

Participative Leadership Style of School Heads: Implications for an Effective Academic Mentorship Program

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Abstract. This study explores how school heads in the Schools Division of Bulacan apply participative leadership in their daily work and how it influences decision-making and school improvement. While leadership is crucial to educational success, there is limited research on how participative leadership is practiced in this setting. There is also a lack of mentorship programs designed to support school heads in strengthening this leadership approach. This study aims to fill these gaps by examining the leadership practices of school heads and developing a mentorship program to enhance their effectiveness. A mixed-method, explanatory-sequential approach was used, combining surveys and interviews. The study included 81 secondary school heads for quantitative data and 15 informants for qualitative insights. Results showed that school heads consistently demonstrated participative leadership, with most practices rated to a "Very Great Extent." However, challenges such as resistance to change, lack of cooperation, and time constraints were identified. Other difficulties included personal issues, student disengagement, limited parental involvement, and weak community connections. Overcoming these obstacles requires strong community support, clear communication, and active stakeholder engagement. Best practices for participative leadership include involving stakeholders, being resilient, and maintaining effective communication. The study highlights improved collaboration, increased teacher engagement, and a better work environment. Key support strategies include teamwork, recognition, and training programs. Based on these findings, an academic mentorship program was designed to help school heads develop sustainable and effective leadership practices, ensuring long-term improvement in school leadership.

Keywords: Leadership; Participative leadership; School heads; Mentorship program; Academic.

1.0 Introduction

The success of any organization largely depends on its leaders' ability to guide members toward shared goals. Effective leadership ensures the proper management of resources, fosters a sense of direction, and maintains organizational stability. Without strong leadership, a group may weaken, become disorganized, and fail. This principle applies to schools, where leadership shapes educational outcomes. School heads employ various leadership styles, but participative leadership suits the educational environment. Jing et al. (2017) defined participative leadership as a democratic approach involving subordinates in decision-making, fostering a sense of ownership and aligning personal aspirations with institutional goals. Leaders practicing this style integrate participatory management into daily operations by emphasizing open communication, coordinated reporting, and flexible promotion methods.

Unlike other leadership styles, participative leadership is characterized by transparency and employee empowerment in corporate decision-making (Huang et al., 2021). It applies to organizations of different sizes and developmental stages, making it a widely adaptable model. The concept of shared governance is closely linked to participative leadership, which Abraham et al. (2017) describes as a transparent process where teachers, staff, administrators, alumni, and students collaborate in shaping policies and procedures. This approach fosters leadership development, teamwork, and innovation in school governance, ensuring a balanced framework of efficiency, equity, and fairness. Open communication is essential to the success of shared governance, yet school leaders often face challenges beyond their control. The effectiveness of leadership approaches varies, and schools inevitably encounter difficulties that require adaptive strategies.

The Schools Division of Bulacan presents a similar landscape to other Philippine school divisions, where some school leaders excel while others perform at an average level. The 2021 School-Based Management (SBM) Validation Report showed that only 37 out of 101 schools in the division advanced in SBM practice. Given that school heads oversee a wide range of responsibilities, including students, teachers, and non-teaching staff, it is difficult to determine which leadership styles are most effective. While participative leadership is widely acknowledged as beneficial, its practical implementation in the daily operations of school heads remains underexplored. Furthermore, there is a lack of research on tailored mentorship programs that support and enhance participative leadership practices. Addressing this research gap, the present study investigates how secondary school heads in the Schools Division of Bulacan demonstrate participative leadership in their duties and responsibilities. It also aims to explore how tailored mentorship programs can foster these practices.

By analyzing school heads' leadership styles, identifying challenges, and assessing their impact on school management, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of participative leadership in education. The findings will serve as the foundation for a proposed Participative Academic Mentorship Program to support school leaders in enhancing their leadership capabilities. This research will provide valuable insights for the Schools Division of Bulacan but may also inform leadership development initiatives in other educational divisions. Furthermore, its recommendations could serve as a basis for future studies and aid the Department of Education (DepEd) in evaluating school leadership, governance, and related concerns. By addressing these objectives, this study aims to provide a structured approach to improving participative leadership among school heads, ultimately fostering a more collaborative, transparent, and effective educational environment.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This study employed a descriptive survey research design using a mixed-method approach, specifically the explanatory-sequential design. The approach involved collecting quantitative and qualitative data to comprehensively understand the participative leadership style of school heads in the Schools Division of Bulacan. The quantitative phase was conducted first to establish general trends, followed by the qualitative phase to explore and elaborate on the quantitative findings.

2.2 Research Participants

The study involved secondary school heads from the Schools Division of Bulacan. 81 school heads participated in the quantitative data collection, while 15 school heads were selected as informants for the qualitative phase based on their responses and leadership experiences. Purposive sampling ensured that qualitative participants represented diverse school contexts within the division.

2.3 Research Instruments

For quantitative data collection, the study utilized an adopted-modified questionnaire based on the dimensions of participative leadership outlined in the study by Wang (2022). Despite multiple attempts, the original author could not be reached. However, since the questionnaire was derived from an open-access work distributed under the Creative Commons Attribution License (CC BY), proper credit was given to the original authors, the copyright owner(s), and the source of the study's publication. The questionnaire measured various aspects of participative leadership, including Decision domain; Degree of participation; Participative structure; and Participative decision-making. To gather qualitative data, a semi-structured interview guide was developed. The guide was designed to explore school heads' perspectives on participative leadership, their challenges, and best practices in

implementing this leadership style. A pilot test was conducted with 10 secondary school heads in Bulacan to assess the reliability of the instruments. The results showed that all measurements had a reliability coefficient between 0.78 and 1.00, with Cronbach's alpha values exceeding 0.70, confirming the reliability of the research instruments.

2.4 Data Gathering Procedure

The study followed a systematic and structured process for data collection and analysis. Before gathering data, the researcher secured the necessary approvals, obtaining clearance from the Graduate School Office of Bulacan State University and official permission from the Office of the Superintendent of the Schools Division of Bulacan to conduct the study within the selected schools. Once approval was granted, quantitative data collection commenced. A structured questionnaire was administered in person to 81 secondary school heads across the Schools Division of Bulacan. Conducting the survey face-to-face ensured a high response rate and facilitated the immediate retrieval of responses. Participants were given clear instructions to maintain accuracy and consistency in their answers.

Following the quantitative phase, qualitative data was collected through in-depth interviews with 15 purposively selected school heads. These participants were chosen based on their responses in the initial survey to gain deeper insights into their participative leadership experiences. A semi-structured interview guide was used to explore emerging themes from the quantitative findings, allowing for a more detailed examination of leadership challenges, best practices, and perceptions of participative leadership. The interviews were conducted in a confidential setting, recorded with consent, and transcribed for analysis.

