recognition, trust, professional development, and shared decision-making as key factors influencing teacher empowerment.

The study concludes that competent and supportive school leadership plays a vital role in enhancing teacher empowerment. It recommends strengthening participatory leadership, expanding professional development opportunities, and promoting collaborative decision-making to further improve teacher empowerment and school effectiveness.

Keywords: Leadership competence, Teacher Empowerment, School Operations

1. Introduction

Background and Rationale

Leadership competence refers to the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that enable school leaders to inspire, guide, and manage teachers and staff effectively. Competent school leaders can create an environment where teachers feel empowered to take initiative, collaborate, and innovate in their teaching practices. Experience gained through professional development, mentorship, and practice enhanced leadership skills, enabling leaders to navigate challenges and drive positive change. This gap may arise from insufficient leadership training, lack of opportunities for school leaders to gain relevant experience, or the failure to apply effective leadership strategies.

The interplay between leadership competence and its impact on teacher performance and empowerment has not been fully explored in some contexts, leaving school leaders ill-equipped to foster an environment conducive to professional growth, collaboration, and innovation among teachers. This inadequacy can hinder teachers' ability to perform effectively and feel empowered, which in turn affects overall school effectiveness.

The researcher is challenged to bring this issue to the fore and to investigate this aspect particularly in the Isabela where she works in a certain public elementary school. It aims to determine the demographic profile of the respondents, the level of teacher empowerment as perceived by the respondents as measured by the standardized 38-item Teacher Empowerment Scale, the level of leadership competence in school operations and its significant relationship of the variables. Consequently, it is considering this perspective that this study is conceived and therefore the researcher opts to establish first-hand data and information which will somehow capacitate the Department of Education to consider the real causes of certain educational problems and to primarily consider the role and position of the school leader thereat. Results of this study are expected to draw the line in addressing the need among school administrators to be within the purview of what is called sound and well-balanced school leadership.

Review of Related Literature

Educational systems worldwide increasingly recognize the central role of school leadership and teacher empowerment in shaping school effectiveness, instructional quality, organizational culture, and student outcomes. Leadership competence influences school operations, decision-making processes, organizational climate, and staff development.

In the Philippine context, school leaders under the Department of Education (DepEd) carry multifaceted responsibilities ranging from instructional supervision to resource mobilization, stakeholder engagement, and crisis response. Simultaneously, teacher empowerment has emerged as a vital mechanism for improving teacher motivation, professional growth, job satisfaction, and participation in school improvement processes.

Statement of the Problem

This study examined the leadership competence of school heads and determined how these influence teacher empowerment and school operations in the three districts of Echague, Schools Division of Isabela.

Specifically, this study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What is the demographic profile of the teacher-respondents, as in terms of:
 - 1.1. Sex
 - 1.2. Age group
 - 1.3. Marital status
 - 1.4. Years of teaching experience
 - 1.5. Career Position
 - 1.6. Highest educational attainment
 - 1.7. Seminars/trainings/conferences attended?
3. What is the level of teacher empowerment as perceived by the respondents as measured by the Teacher Empowerment Scale across the domains of:
 - 3.1 Decision-making;
 - 3.2 Professional growth Autonomy;
 - 3.3 Status;
 - 3.4 Self-efficacy;
 - 3.5 Autonomy; and
 - 3.6 Impact?
2. What is the level of school administrators' leadership competence in school operations as perceived by the respondents in terms of:
 - 2.1 Planning
 - 2.2 Organizing
 - 2.3 Staffing
 - 2.4 Directing
 - 2.5 Controlling; and
 - 2.6 Overall domain?
4. Is there a significant relationship between the school administrators' leadership competence in school operations and teacher empowerment?
5. Is there a significant difference between respondent's demographic profile and teacher empowerment?
6. What leadership competencies do teachers identify as influencing their empowerment, as described through:
 - a. Essential competencies for effective school leadership; and
 - b. Desired improvements in leadership practices?
7. What innovation plan may be proposed based on the findings of the study?