2.5 Data Analysis

The quantitative responses were processed, analyzed, and interpreted using SPSS software. Descriptive statistics were used to determine leadership patterns and trends, including means, standard deviations, and frequencies. Meanwhile, the qualitative data underwent content analysis and thematic coding to identify key themes, challenges, and best practices related to participative leadership. The integration of qualitative and quantitative findings provided a more comprehensive understanding of the research problem, ensuring that the results were well-rounded and supported by multiple sources of evidence.

2.6 Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to strict ethical standards to ensure participants' rights, safety, and confidentiality. The university's ethics committee reviewed and approved the research protocol before data collection, ensuring compliance with ethical guidelines. Participants were informed about the study's purpose, assured of data confidentiality, and given the right to withdraw at any stage without consequences. Written informed consent was obtained from all participants, and all collected data were securely stored to protect their identities.

3.0 Results and Discussion

3.1 School Heads' Performance as Participative Leaders

Decision Domain

Tables 1 to 4 present the distribution of school heads' summary of performance as participative leaders based on different dimensions.

Table 1. *School heads' performance as participative leaders in the dimension of decision domain*

Indicators	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Setting School Goals	4.95	0.37	Always
Hiring Teaching Staff	4.25	1.28	Always
Selecting Team Leaders	4.68	0.67	Always
Allocating Budget	4.79	0.61	Always
Instructional Policies	4.83	0.38	Always
Selecting Textbooks/Learning Materials	4.44	0.79	Always
Selecting Learning Objectives and Methods	4.59	0.67	Always
Grading Policies	4.86	0.41	Always
Student Discipline	4.58	0.61	Always
Overall Result	4.66	0.64	Always

As shown in Table 1, school heads are always participative in the dimension of the decision domain. Indicator number 1 in the decision domain, Setting School Goals yielded the highest computed mean of 4.95 and 0.37 standard deviation, interpreted as Always, while indicator number 2, Hiring Teaching Staff, obtained the lowest computed mean of 4.25 and standard deviation of 1.28, interpreted as Always. Hence, the overall mean yielded 4.66, interpreted as Always. The standard deviation of 0.64 suggests moderate variability in the responses across different decision domains in the school setting. It indicated that while there is a general trend or agreement in how these decisions are made (as reflected by the high means), there is still a range of differences in the responses. This could be due to diverse approaches, perspectives, or experiences among those involved in these decision-making processes. School administrators constantly make decisions. Even though everyone in a school occasionally makes decisions, administrators are paid to do so. Instead of carrying out mundane tasks, making decisions is their primary role. For instance, the superintendent's assessment of a principal's performance, or a principal's assessment of a department head's or team leader's performance, depends heavily on the quality of the judgments made. Additionally, decision-making impacts a school's or district's performance and the welfare of its constituents, including students, teachers, parents, and the community (Lunenburg, 2010).

Degree of Participation

As can be gleaned in Table 2, from the four indicators: indicator number 2, Information obtained the highest computed mean of 4.90 and standard deviation of 0.30, interpreted as Always. It is followed by indicator 1, Consultative Decision Making with a computed mean of 4.65 and standard deviation of 0.48, and indicator 3, Democratic Decision Making with a computed mean of 4.53 and standard deviation of 0.67, which were all interpreted as Always. The lowest computed mean was obtained by indicator number 4, Autocratic Decision Making, interpreted also as Always. Overall, the computed mean yielded 4.48, and a standard deviation of 0.45, interpreted as Always. The standard deviation across the indicators is 0.65, which suggests moderate variability in the responses. This indicates that while the overall tendency leans towards consistent application, there is some variation in how often the different decision-making approaches are utilized.

Table 2. *School heads' performance as participative leaders in the dimension of degree of participation*

Indicators	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Consultative Decision Making	4.65	0.48	Always
Information	4.90	0.30	Always
Democratic Decision Making	4.53	0.67	Always
Autocratic Decision Making	3.85	0.95	Always
Overall Result	4.48	0.65	Always

In managing school financial resources, the law requires both transparency and accountability. Transparency as a prerequisite ensures that resources are used wisely and efficiently. Regardless of the levels of transparency and accountability observed, the fact remains that adherence to these principles creates a compelling reason to meticulously consider potential expenditures and disbursement of government resources in the Philippines' basic education, thereby preventing graft and corruption (Gaspar et al., 2022).

Structure

Indicative of Table 3 on the distribution of school heads' summary of performance as participative leaders in the dimension of structure, indicator number 1 on Explicit procedures concerning who participates obtained the highest computed mean of 4.58 and standard deviation of 0.54, interpreted as Always, followed by indicator number 2, Explicit procedures concerning what decisions are open to participation obtained the mean of 4.42 and standard deviation of 0.74 and also interpreted as Always. In indicator number 3, explicit procedures concerning participation, obtained the lowest computed mean of 4.48 and standard deviation of 0.82. Generally, the data as regards the distribution of school heads' summary of performance as participative leaders in the dimension of structure yielded an overall mean of 4.49, interpreted as Always. The standard deviation of 0.71 indicated a relatively high degree of variability in how frequently the explicit procedures are engaged across the different participation dimensions. This suggested that while there is a general trend toward consistent application, as reflected in the Always interpretation, the experiences of participation vary more than initially thought.

Table 3. *School heads' performance as participative leaders in the dimension of structure*

Structure	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Explicit Procedures Concerning Who Participates	4.58	0.54	Always
Explicit Procedures Concerning What Decisions Are Open to Participation	4.42	0.74	Always
Explicit Procedures Concerning How Participation Occurs	4.48	0.82	Always
Overall Result	4.49	0.71	Always

Many organizations have recently been interested in the concept of authority delegation. The practice of delegation is taken seriously by both the public and private sectors worldwide. One crucial aspect of school administration is the assignment of responsibilities to subordinates. It aids the principal in adequately managing the institution, yet depending on how the process is carried out, it may harm the subordinates (Masaku et al., 2018).

Decision-making

As can be discerned in Table 4, from the three indicators: number 1, Decision Motive, obtained the highest computed mean of 4.87 and standard deviation of 0.06, interpreted as Always, followed by indicator 2, Teacher-Oriented Motive, obtained the mean of 4.84 and standard deviation of 0.09, also interpreted as Always. In indicator number 3, the Principal-Oriented Motive obtained the lowest computed mean of 4.77 and standard deviation of 0.14, which is interpreted as Always. Aseemingly, the overall mean was computed to 4.83, interpreted as Always. The standard deviation of 0.33 across the various categories implied that the responses were relatively consistent and clustered around the mean, indicating good agreement or consistency in the assessed measures.

Table 4. *School heads' performance as participative leaders in the dimension of participative decision-making*

Decision Making	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Decision-Oriented Motive	4.87	0.06	Always
Improve Decision Quality	4.83	0.47	Always
Encourage Teacher's Acceptance of the Decision	4.91	0.28	Always
Teacher-Oriented Motive	4.84	0.09	Always
Develop Teacher's Confidence	4.94	0.24	Always
Increase Teachers Motivation	4.85	0.36	Always
Increase Teacher's Commitment	4.85	0.36	Always
Improve Teacher's Skills	4.72	0.60	Always
Principal-Oriented Motive	4.77	0.14	Always
Share Responsibility	4.83	0.47	Always
Reduce Principal Work Load to Manage Time Better	4.62	0.56	Always
Improve Principal's Work Efficiency	4.88	0.33	Always
Overall Result	4.83	0.33	Always

People believe that leaders are created rather than born. However, it is widely recognized that to be a competent leader, one must have the experience, knowledge, dedication, patience, and, most importantly, the ability to negotiate and collaborate to achieve goals (Amanchukw et al., 2015).

Summary

As shown in Table 5, the school heads are always participative in the different dimensions of participative leadership: decision, degree of participation, structure, and participative decision-making. Specifically, Dimension 4 on participative decision-making obtained the highest computed mean of 4.83 and standard deviation of 0.05, interpreted as Always. In contrast, Dimension 2 on degree of participation obtained the lowest mean of 4.48 and standard deviation of 0.45, interpreted as Always. Lastly, the overall computed mean reached 4.62, and the standard deviation of 0.16, interpreted as Always. The standard deviation of 0.25 across the dimensions suggests a relatively low but notable spread of responses. This meant that while there is a general consistency in the application of participative processes, indicated by the Always interpretation, there are variations in the extent to which these processes are experienced or perceived among the respondents.

Table 5. *Summary of performance as participative leaders in different dimensions*

Dimensions	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1. Decision Domain	4.66	0.22	Always
2. Degree of Participation	4.48	0.45	Always
3. Structure	4.49	0.08	Always
4. Participative Decision Making	4.83	0.05	Always
Overall Result	4.62	0.25	Always

It is glaring that the school heads' performances showed very active participation in all dimensions of leadership, particularly in the decision domain, degree of participation, participative structure, and participative decision-making. Therefore, all the school heads know how to implement participative leadership in their schools to improve their operations and functions. The findings are ascribed to Wang's (2022) study on participative Leadership, which underlined that "encouraging employee involvement" is an important component of effective management. He also stated that employee participation - a critical feature of organizational decision-making - is a big factor for companies to respond to the changing business environment and improve the efficacy and integrity of leadership judgments. With this power, participative leaders may share decision-making and full employee consultation to handle workplace concerns cooperatively.

3.2 School Heads' Manifestation of Participative Leadership Styles

The extent to which school heads summarize the manifestation of participative leadership styles in terms of areas like supervisory role, students' support, parental involvement, and community linkages.

Supervisory Role

Table 6 showcases the distribution of areas of school heads' summary of manifestation of participative leadership styles in terms of supervisory role. As shown in the table, indicator number 4 on the supervisory role, which stated, The school head regularly monitors that all teachers are physically present and in contact with the learners yielded the highest computed mean of 4.93 and 0.26 standard deviation, interpreted as Very Great Extent. In contrast, indicator number 1, which stated, The school head checks and verifies the teachers' physical and mental well-being before the classroom delivery obtained the lowest computed mean of 4.51 and standard deviation of 0.74 interpreted as Very Great Extent. Hence, the overall mean yielded 4.73, interpreted as a Very Great Extent. The standard deviation of 0.52 across the given indicators reflected moderate variability in the responses. This indicated that while there was general agreement among the responses, there was also a noticeable range of different answers. The variation is not extremely wide, suggesting that most responses are relatively aligned, but not tightly clustered, indicating some differences in perceptions or experiences among the respondents regarding the school head's practices.

Table 6. *School heads' manifestation of participative leadership styles in terms of the supervisory role*

Indicators	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1. The school head checks and verifies the teachers' physical and mental well-being before the classroom delivery.	4.51	0.74	Very Great Extent
2. The school head daily monitors and fulfills outlined instructional activities of the teacher in lesson plans/ instructional materials/classroom management, etc.	4.59	0.77	Very Great Extent
3. The school head ensures that all teachers receive supervisory feedback and /or advice.	4.79	0.47	Very Great Extent
4. The school head regularly monitors all teachers to ensure they are physically present and in contact with the learners.	4.93	0.26	Very Great Extent
5. The school head regularly maintains that teachers' problems are addressed.	4.83	0.38	Very Great Extent
Overall Result	4.73	0.52	Very Great Extent

The statistics demonstrated that the school heads' participation in participative leadership in supervisory roles demonstrated high involvement and manifestation. As a result, school administrators guarantee that instructors are well-supervised in delivering quality education to students through practical technical help and feedback mechanisms. Practically, the school heads are burdened with several tasks, and they must fulfill all of their commitments while also possessing the competencies to complete their responsibilities jointly. According to Garcia and Acosta (2017), several skills make one a great leader. These abilities enable managers and administrators to do their daily jobs efficiently, motivate employees, and cope with workplace challenges for the business to continue to develop and prosper. According to them, leadership skills can be classified as dominant or recessive based on how they exercise their unique leadership style, deal with cross-cultural differences, improve

the school's commerciality, and perform their corporate social responsibility. All of these areas are concealed inside the disclosed leadership abilities, which are bound to be attributory, participative, and contributing, and which can be proven to be dominant or recessive depending on the scenario.

Student Services

Table 7 illustrates the distribution of areas of school heads' summary of the manifestation of participative leadership styles in student services. As can be gleaned in the tabular presentation of data, from the five indicators: indicator number 1, The school head checks and monitors the conduciveness of the classroom and the learners' statuses and indicator number 5, The school head ensures the interventions provided to the non-performing students obtained the highest computed mean of 4.85 and standard deviation of 0.36, interpreted as Very Great Extent. It is followed by indicator number 2, The school head provides the school's basic services to the learners and indicator 4, The school head monitors the operation and implementation of the students' organization, which were all interpreted as Strongly Agree with a computed mean of 4.84 and standard deviation of 0.46. The lowest computed mean was obtained by indicator number 3. The school head knows the students' academic performances, with a computed mean of 4.72 and a 0.53 standard deviation, which is also interpreted as a very great extent. The computed mean yielded 4.82, interpreted as a Very Great Extent. The standard deviation of 0.44 indicated a moderate variation in how the different aspects of the school head's involvement are perceived or experienced. While the overall trend showed significant involvement, as indicated by the high mean, the SD reflects some differences in individual responses or situations.