Objectives and/or research hypotheses

This study aimed to determine the relationship between school administrators' competence in school operations and teacher empowerment. Specifically, it seeks to:

Hypothesis

The study tested whether teachers' demographic characteristics, school administrators' leadership competence, and school operations were significantly related to teacher empowerment. Specifically, it examined whether demographic profile, leadership competence and experiences, and school operations influence the level of teacher empowerment.

2. Materials and Methods

Research Design

This study adopted a mixed-method research design to examine the leadership competence and experiences of school heads and their relationship to school operations and teacher empowerment in the three districts of Echague, Schools Division of Isabela. The descriptive component was used to present the demographic profile of teachers, the level of leadership competence of school heads, and the degree of teacher empowerment. Meanwhile, the correlational aspect sought to determine whether significant associations exist among the identified variables.

Given the geographical spread and large number of teachers in the study area, data will be collected through a Google Form online survey. This method will allow efficient, standardized, and wide-reaching administration of the questionnaire while ensuring accessibility for respondents across the three districts.

Participants

The respondents of the study consisted of 215 teachers assigned to public schools in the three districts of Echague. The study was conducted in: Echague West District, Echague East District, and Echague South District, Schools Division Office of Isabela.

Instruments

Data were gathered using a structured survey questionnaire composed of several sections. The primary tool for measuring teacher empowerment is the School Participant Empowerment Scale (SPES) developed by Short and Rinehart (1992) and school operations in management practices questionnaire was developed by Holy Trinity College Graduate Studies in General Santos City. A 5-point Likert scale was used to measure responses.

Procedure

Prior approval was obtained from the Schools Division Office of Isabela, followed by coordination with district supervisors and school heads to facilitate the smooth distribution of the online questionnaire. The Google Form link was disseminated to teachers through official communication channels. Respondents were informed of the study's purpose, confidentiality measures, and voluntary nature of participation.

Data Analysis

The data collected in this study were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Both descriptive and inferential statistical tools were employed to analyze the data and answer the research questions.

Frequency counts and percentages-to describe the demographic profile of teachers

Weighted Mean, Standard Deviation, Median, and Interquartile Range-to determine the level of teacher empowerment and the perceived competence of school administrators in school operations and to describe the central tendency and variability of the respondents' ratings.

Spearman's Rank-Order Correlation Coefficient-to determine the significant between school administrators' competence in school operations and teacher empowerment.

Mann-Whitney U Test-to determine whether significant differences existed in teacher empowerment according to sex.

Kruskal-Wallis H Test-to determine significant differences in teacher empowerment when respondents were group according to their demographic profile.

Qualitative Content Analysis-to analyze the open ended-questions.

3. Results

Demographic Profile of Teacher-Respondents

Table 2 shows that most of the 215 teacher-respondents were female (90.7%) and married (83.3%). The largest age group consisted of respondents aged 51 years and above (25.1%), followed by those aged 46–50 years (21.4%). In terms of teaching experience, the highest proportion had been teaching for 10–20 years (35.8%). Most respondents held the position of Teacher III (68.4%), while smaller proportions were Teacher I, Master Teacher I, and Master Teacher II. Regarding educational attainment, the largest group had completed a master's degree (41.9%), followed by those with master's units (23.7%).

Table 2: Demographic Profile of the Teacher-Respondents

Variable	Category	n	%
Sex	Female	195	90.7
	Male	20	9.3
Age Group	30 years old and below	23	10.7
	31-35 years old	25	11.6
	36-40 years old	42	19.5
	41-45 years old	25	11.6
	46-50 years old	46	21.4
	51-55 years old and above	54	25.1
Marital Status	Single	21	9.8
	Married	179	83.3
	Widow	12	5.6
	Widower	3	1.4
Years of Teaching	Less than 10 years	59	27.4
	10-20 years	77	35.8
	21-30 years	57	26.5
	31 years and above	22	10.2
Career Position	Teacher I	25	11.6
	Teacher II	7	3.3
	Teacher III	147	68.4
	Teacher IV	0	0
	Teacher V	0	0
	Teacher VI	0	0
	Teacher VII	0	0
	Master Teacher I	18	8.4
	Master Teacher II	18	8.4
	Master Teacher III	0	0
	Master Teacher IV	0	0
	Master Teacher V	0	0
Highest Educational Attainment	Bachelor's Degree	31	14.4
	MA/MAED/MAT Units	51	23.7
	MA/MAED/MAT Graduate	90	41.9
	Ed.D./Ph.D Units	13	6.0
	Ed.D./Ph.D Graduate	30	14.0

Note. N=215

Seminars, Trainings, and Conferences Attended

Table 3 shows that most respondents attended seminars, trainings, or conferences at the district level (80.5%), division level (80.0%), and school level (77.2%). A substantial proportion had also participated at the legislative district level (60.5%). However, participation was considerably lower at the regional (26.5%), national (23.3%), and international levels (9.3%).

Table 3: Seminars, Trainings, and Conferences Attended

Category	n	% of respondents
School Level	166	77.2
District Level	173	80.5
Legislative District Level	130	60.5
Division Level	172	80.0
Regional Level	57	26.5
National Level	50	23.3
International Level	20	9.3

Note. $N = 215$. Respondents were allowed to select more than one level of seminar, training, or conference attended. Therefore, the frequencies represent the number of respondents who attended each level, and the percentages were computed as $n/N \times 100$.

Table 4.1: Level of Teacher Empowerment in Terms of Decision Making

<i>Statement</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mdn</i>	<i>IQR</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
1. I am given the responsibility to monitor programs.	4.31	4.00	0.730	1.000	Very High
2. I function in a professional environment.	4.52	5.00	0.595	1.000	Very High
3. I believe that I have earned respect.	4.63	5.00	0.547	1.000	Very High
4. I believe that I am helping kids become independent learners.	4.74	5.00	0.437	1.000	Very High
5. I have control over daily schedules.	4.41	4.00	0.573	1.000	Very High
6. I believe that I can get things done.	4.60	5.00	0.519	1.000	Very High
7. I make decisions about the implementation of new programs in the school.	4.15	4.00	0.829	1.000	High
8. I am treated as a professional.	4.69	5.00	0.556	1.000	Very High
9. I believe that I am very effective.	4.57	5.00	0.550	1.000	Very High
10. I believe that I am empowering students.	4.63	5.00	0.531	1.000	Very High
11. I can teach as I choose.	4.52	5.00	0.662	1.000	
12. I participate in staff development.	4.58	5.00	0.540	1.000	Very High
13. I make decisions about the selection of other teachers for my school.	4.01	4.00	0.976	1.000	High
14. I have the opportunity for professional growth.	4.55	5.00	0.616	1.000	Very High
15. I have the respect of my colleagues.	4.62	5.00	0.540	1.000	Very High
16. I feel that I am involved in an important program for children.	4.63	5.00	0.539	1.000	Very High
17. I have the freedom to make decisions on what is taught.	4.49	5.00	0.683	1.000	Very High
18. I believe that I am having an impact.	4.55	5.00	0.544	1.000	Very High
19. I am involved in school budget decisions.	4.15	4.00	0.848	1.000	High
20. I work at a school where kids come first.	4.37	4.00	0.730	1.000	Very High
21. I have the support and respect of my colleagues.	4.60	5.00	0.578	1.000	Very High
22. I see students learn.	4.71	5.00	0.484	1.000	Very High
23. I make decisions about curriculum.	4.03	4.00	0.949	1.000	High
24. I am a decision-maker.	4.16	4.00	0.816	1.000	High
25. I am allowed to teach other teachers.	4.20	4.00	0.933	1.000	High
26. I am allowed to continue learning.	4.60	5.00	0.586	1.000	Very High
27. I have a strong knowledge base in the areas in which I teach.	4.53	5.00	0.553	1.000	Very High
28. I believe that I have the opportunity to grow by working daily with students.	4.62	5.00	0.495	1.000	Very High
29. I perceive that I have the opportunity to influence others.	4.51	5.00	0.610	1.000	Very High
30. I can determine my schedule.	4.47	5.00	0.602	1.000	Very High
31. I have the opportunity to collaborate with other teachers in my school.	4.53	5.00	0.570	1.000	Very High
32. I perceive that I am making a difference.	4.48	5.00	0.625	1.000	Very High
33. Principals, other teachers, and school personnel solicit my advice.	4.14	4.00	0.750	1.000	High
34. I believe that I am good at what I do.	4.54	5.00	0.561	1.000	Very High
35. I can plan my schedule.	4.48	5.00	0.562	1.000	Very High
36. I perceive that I have an impact on other teachers and students.	4.43	4.00	0.583	1.000	Very High
37. My advice is solicited by others.	4.25	4.00	0.671	1.000	Very High
38. I have an opportunity to teach other teachers about innovative ideas.	4.23	4.00	0.697	1.000	Very High