Table 7. *School heads' manifestation of participative leadership styles in terms of student services*

Indicators	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1. The school head checks and monitors the conduciveness of the classroom and the learners' statuses.	4.85	0.36	Very Great Extent
2. The school head provides essential services to the learners.	4.84	0.46	Very Great Extent
3. The school head knows the academic performances of the students.	4.72	0.53	Very Great Extent
4. The school head monitors the student organization's operation and implementation.	4.84	0.46	Very Great Extent
5. The school head ensures the interventions provided to the non-performing students.	4.85	0.36	Very Great Extent
Overall Result	4.82	0.44	Very Great Extent

According to the findings, the school heads' involvement in participative leadership in student services was very high, particularly in monitoring students' progress, providing a good learning environment, essential services, and implementing intervention programs for low-performing students. Support for kids appears to be one of the most important duties that a school principal must do. In their study, Pastou et al. (2017) concluded that there was a rising demand for accessible and anonymous services to help students experiencing psychological and/or academic issues. Such issues can result in various adverse consequences, including poor academic performance, poor mental health, decreased study satisfaction, and study dropout. Universities in the United Kingdom currently lack financial resources, and the on-campus mental health services historically provided to students have become more fiscally unsustainable. Compounding the perceived shame of utilizing such services, mental health practitioners have been compelled to accommodate students' growing requirements through online services. Though the proposals were aimed at postsecondary students, they might equally be applied to primary school kids.

Parental Involvement Monitoring

Table 8 displays the distribution of areas of school heads' summary of the manifestation of participative leadership styles in parental involvement monitoring. Indicative of Table 8 on the distribution of areas of school heads' manifestation of participative leadership styles in terms of parental involvement monitoring, indicator number 5 on The school head invites and accommodates the parents when there are school activities obtained the highest computed mean of 4.85 and standard deviation of 0.45, interpreted as Very Great Extent. In contrast, indicator number 3, The school head has a unique support program for the parents during special occasions, obtained the lowest computed mean of 4.64 and standard deviation of 0.73. Generally, the data regarding manifestation of school heads' participative learning regarding parental involvement monitoring yielded an overall mean of 4.76, interpreted as a Very Great Extent. The standard deviation of 0.58 pointed to a moderate range of responses, reflecting some diversity in the perceptions or experiences of the school head's effectiveness in maintaining communication and engaging parents. While the overall assessment is positive, the SD showed that there were varying degrees to which the respondents felt these initiatives.

Table 8. *School heads' manifestation of participative leadership styles in terms of parental involvement monitoring*

Indicators	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1. The school head maintains communication linkage with the parents.	4.78	0.50	Very Great Extent
2. The school head has a parental involvement mentoring and recognition program.	4.75	0.51	Very Great Extent
3. The school head has a unique support program for the parents during special occasions.	4.64	0.73	Very Great Extent
4. The school head assists the parents.	4.75	0.64	Very Great Extent
5. The school head invites and accommodates the parents when there are school activities.	4.85	0.45	Very Great Extent
Overall Result	4.76	0.58	Very Great Extent

The data implied that the school heads' extent of participative leadership on parental involvement monitoring demonstrated high engagement and linkages in strengthening the parents' participation and recognition for school improvement and student academic progress. The data confirmed the school head's participative leadership style to the stakeholders, particularly the parents. According to Llego (2022), there are several reasons why parents should be active in their child's education. One explanation is that parental participation can lead to children performing better academically. Parents who are active in their kids' education can guarantee their child receives the best education possible. Another reason parents should be active in their child's education because it can strengthen the parent-child bond. When parents participate in their kid's education, they can assist in building trust and communication between parent and child. This can assist to strengthen and enhance the parent-child bond.

Community Linkages

Table 9 shows the distribution of areas of school heads' summary of manifestation of participative leadership styles in terms of community linkages. As can be discerned in the tabular presentation of data, from the five indicators: number 1, The school head knows the members of the Sangguniang Barangay and other important stakeholders in the community, obtained the highest computed mean of 4.77 and the standard deviation of 0.48, interpreted as Very Great Extent while number 2, The school head has a program for parents' The school head attends and participates in the meetings that are regularly held in the barangay obtained the lowest computed mean of 4.40 and standard deviation of 0.74, interpreted as Very Great Extent. Aseemingly, the overall mean was computed to 4.62, interpreted as Strongly Agree. The standard deviation of 0.60 suggested a moderate dispersion in perceptions regarding the school head's community involvement. This indicates that while there was a general recognition of their very great extent of involvement, experiences vary among respondents. It was glaring that the school heads' extent in participative leadership on community linkages showed high connections, especially in tapping external stakeholders such as LGUs and Sangguniang Kabataan. In addition, the school heads actively involve the external stakeholders in conferences, celebrations, and outreach events. These were effective indicators of connectivity towards school improvement, which involved using facilities, infrastructure, and learning resources through collaborative efforts of LGUs, particularly the Local School Board.

Table 9. *School heads' manifestation of participative leadership styles in terms of community linkages*

Indicators	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1. The school head knows the Sangguniang Barangay members and other important community stakeholders.	4.77	0.48	Very Great Extent
2. The school head has a program for parents. The head attends and participates in the meetings that are regularly held in the barangay.	4.40	0.74	Very Great Extent
3. The school head attends and participates in the meetings regularly held in the municipality.	4.73	0.52	Very Great Extent
4. When necessary, the school head participates in the barangay council meetings and attends outreach events.	4.58	0.65	Very Great Extent
5. The school head cooperates and joins all the municipal events and celebrations.	4.65	0.57	Very Great Extent
Overall Result	4.62	0.60	Very Great Extent

The findings are consistent with Qaralleh's (2021) findings on the importance of school leaders in establishing community collaboration. Even though the phrase "community involvement" was used in this study. Qaralleh's study demonstrated a significant propensity for the study samples to develop the performance of school administration regarding Community Partnership (CP), emphasizing the relevance of this collaboration for the school to achieve its goals. The school leaders also attempted to implement a variety of methods to develop CP to improve the educational environment, establish communication with various community institutions, and implement what the Saudi Vision 2030 calls for, which is to create a safe and positive school climate by providing

school facilities for the local community as well as accelerating school development through the external environment represented by the local community. This also means that the school administration has an unorthodox mindset of striving for knowledge growth and constructing an aware and educated generation whose responsibilities emerge in the local community.

Summary

Table 10 exhibits the extent of school heads' manifestation of participative leadership style based on different areas. Table 10 provides an overview of the extent of school heads' manifestation of participative leadership style based on different areas. From the table, data revealed that the school heads' manifestation of participative leadership style on student services revealed a Very Great Extent shown by the highest computed mean of 4.82 and standard deviation of 0.06. At the same time, community linkages obtained the lowest computed mean of 4.62 and standard deviation of 0.15, revealed a Very Great Extent. In sum, all the areas garnered an overall mean of 4.73, interpreted as a Very Great Extent. The standard deviation of approximately 0.12 for the listed areas suggested a low to moderate spread of responses around the mean. This indicated that the perceptions or experiences of the respondents were quite consistent with each other, with relatively small deviations from the average. The low average SD pointed to a strong consensus on the effectiveness of the school's supervisory role, student services, parental involvement monitoring, and community linkages, as evaluated by the respondents.

Table 10. School heads' summary of the manifestation of participative leadership style

Areas	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1. Supervisory Role	4.73	0.17	Very Great Extent
2. Student Services	4.82	0.06	Very Great Extent
3. Parental Involvement Monitoring	4.76	0.08	Very Great Extent
4. Community Linkages	4.62	0.15	Very Great Extent
Overall Result	4.73	0.12	Very Great Extent

The school heads' extent of participative leadership in all aspects of school administration meant strong performance in supervisory roles, student support, parental involvement, mentoring, and community linkages. According to Khassawne and Elrehail (2022), the participative leadership paradigm has received substantial empirical attention due to its generalizability and adaptability to varied organizational settings. The underlying notion of leadership being freely and authentically expressive of thinking processes to ensure the prioritized accomplishment of each subordinate underpins the concept of participative leadership. Such an approach yields ethical and beneficial job outcomes.

3.3 Problems Encountered in Participative Leadership Style

Supervisory Role

This study identified several recurring themes in school leaders' participative leadership practices. Notably, resistance to change, lack of cooperation among staff and stakeholders, and insufficient time to fulfill leadership responsibilities emerged as significant challenges (Table 11).

Table 11. Problems encountered in the participative leadership style in terms of the supervisory role

Themes	Challenges Encountered	Sample Responses from School Heads
Resistance to Change	Teachers hesitate to adopt new teaching methods and administrative changes.	"There are times that teachers find it difficult to embrace changes when directed to implement teaching techniques. It requires school heads, like me, to practice the virtue of patience to understand the situations of teachers better." – Mr. Grand
	Teachers avoid participation in new programs or initiatives.	"Some teachers hesitate to participate in the programs initiated by other teachers or the school head." – Mr. Ruling
Lack of Cooperation	Some teachers remain in their comfort zones and resist leadership involvement.	"Some teachers resist change. They are hesitant to share their opinions and talents because they do not want to be discovered." – Mr. Directing
	Teachers show reluctance in collaborative decision-making.	"Not all teachers are cooperative and participate in all decisions for the good of the community and learners." – Mr. Chief
	Resistance to supervision from delegated leaders (e.g., Head Teachers).	"They follow if I am around, but if the OIC is involved, they are not submitting to the supervision. Some are hardheaded, especially the older teachers." – Mr. Uppermost
	Some teachers do not recognize the authority of Head Teachers when the principal is absent.	"The teachers have different perceptions of supervision. If I am away, then the Head Teachers supervise, but they do not accept the HT as their superior." – Mr. Predominant
Insufficient Time	School heads struggle to balance multiple responsibilities.	"Inadequate time to provide instructional leadership and supervision is consistently an identified impediment by school administrators." – Mr. Dominant
	Urgent administrative tasks interfere with instructional supervision.	"Sometimes during monitoring and observation, I cannot finish due to urgent tasks to accomplish, but to ensure that the head teacher will do these things." – Mr. Managing

School heads implementing participative leadership face challenges, including resistance to change, lack of cooperation, and insufficient time. Teachers' reluctance to adopt new strategies hinders progress, requiring patience and targeted interventions (Ibrahim et al., 2013; Prieto, 2019). Lack of cooperation arises when teachers resist collaborative decision-making, emphasizing the need for leadership strategies that foster engagement (Meyer et al., 2023; Bevan & Flores, 2021). Additionally, time constraints due to administrative and instructional duties impact leadership effectiveness (De Jong et al., 2017; Wise, 2015). Addressing these challenges requires structured support systems, including leadership training and mentorship programs, strengthening participative leadership.

Student Services

The study revealed various challenges school heads encountered in student services while practicing participative leadership. These challenges were categorized into two major themes: students' personal problems and lack of interest in school programs, projects, and activities (PPAs). Table 12 presents these themes, the specific challenges identified, and selected responses from participants.

Table 12. Problems encountered in the participative leadership style in terms of student services

Themes	Challenges Encountered	Sample Responses from School Heads
Personal Problems of Students	Students face serious personal issues such as health concerns, early pregnancy, and involvement in conflicts.	"I am giving my full attention to students facing serious health conditions, personal problems like early pregnancy, and troubles like student fights. We conduct guidance and counseling to help them rebuild their reputation and complete their studies." – Mr. Directing
	Absenteeism and tardiness due to personal and external factors.	"External problems that involve non-academic issues of students, such as absenteeism and tardiness, are common challenges." – Mr. Predominant
Lack of Interest of Students in PPAs	Family problems and financial difficulties hinder students' education.	"Some of the problems I encountered are related to family issues, lack of parental involvement, and financial problems, which affect students' education." – Mr. Uppermost
	Students show unwillingness to participate in school programs, projects, and activities.	"Some students are not interested in our organization's goals and advocacy due to a lack of encouragement and motivation, maybe because of the two-year pandemic." – Ms. Sovereign
	Students feel discouraged and unmotivated.	"Learners are discouraged and not motivated." – Mr. Directing
	Students have difficulty focusing on academic and extracurricular activities.	"Lack of focus among learners is a persistent problem." – Mrs. Topmost

The study identified key challenges in student services under participative leadership, particularly personal problems and lack of interest in school activities. Students' issues, including health, absenteeism, early pregnancy, and financial struggles, affected academic performance. Julal (2012) emphasized that institutional support, such as counseling and financial aid, is crucial in addressing these concerns. Khan et al. (2019) noted that absenteeism remains a long-standing issue impacting achievement, while Daud et al. (2018) and Deng et al. (2022) highlighted financial struggles and parental involvement as critical factors in student success. Lack of interest in school programs was another concern, with many attributing it to the pandemic's impact. Al-Muslawi & Hamid (2020) identified external and internal distractions as significant barriers to learning. To address these challenges, schools must strengthen student support systems, enhance parental involvement, and implement strategies to boost motivation and participation.