Note. N= 215. M=4.45, Mdn= 4.47, SD=0.399, IQR=0.500

Level of Teacher Empowerment in Terms of Decision Making

Table 4 shows that the respondents had a very high overall level of teacher empowerment ($M = 4.45$, $Mdn = 4.47$, $SD = 0.40$, $IQR = 0.50$). The highest-rated statement was “I believe that I am helping kids become independent learners” ($M = 4.74$), followed by “I see students learn” ($M = 4.71$) and “I am treated as a professional” ($M = 4.69$).

The lowest-rated statements concerned participation in selecting other teachers ($M = 4.01$), making curriculum decisions ($M = 4.03$), and having one’s advice solicited by school personnel ($M = 4.14$).

Level of Teacher Empowerment Across the Different Domains

Table 4.2 shows that the teacher-respondents had a very high overall level of empowerment ($M = 4.45$, $SD = 0.40$, $Mdn = 4.47$, $IQR = 0.50$). Among the domains, self-efficacy obtained the highest mean ($M = 4.64$), followed by status and respect ($M = 4.59$) and professional growth ($M = 4.54$).

Decision making received the lowest mean ($M = 4.24$), followed by autonomy ($M = 4.37$), although both remained within the very high category. Autonomy also had the largest interquartile range ($IQR = 0.75$).

Table 4.2: Level of Teacher Empowerment Across the Different Domains

<i>Domain</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mdn</i>	<i>IQR</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
Decision Making	4.24	0.52	4.30	0.60	Very High
Professional Growth	4.54	0.43	4.67	0.50	Very High
Status and Respect	4.59	0.41	4.67	0.58	Very High
Self-Efficacy	4.64	0.37	4.67	0.67	Very High
Autonomy	4.37	0.55	4.50	0.75	Very High
Impact and Meaning	4.47	0.43	4.50	0.67	Very High

Note. $N = 215$. $M = 4.45$, $Mdn = 4.47$, $SD = 0.399$, $IQR = 0.500$

Table 5.1: Level of School Administrators' Competence in School Operations

<i>Domain</i>	<i>Statement</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mdn</i>	<i>IQR</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
Planning	1. Create and maintain a shared Vision and Goals for a pupil development and learning through school-community consultation.	4.62	5.00	0.532	1.000	<i>Very High</i>
	2. Develop school policies and procedures which are consistent with the school Vision and Mission, through school-community consultation	4.55	5.00	0.560	1.000	<i>Very High</i>
	3. Commit to a process of school development that responds to and manages the process that led to sustained improvement.	4.53	5.00	0.562	1.000	<i>Very High</i>
	4. Implement, monitor and evaluate the School Improvement Plan.	4.56	5.00	0.592	1.000	<i>Very High</i>
	5. Analyze and use data in decision making.	4.50	5.00	0.579	1.000	<i>Very High</i>
	6. Ensure a consistency of practice in critical policy areas such as assessment and student behavior management.	4.57	5.00	0.559	1.000	<i>Very High</i>
	7. Develop and implement a decision-making policy which includes role statement for individual groups and explicit lines of authority.	4.52	5.00	0.579	1.000	<i>Very High</i>
Organizing	1. Promotes environment where everyone is relaxed, friendly and ease during Meetings and other discussions.	4.63	5.00	0.539	1.000	<i>Very High</i>
	2. Encourages decision-making throughout the organization and operate among themselves and with their subordinates as a group.	4.47	5.00	0.571	1.000	<i>Very High</i>
	3. Organize teachers to participate in the planning of programs in school.	4.61	5.00	0.553	1.000	<i>Very High</i>
	4. Maintaining campus facilities.	4.55	5.00	0.577	1.000	<i>Very High</i>
	5. Managing budget, resources and non-instructional staff.	4.49	5.00	0.587	1.000	<i>Very High</i>
	6. Build up human and material resources.	4.52	5.00	0.579	1.000	<i>Very High</i>
	7. Assign to the academic and non-academic staff specific roles to perform.	4.53	5.00	0.570	1.000	<i>Very High</i>
Staffing	1. Determining professional development needs and goals of teachers.	4.64	5.00	0.528	1.000	<i>Very High</i>
	2. Motivate teachers to increase their teaching performance.	4.52	5.00	0.537	1.000	<i>Very High</i>
	3. Interacting socially with staff about school related topics.	4.50	5.00	0.563	1.000	<i>Very High</i>
	4. Coordinate the auxiliary services that support instruction.	4.51	5.00	0.579	1.000	<i>Very High</i>
	5. Provide staff development to support Teachers in implementing curriculum and instruction change.	4.57	5.00	0.558	1.000	<i>Very High</i>
	6. Working with local community and teachers.	4.53	5.00	0.570	1.000	<i>Very High</i>
	7. Provide adequate resources to teachers for curriculum implementation.	4.52	5.00	0.562	1.000	<i>Very High</i>
Directing	1. Assigns group members to follow standards rule and regulations.	4.56	5.00	0.559	1.000	<i>Very High</i>
	2. Informed of current trends in instruction.	4.45	4.00	0.569	1.000	<i>Very High</i>
	3. Stimulate a task-oriented atmosphere in the school.	4.47	5.00	0.570	1.000	<i>Very High</i>
	4. Demonstrate instructional practices and the use of curricular materials in a classroom.	4.48	5.00	0.579	1.000	<i>Very High</i>
	5. Encourage teachers to implement their classroom improvement plan.	4.53	5.00	0.553	1.000	<i>Very High</i>
	6. Ensure measure to remedy the weaknesses in teaching are discussed with the teacher.	4.54	5.00	0.553	1.000	<i>Very High</i>
	7. Provide information that is useful in teaching learning process.	4.52	5.00	0.571	1.000	<i>Very High</i>
Controlling	1. Use pupil's performance result to develop the school's educational goals	4.61	5.00	0.526	1.000	<i>Very High</i>
	2. Check to see whether classroom activities are in keeping with the educational goals.	4.64	5.00	0.528	1.000	<i>Very High</i>

Note. $M=4.54$, $SD=0.41$, $Mdn=4.60$ $IQR=0.507$, $DI=$ Very High

Table 5.1 shows that the respondents perceived the school administrators' competence in school operations as **very high** overall ($M = 4.54$, $SD = 0.41$, $Mdn = 4.60$, $IQR = 0.51$).

The highest-rated indicators were determining teachers' professional-development needs and goals and checking whether classroom activities were aligned with the school's educational goals, both with a mean of 4.64. Promoting a relaxed and friendly environment during meetings also received a high rating ($M = 4.63$).

The comparatively lowest-rated indicator was keeping teachers informed of current trends in instruction ($M = 4.45$), followed by encouraging decision-making throughout the organization ($M = 4.47$).