Parental Involvement Monitoring

The study identified several challenges school leaders faced in monitoring parental involvement while practicing participative leadership. These challenges were categorized into two major themes: lack of cooperation and tendency to overpower. Table 13 presents these themes, the specific challenges identified, and selected responses from participants.

Table 13. Problems encountered in the participative leadership style in terms of parental involvement monitoring

Themes	Challenges Encountered	Sample Responses from School Heads
Lack of Cooperation	Some parents do not actively participate in school programs, meetings, and conferences.	"Some parents are not cooperative regarding their children's academic behavior. They are not responsive to letters for conferences. Only PTA officers are active, and only 75% of parents attend the Quarterly General Assembly." – Mr. Dominant
	Parents have negative perceptions of school involvement, making it challenging to engage them.	"Changing parents' perceptions about school participation is a challenging task. However, if they see your dedication and goals for their children's benefit, they will eventually become participative." – Mr. Ruling
Tendency to Overpower	Some parents are less interested in the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) than the elementary level.	"Some parents do not attend meetings and conferences. They are not active in the PTA/Council unlike in the elementary department." – Mr. Predominant
	Some parents overstep their boundaries in decision-making and school policies.	"Some parents/guardians tend to overpower and exceed their boundaries." – Mr. Directing
	Some educated parents show less respect for teachers, particularly those whose children are in the star section.	"Some educated parents have less respect for teachers, especially those of students in the star section. They feel they are the authority, and the teachers are merely servants. Their experiences with other school heads could influence this." – Mr. Uppermost

The study identified key challenges in parental involvement under participative leadership, particularly lack of cooperation and a tendency to overpower school authority. Lack of cooperation was evident as some parents remained unresponsive to school initiatives, conferences, and meetings. Demirbulak, as cited by Gokalp et al. (2021), emphasized that parents play a crucial role in a child's cognitive and emotional development, making school-home collaboration essential for academic success. However, schools must actively engage parents rather than attribute low participation solely to them. Effective strategies include parent-teacher conferences, strengthened communication, and home visits to foster engagement. Some parents also tended to assert authority over school affairs, particularly those with strong educational backgrounds. Gunawan (2020) and Oundo (2014) highlighted how attitudes shape actions, with parental perspectives influencing their level of involvement. Samal (2012) noted that positive parental attitudes enhance student motivation and academic achievement, while negative perceptions hinder learning. Policymakers and school leaders must cultivate a school culture that encourages mutual respect, promotes parental awareness, and strengthens collaboration to optimize student success.

Community Linkages

The study identified key challenges school leaders faced in establishing effective community linkages while practicing participative leadership. These challenges were categorized into two major themes: lack of cooperation and information dissemination issues. Table 14 presents these themes, the specific challenges identified, and selected responses from participants.

Table 14. Problems encountered in the participative leadership style in terms of community linkages

Themes	Challenges Encountered	Sample Responses from School Heads
Lack of Cooperation	Limited community participation in school programs and activities.	"Some parents are not cooperative with the school." – Mr. Dominant
	Open communication exists, but community members are not actively engaged in school affairs.	"There is open communication, but the community is not that active in the school affairs." – Mr. Uppermost
Information Dissemination Issues	Limited collaboration between schools, parents, and the community affects educational goal achievement.	"Schools, teachers, parents, and the community should contribute more to cooperative activities beyond just words on paper. Partnerships must be developed through practice." – Mr. Directing
	Community members lack awareness of DepEd policies and school-related announcements. There is a need to explain DepEd issuances to the community before engaging them in school matters.	"Similar to parental involvement monitoring, many stakeholders lack information about the latest DepEd concerns, issuances, and policies." – Ms. Sovereign "To make community linkage more dynamic and participative, I explain DepEd issuances first, because most of the time, the community members lack awareness of the school situation." – Mr. Grand

The study identified challenges in community linkages under participative leadership, particularly lack of collaboration and ineffective information dissemination, which hinder school heads from engaging the community. Minimal parental and community involvement in school activities weakens educational outcomes, as cooperation between families, schools, and the community is essential (Fatimah et al., 2023). Another concern was the limited awareness of DepEd policies and school initiatives. DepEd Order No. 26, s. 2022, highlights the role of School Governance Councils (SGC) in promoting shared responsibility among stakeholders. Strengthening communication channels and fostering inclusive governance will enhance collaboration, ensuring effective education service delivery and student welfare.

3.4 Solutions to Challenges Experienced in Participative Leadership Style

The study identified key solutions that school leaders employed to address challenges encountered while practicing participative leadership. These solutions were categorized into three major themes: support from the school community, proper communication, and stakeholder engagement. Table 15 presents these themes, the specific solutions implemented, and selected responses from participants. The study highlighted school heads' solutions to challenges in participative leadership, emphasizing the importance of school community support, proper communication, and stakeholder engagement. Effective leadership relies on collaboration, transparency, and involvement from all sectors to ensure smooth school operations and improved educational outcomes. School heads recognized the value of support from the school community in addressing challenges. They emphasized open-mindedness, resource utilization, and shared decision-making as key strategies. Effective school-based management (SBM) fosters decentralization, empowering school leaders and stakeholders to take responsibility for educational progress. By promoting collaboration and accountability, SBM enhances teacher motivation, student performance, and overall school quality (Cornito, 2021; Mailool et al., 2020).

Table 15. Solutions implemented by school leaders in community linkages

Themes	Solutions Implemented	Sample Responses from School Heads
Support from the School Community	Encouraging a positive mindset and seeking support from colleagues.	"I always have a positive mindset and accept support if necessary. Conducting brainstorming of possible solutions and putting these solutions into practice is a great help." – Mr. Directing
	Utilizing available resources and assigning responsibilities to key personnel.	"Department heads monitor teachers' and students' performance daily. We have different group chats where we can immediately inform, analyze, and resolve issues with quick solutions." – Mr. Paramount
	Practicing transparency and collaborative decision-making.	"Through a thorough decision-making process with the concerned people, challenges can easily be resolved. Transparency is necessary for good governance." – Mr. Ascendant
Proper Communication	Involving staff, coordinators, and other personnel in problem-solving and decision-making.	"I involve my staff and school personnel in the solution. We document our meetings and discussions to ensure accountability and immediate response to issues." – Mr. Managing
	Implementing open-door policies to encourage dialogue with teachers and stakeholders.	"I practice open-door policies so that teachers know they can approach me anytime with their queries. Transparency and adherence to DepEd issuances guide me as a participative leader." – Mr. Grand
	Establishing clear communication channels and setting boundaries.	"Setting limitations, open communication, and vision sharing are vital to overcoming challenges in participative leadership." – Mr. Directing
Engaging the Stakeholders	Encouraging collaboration and active teacher involvement in decision-making.	"School administrators should actively seek input from team members to ensure that everyone's perspective is valued." – Mr. Directing
	Partnering with community members and local government units to support school initiatives.	"The school taps the capable members of the community for support, as well as the local government unit. The Parents-Teachers Association also helps through resolutions for students' health and well-being." – Mr. Dominant
	Strengthening communication with parents and stakeholders.	"Intensify communication with parents and stakeholders, and include internal and external education partners in planning and implementing the School Improvement Plan." – Mr. Dominant
	Encouraging stakeholder participation in school activities and decision-making.	"Engaging learners, teachers, parents, and the community effectively resolves issues and challenges. They realize the value of planning, implementation, and school accomplishments." – Mr. Ruling