Perceived Level of School Administrators' Competence in School Operations Across Different Domains

Table 5.2 shows that the respondents perceived their school administrators' overall competence in school operations as very high ($M = 4.54$, $SD = 0.41$, $Mdn = 4.60$, $IQR = 0.57$). Among the domains, controlling obtained the highest mean ($M = 4.62$), indicating that administrators were consistently perceived to monitor classroom activities and use pupils' performance results in developing school goals. Planning followed with a mean of 4.55, while organizing and staffing both obtained means of approximately 4.54. Directing received the lowest mean ($M = 4.51$), although it remained within the very high range.

The relatively small standard deviations indicate that the respondents' assessments were generally consistent. However, controlling had the largest interquartile range ($IQR = 1.00$).

Table 5.2: Perceived Level of School Administrators' Competence in School Operations Across Different Domains

Domain	M	SD	Mdn	IQR	Interpretation
Planning	4.55	0.44	4.71	0.71	Very High
Organizing	4.54	0.45	4.57	0.71	Very High
Staffing	4.54	0.44	4.57	0.71	Very High
Directing	4.51	0.45	4.57	0.86	Very High
Controlling	4.62	0.48	5.00	1.00	Very High

Note. $N = 215$. $M = 4.54$, $SD = 0.41$, $Mdn = 4.60$, $IQR = 0.507$, $DI = \text{Very High}$

Table 6: Relationship Between School Administrators' Competence in School Operations and Teacher Empowerment

School Operations Domain	Spearman's ρ	p	Interpretation	Decision
Planning	.441	< .001	Moderate Positive Relationship	Reject H_0
Organizing	.349	< .001	Moderate Positive Relationship	Reject H_0
Staffing	.320	< .001	Moderate Positive Relationship	Reject H_0
Directing	.341	< .001	Moderate Positive Relationship	Reject H_0
Controlling	.340	< .001	Moderate Positive Relationship	Reject H_0

Note. Overall school operations were significantly and moderately positively related to teacher empowerment, Spearman's $\rho = .399$, $p < .001$. Statistical significance was evaluated at $\alpha = .05$.

Table 6 shows that all domains of school administrators' competence in school operations had statistically significant moderate positive relationships with teacher empowerment. Planning had the strongest relationship with teacher empowerment, $\rho = .441$, $p < .001$.

Organizing, $\rho = .349$, $p < .001$; directing, $\rho = .341$, $p < .001$; controlling, $\rho = .340$, $p < .001$; and staffing, $\rho = .320$, $p < .001$, also demonstrated significant moderate positive relationships with teacher empowerment.

Overall school operations were significantly and positively related to teacher empowerment, $\rho = .399$, $p < .001$.

Table 7: Kruskal-Wallis Test of Differences in Teacher Empowerment According to Demographic Profile

Demographic Variable	Group	<i>n</i>	<i>Mean Rank</i>	<i>H</i>	<i>p-value</i>	Decision
Sex	Female	195	104.70	1884.00	.803	Accept H_0
	Male	20	108.34			
Age	30 years old and below	23	80.65	15.349	.009	Reject H_0
	31-35 years old	25	87.98			
	36-40 years old	42	106.08			
	41-45 years old	25	129.56			
	46-50 years old	46	101.08			
	51-55 years old and above	54	126.32			
Marital Status	Single	21	87.12	3.147	.370	Accept H_0
	Married	179	111.18			
	Widow	12	98.33			
	Widower	3	103.00			
Years of teaching experience	Less than 10 years	59	86.94	11.446	.010	Reject H_0
	10-20 years	77	109.77			
	21-30 years	57	118.62			
	31 years and above	22	130.77			
Career Position	Teacher I	25	64.80	45.235	.000	Reject H_0
	Teacher II	7	87.07			
	Teacher III	147	102.84			
	Master Teacher I	18	145.11			
	Master Teacher II	18	181.19			
	Bachelor's Degree	31	95.15			
Highest Educational Attainment	MA/MAED/MAT Units	51	95.74	17.075	.002	Reject H_0
	MA/MAED/MAT	90	102.94			
	Graduate					
	Ed.D./Ph.D Units	13	140.88			
	Ed.D./Ph.D Graduate	30	143.05			

Note. $N=215$

Teacher empowerment differed significantly across age groups, $H(5) = 15.35$, $p = .009$. Respondents aged 41–45 years obtained the highest mean rank (129.56), followed by those aged 51–55 years and above (126.32). In comparison, respondents aged 30 years and below had the lowest mean rank (80.65).

Teacher empowerment did not significantly differ according to marital status, $H(3) = 3.15$, $p = .370$. Married respondents obtained the highest mean rank (111.18), while single respondents obtained the lowest mean rank (87.12).

A statistically significant difference was found in teacher empowerment according to years of teaching experience, $H(3) = 11.45$, $p = .010$. Respondents with 31 years or more of teaching experience obtained the highest mean rank (130.77), followed by those with 21–30 years of experience (118.62). Teachers with less than 10 years of experience obtained the lowest mean rank (86.94).

Teacher empowerment also differed significantly according to career position, $H(4) = 45.24$, $p < .001$. Master Teacher II respondents recorded the highest mean rank (181.19), followed by Master Teacher I respondents (145.11). Teacher I respondents had the lowest mean rank (64.80).

Similarly, a statistically significant difference was observed according to highest educational attainment, $H(4) = 17.08$, $p = .002$. Respondents who had completed doctoral degrees obtained the highest mean rank (143.05), closely followed by those with doctoral units (140.88). Respondents with bachelor's degrees (95.15) and master's units (95.74) had comparatively lower mean ranks.

What leadership competencies and experiences do teachers identify as influencing their empowerment?

Qualitative content analysis was used to examine the respondents' open-ended answers. Responses were coded, grouped into recurring categories, and organized into themes. Since respondents could mention more than one idea, a single response could be classified under several themes.

A. Essential Competencies for Effective School Leadership

Table 8: Leadership Competencies Identified as Essential for Effective School Leadership

Emerging Theme	n	%
Communication and active listening	72	33.5
Decision-making and problem-solving	52	24.2
Integrity, fairness, and professionalism	46	21.4
Instructional leadership and professional competence	41	19.1
Motivation and support	40	18.6
Vision, adaptability, and innovation	31	14.4
Empathy, respect, and emotional intelligence	28	13.0
Collaboration and teamwork	17	7.9

Note. $N = 215$. Multiple themes could be identified from each response; therefore, percentages do not total 100%.

Communication and active listening emerged as the most frequently identified leadership competency. Teachers emphasized that school leaders should clearly communicate expectations, listen to teachers' concerns, explain decisions, and remain approachable. Decision-making and problem-solving were also frequently mentioned, indicating that teachers valued leaders who could make timely, informed, and fair decisions.

Other important competencies included integrity, fairness, professionalism, instructional competence, empathy, adaptability, teamwork, and the ability to motivate and support teachers. Overall, the responses indicate that effective school leadership involves both managerial competence and strong interpersonal skills.

B. Desired Improvements in Leadership Practices

Table 9: Desired Improvements in Leadership Practices

Emerging Theme	n	%
Greater recognition, trust, and support	70	32.6
Stronger communication and active listening	49	22.8
More inclusive and shared decision-making	45	20.9
More professional development, coaching, and mentoring	44	20.5
Greater collaboration and teamwork	15	7.0
Reduced workload and improved resources	12	5.6
Greater fairness, transparency, and consistency	10	4.7
More empathy, respect, and attention to teacher well-being	5	2.3

Note. $N = 215$. Multiple themes could be identified from each response.

Teachers most frequently recommended greater recognition, trust, and support from school leaders. They also requested more open communication, opportunities to participate in decision-making, and additional professional development, coaching, and mentoring.

Other recommendations included promoting teamwork, reducing excessive paperwork, providing adequate teaching resources, applying policies fairly, and showing greater consideration for teachers' well-being. These findings show that teachers seek leadership practices that are participatory, supportive, transparent, and development oriented.