Alongside community support, proper communication plays a crucial role in participative leadership. Open communication channels, ethical leadership, and adherence to DepEd guidelines create a transparent environment where issues are addressed efficiently. A principal's ability to foster a positive atmosphere encourages teamwork and ensures that decision-making aligns with student and teacher needs. Encouraging stakeholder input strengthens collaboration and enhances organizational efficiency (Mayo & Woolley, 2016). Furthermore, engaging stakeholders ensures sustained school improvement. Active participation of parents, local government units, and community members in planning and decision-making fosters shared responsibility and strengthens school-community ties. Parental involvement positively influences student motivation and academic performance, while strong partnerships between schools and communities create mutual benefits that enhance educational and social development (Hashmi & Akhter, 2013; Lewallen et al., 2015). School heads effectively address leadership challenges by integrating these strategies, ensuring a more inclusive, dynamic, and responsive educational environment.

3.5 School Heads' Good Practices in School Management and Administration

Table 16 presents the key themes identified in the qualitative findings, emphasizing the good practices implemented by school leaders to overcome challenges in school management and administration. These practices highlight the significance of participative leadership, stakeholder involvement, resilience, and effective communication. The study identified effective practices that school heads developed to overcome challenges in implementing participative leadership, highlighting the active participation of stakeholders, resiliency, and proper communication as key drivers of school growth. Active stakeholder participation fosters collaboration and shared decision-making, reinforcing the idea that school leadership is a collective effort. School heads recognize that involving teachers, parents, students, and the community strengthens relationships, transforms weaknesses into strengths, and enhances overall school management (Goods, 2014; Bangayan-Manera, 2020).

Resiliency among school heads emerges as a crucial trait developed through experience. Facing challenges strengthens leadership skills, increases awareness of limitations, and refines decision-making processes. Adversity fosters adaptability, optimism, and the ability to navigate uncertainties effectively (Taylor, 2013; Doney, 2013). By learning from past difficulties, school heads build a culture of perseverance that benefits both administrators and stakeholders in solving future issues collaboratively. Proper communication further strengthens participative leadership by promoting transparency, trust, and shared understanding between schools and stakeholders. Open dialogue ensures that decisions are well-informed and widely accepted, fostering a cooperative school environment (Locklear, 2019). Modern communication tools, such as social media and digital platforms, enhance engagement and responsiveness, aligning with evolving stakeholder expectations (King, 2015; Greene-Clemmons

& Flood, 2013). By integrating these practices—stakeholder participation, resiliency, and effective communication—school leaders create an inclusive, adaptive, and transparent leadership approach, driving continuous improvement and sustainable school development.

Table 16. *School heads' good practices in school management and administration*

Theme	Findings	Sample Responses from School Heads
Active Participation of Stakeholders	School leaders emphasized the importance of collaboration and stakeholder involvement in decision-making and school governance. Engaging parents, teachers, students, and the local community enhances school programs and activities.	<i>"The school head cannot do it alone. That is why support and collaboration of all concerned persons is of prime importance."</i> -Mr. Paramount <i>"I practice participative leadership through the involvement of all people in our school. Collaboration is important in decision-making to transform weaknesses into strengths."</i> -Mr. Managing <i>"Shared responsibility is exerted for any success of a team or organization."</i> -Mr. Directing
Resiliency	School heads demonstrated resilience by adapting to challenges, strengthening their leadership skills, and learning from difficult experiences. Overcoming obstacles made them more effective in decision-making and problem-solving.	<i>"By solving the problems that come, I become stronger as a principal and more prepared for the next problems."</i> -Mr. Chief <i>"Challenges make the school head tougher and encourage stakeholders to participate, especially when issues affect their children's learning."</i> -Mr. Ruling <i>"Having encountered many challenges, I am now more aware of my strengths and weaknesses as a leader and more careful in decision-making."</i> -Mr. Grand
Proper Communication	Effective communication strategies, such as open-door policies and collaborative discussions, were key in fostering positive relationships between the school and its stakeholders. Transparent communication ensured that all parties were well-informed and engaged in school activities.	<i>"Sitting and talking about problems, challenges, and possible solutions should be the final step to resolving issues."</i> -Mr. Manager <i>"By solving these challenges through communication, we get to discuss all decisions, and all parties adhere to what has been agreed upon."</i> -Mr. Directing

3.6 Benefits of Participative Leadership

The study demonstrated that implementing participative leadership yields several key benefits (see Table 17), including a more enhanced work environment, stronger collaboration, and increased teacher engagement. These advantages collectively contribute to improved organizational performance and a more dynamic, inclusive educational setting.

Table 17. *Benefits of participative leadership*

Theme	Benefits	Sample Responses from School Heads
Enhanced Work Environment	Participative leadership fosters a positive work environment by improving relationships among administrators, teachers, and staff. It enhances job satisfaction, trust, and collaboration.	<i>"There are several benefits in the organization and teachers of having participative leadership. This helps to fulfill an organization's goals and motivate the teachers to do well, produces more effective teachers, boosts one's morals, improves the workforce's productivity, improves a harmonious relationship, and promotes a positive outlook in life."</i> -Mr. Manager <i>"The teachers are not hesitant to express their insights and opinions for the students' development as well as to their fellow mentors to attain harmonious relationships and update themselves for professional growth."</i> -Mr. Superior <i>"It increases the teachers' satisfaction and develops trust in one another because they feel they are part of the decision-making."</i> -Ms. Sovereign
Collaboration	Encourages teamwork by involving teachers in decision-making, school programs, and initiatives. This process fosters shared responsibility and enhances organizational transparency.	<i>"When teachers are part of decision-making, they feel valued, and they become more proactive in contributing ideas that benefit the school."</i> -Mr. Strategic <i>"I have seen that collaboration among teachers strengthens teamwork, which helps implement school programs successfully."</i> -Ms. Visionary <i>"Through participative leadership, teachers feel that their voices matter, encouraging them to work together towards a shared goal."</i> -Mr. Guiding
Increased Teachers' Engagement	Teachers become more involved in decision-making, feel empowered, and develop a sense of ownership over school initiatives.	<i>"Everyone is encouraged to speak their mind and become receptive to situations and challenges."</i> -Mr. Chief <i>"Increased teachers' engagement, when each member can take part in high-level decision-making, they can feel empowered in their roles."</i> -Mr. Dominant <i>"It is beneficial that all have a voice in the organization. Moreover, I think the members would have a sense of ownership. For the teacher, their voice would also be heard. They will work hard for the good of the school and the community as well."</i> -Mr. Ascendant