4. Discussion

The findings revealed that teachers perceived both their level of empowerment and their level of empowerment and their school administrators' competence in school operations as very high. Self-efficacy, status, and professional growth have the highest ratings, indicating that teachers were confident in their instructional abilities, felt respected within their schools, and perceived opportunities for continuous professional development. However, the lowest mean score is decision-making, suggesting that teachers had relatively fewer opportunities to participate in formal school governance despite generally feeling empowered.

Similarly, school administrators were perceived as highly competent in all areas of school operations, particularly in planning and controlling, reflecting their effectiveness in managing

school programs, monitoring performance, and supporting instructional improvement. The study further established a moderate positive and statistically significant relationship between school administrators as more competent also tended to experience higher levels of empowerment.

The findings also showed that teacher empowerment significantly differed according to their demographic profile, while no significant differences were found based on sex and marital status. Older, more experienced teachers, those holding higher positions, and those with advanced educational qualifications generally reported higher levels of empowerment.

The qualitative findings reinforced the quantitative results by emphasizing that teachers value school leaders who demonstrate affective communication, integrity, fairness, participative decision-making, recognition, trust, professional support, and opportunities for leadership. These leadership practices were perceived to strengthen teachers' confidence, motivation, and commitment.

Comparison to Existing Studies

The findings are consistent with existing studies showing that effective and supportive school leadership promotes teacher empowerment and professional growth. They also support previous research that teachers with greater experience, higher positions, and advanced educational attainment tend to report higher levels of empowerment.

Implications for Practice and Policy

The findings imply that effective and supportive school leadership enhances teacher empowerment. Schools should strengthen participative leadership, recognize teachers' contributions, and provide continuous professional development to foster a more empowered, motivated, and productive teaching workforce.

Study Limitations

The study was limited by its descriptive-correlational design, reliance on self-reported data, focus on one group of elementary public teachers, and the absence of post hoc analyses and perspectives from other stakeholders, limiting the generalizability and causal interpretation of the findings.

5. Conclusion

Based on the findings, the study concludes that public elementary school teachers perceive to be highly empowered and regard their school administrators as highly competent in managing school operations. Although demonstrate strong self-efficacy, professional growth, and positive professional relationships, opportunities for meaningful participation in school-level decision-making remain comparatively limited.

The study further concludes that school administrators' competence is significantly associated with teacher empowerment. Administrators who demonstrate effective planning, organizing, staffing, directing, and controlling practices contribute to creating an environment where teachers feel more competent, valued, motivated, and empowered. However, the moderate magnitude of the relationship suggests that teacher empowerment is also influenced by other organizational and personal factors beyond administrative competence.

Moreover, teacher empowerment varies according to professional characteristics such as age, teaching experience, career position, and educational attainment, indicating that professional growth and career advancement contribute to stronger perceptions of empowerment. Conversely, sex and marital status do not appear to influence teachers' sense of empowerment.

Overall, effective school leadership extends beyond managerial competence. Teachers value leaders who communicate openly, recognize teachers' contributions, encourage collaboration, involve teachers in decision-making, provide professional development opportunities, and demonstrate fairness, trust, and respect. These leadership practices strengthen teacher empowerment and contribute to a more positive and productive environment.

Recommendation for future research or implementation

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. School administrators should strengthen participatory leadership by providing teachers with greater opportunities to participate in curriculum planning, and school-level decision-making to further enhance teacher empowerment.
2. Educational authorities should expand access to training for higher level professional development opportunities to further develop teachers' competencies, leadership capacity, and professional empowerment.
3. Future researchers may conduct similar studies involving larger and more diverse samples across different regions and educational settings. They may also investigate other variables that influence teacher empowerment, such as organizational climate, transformational leadership, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and teacher well-being. Qualitative or mixed methods studies may likewise provide deeper insights into teachers' lived experiences of empowerment.

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