The findings highlight that participative leadership has significant advantages for school environments, particularly in fostering an enhanced work environment, collaboration, and increased teacher engagement. Creating a positive atmosphere where teachers and administrators collaborate effectively leads to increased satisfaction and motivation. Jain and Kaur (2014) emphasize that a workplace that prioritizes employee well-being enhances productivity and fosters harmonious relationships. Saidi et al. (2019) further highlight that a positive work environment, where supervisors engage employees in decision-making, directly contributes to improved job performance. Decision-making processes that include teachers create a sense of collective responsibility, as emphasized by Puni et al. (2018). Employees who feel valued and respected are more likely to contribute

meaningfully to the organization (Jones, 2013). Quick and Nelson (2013) further assert that participative leadership increases workplace transparency, boosting morale and organizational success. A decentralized decision-making approach, such as School-Based Management (SBM), ensures that teachers actively shape policies and school governance (Brown, 2011). Morenike (2019) stresses that engaging teachers in key decisions leads to a sense of ownership, positively impacting school and community development. School heads can cultivate a supportive and productive educational environment by implementing participative leadership strategies, ultimately benefiting educators and students.

3.7 Integration of Qualitative and Quantitative Findings

This research study integrates qualitative and quantitative data to comprehensively understand the support mechanisms that enable participative leadership among school heads. The qualitative findings capture the lived experiences of school leaders, highlighting the specific ways they foster collaboration, recognize teacher contributions, and facilitate professional development. The quantitative findings confirm that most school heads implement participative leadership, while the qualitative insights reveal how they navigate challenges. Furthermore, the study's practical implications are reinforced by the development of an academic mentorship program, which directly stems from the research findings. This program addresses real-world challenges and enhances leadership development among future educational leaders in the Schools Division of Bulacan. Ultimately, this research underscores the value of participative leadership in achieving educational goals and provides actionable recommendations for improving school leadership practices.

3.8 Proposed Participative Leadership Style Academic Mentorship Program

This section presents the study's findings on school heads' manifestation of participative leadership and its implementation across four key areas: teachers, students, parents, and the community. Results indicate a "Very Participative" outcome and a "Very Great Extent" of implementation. The qualitative data revealed various reflective themes, none considered negative responses. Instead, these insights informed the development of the training plan, which includes a structured mentorship program to strengthen participative leadership among school heads. In the Schools Division of Bulacan, school leaders employ different leadership styles, leading to varied reactions from subordinate teachers, ranging from acceptance to resistance. The administration's failure to consider essential factors can hinder organizational success. To address this, the mentorship program follows a structured flow: an initial orientation and goal-setting session, followed by discussions on leadership theories and their application. School heads will be paired with experienced mentors to guide them in collaborative planning, decision-making, and conflict resolution.

Furthermore, the program integrates classroom observations and feedback mechanisms, fostering a culture of instructional leadership. Through sessions on community involvement and stakeholder engagement, school heads will develop strategies to strengthen relationships with parents and the broader community. The program culminates with a reflection and sharing of best practices, allowing participants to assess their growth and refine their leadership approaches. Participative leadership, or democratic leadership, is integral to school leadership practices. While some may perceive it as a novel approach, many school heads already incorporate its principles. Effective participative leaders guide their teachers, encourage feedback, and promote shared decision-making, recognizing teachers' crucial role in school success. The mentorship program thus serves as a key initiative to further enhance these leadership competencies, ensuring a more collaborative and effective educational environment.

4.0 Conclusions

The statistical analysis showed that most Bulacan school heads employ the Participative Leadership Style. While all computed means indicated a consistent "Always" response, slight variations in the numerical sequence did not impact on the overall interpretation of results. School heads in the Schools Division of Bulacan (SDO Bulacan) exhibit participative leadership styles across various domains, including supervisory roles, student services, parental involvement monitoring, and community linkages. Their ability to effectively exercise their duties and obligations, despite the demands of their workload, underscores their commitment to serving the stakeholders of the education system. Despite the widespread implementation of participative leadership, secondary school heads face challenges in fulfilling their roles. However, they demonstrate resilience, adaptability, and problem-solving skills, which allow them to navigate obstacles and maintain their commitment to their schools' success. Their

capacity to find innovative solutions highlights their dedication to continuous improvement and leadership excellence.

This study underscores the need for sustained support mechanisms and professional development initiatives for school heads. In response to this need, an Academic Mentorship Program has been established to assist aspiring educational leaders in SDO Bulacan. This program is designed to equip future school heads with the necessary leadership competencies, foster collaboration, and enhance their ability to implement participative leadership effectively. Future research may build on this study by exploring the long-term impact of participative leadership on school performance, teacher retention, and student outcomes. Additionally, further studies could investigate the effectiveness of mentorship programs in leadership development, particularly in addressing specific challenges school heads face. Expanding this research to include comparative analyses across different school divisions or educational contexts could provide a broader perspective on best practices in participative leadership. Strengthening these areas will contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of educational leadership dynamics and inform policy-making for continuous leadership enhancement.

5.0 Contributions of Author

This research was presented at an international research conference, reviewed by research experts, and subsequently approved by the Research Committee of the Schools Division of Bulacan and the Ethics Review Committee of Bulacan State University, ensuring its credibility and adherence to ethical standards.

6.0 Funding

This research was conducted independently and did not receive financial support or funding from external grants, organizations, or institutions. The researcher provided all resources and materials used in the study, ensuring that the findings were based solely on their own efforts and without any external financial influence.

7.0 Conflict of Interests

The researcher declares no conflict of interest related to this study. The research was conducted with complete impartiality, and no personal, financial, or professional interests influenced the design, execution, or outcomes of the study. All findings and interpretations are solely the result of the researcher's objective analysis, with no external factors impacting the research process.

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