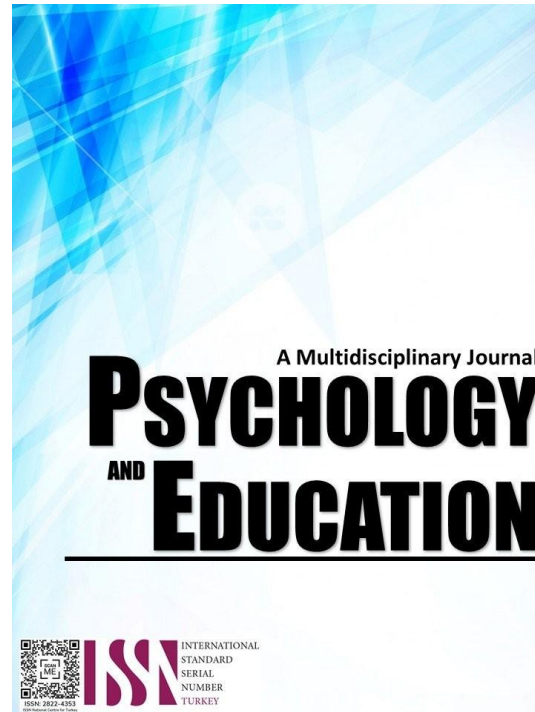


EXPLORING TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES ON LEADERSHIP STYLES IN RELATION TO GENDER DIFFERENCES



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Exploring Teachers' Perspectives on Leadership Styles in Relation to Gender Differences

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Abstract

This study examined teachers' perceptions of their school administrators' leadership styles—transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire—in public elementary schools in Barili District 1. Guided by the descriptive–correlational research design, the study sought to determine the extent to which teachers perceive these leadership styles and whether such perceptions vary when grouped according to administrator gender, teacher gender, and teaching experience. Data were gathered from 146 teachers using an adopted and validated survey instrument based on the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) and analyzed using descriptive statistics, independent samples t-tests, one-way ANOVA, and Pearson correlation. Results revealed that administrators were perceived to demonstrate high levels of transformational ($M = 4.41$) and transactional leadership ($M = 4.34$), whereas laissez-faire leadership was rated moderate ($M = 2.98$). Significant differences emerged based on administrator gender, with female administrators receiving higher ratings in transformational and transactional leadership and lower ratings in laissez-faire behaviors ($p < .001$). Teaching experience also predicted significant variations in transformational leadership perceptions ($p = .024$), with more experienced teachers reporting higher transformational leadership and lower laissez-faire leadership. Meanwhile, no significant differences were found based on teacher gender. The findings underscore the importance of gender-responsive leadership development and the need for targeted administrative support for less experienced teachers. Insights from this study directly informed the creation of a School-Based Leadership Development Program aimed at strengthening effective leadership practices across the district.

Keywords: *laissez-faire leadership, school leadership, teacher perceptions, transactional leadership, transformational leadership*

Introduction

Leadership in educational institutions plays a critical role in shaping organizational effectiveness and the psychological processes that influence teaching and learning. In school settings, leadership extends beyond administrative authority to encompass cognitive, motivational, and relational functions that affect how teachers interpret policies, evaluate support, and engage with institutional goals. School heads thus function not only as managers but also as social and psychological agents whose leadership behaviors shape teachers' perceptions, attitudes, and professional commitment (He, Guo, & Anulika, 2024).

A dominant framework in leadership research is the Full Range Leadership Model proposed by Bass and Avolio (1995), which categorizes leadership into transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire styles. Transformational leadership emphasizes vision, ethical conduct, motivation, and individualized consideration; transactional leadership focuses on performance monitoring, contingent rewards, and corrective feedback; and laissez-faire leadership reflects minimal involvement and delayed decision-making (Khan et al., 2020; Than & Quang, 2022). Empirical evidence consistently shows that transformational leadership is associated with positive psychological outcomes, including teacher motivation, trust, and job satisfaction (Abuhassira, Razak, & Hoque, 2024).

In the Philippine context, studies report similar patterns. Bermudo (2017) and Ramos and Castillo (2018) found that teachers commonly perceive school heads as transformational, particularly in terms of mentoring and collaboration. Manalasan (2018) further emphasized that leadership effectiveness in public schools depends on balancing instructional supervision with relational sensitivity. However, most local studies rely on descriptive or qualitative approaches or focus on leaders' self-perceptions rather than teachers' cognitive evaluations of leadership behavior (Dela Cruz, 2020).

Teachers' perceptions of leadership constitute a critical yet underexamined dimension of educational administration. Leadership effectiveness is socially constructed and mediated through teachers' interpretations of leaders' behaviors, which influence trust, cooperation, and willingness to engage in school initiatives (Harris, 2013; Çoban et al., 2020). Moreover, leadership perceptions are shaped by gender-related cognitive schemas. Gender Role Theory and Social Role Theory posit that leadership evaluations are influenced by culturally embedded expectations regarding male and female behavior (Eagly, 1987; Eagly et al., 2000). Philippine studies corroborate this, showing that female administrators are often perceived as more transformational and relational, while male administrators are viewed as more authoritative or transactional (Dela Peña & Rosales, 2021; Villanueva, 2020).

Addressing these gaps, the present study employs a quantitative descriptive–correlational design to examine teachers' perceptions of leadership styles in relation to administrator gender and teaching experience in public elementary schools in Barili, Cebu.

Despite extensive international research on leadership styles, limited empirical evidence exists within the Philippine public elementary school context, particularly concerning how gender differences may shape leadership perceptions. This study addresses this gap by examining teachers' perspectives in a localized setting, providing insights that may inform leadership development programs and policy

initiatives within the Philippine education system.

Research Questions

This study sought to investigate teachers' perceptions of leadership styles in relation to gender differences among public elementary schools in Barili District 1 for the school year 2025-2026. Specifically, this study aimed to answer the following questions:

1. What is the demographic profile of the teachers who responded in terms of:
 - 1.1. gender;
 - 1.2. years of teaching experience;
 - 1.3. teaching role; and
 - 1.4. administrator's gender?
2. How do teachers assess school administrators' leadership approaches in terms of:
 - 2.1 transformational leadership;
 - 2.2 transactional leadership; and
 - 2.3 laissez-faire leadership?
3. What is the level of teachers' perceptions of leadership styles in terms of:
 - 3.1 teachers' gender;
 - 3.2 administrators' gender;
 - 3.3 years of teaching experience?
4. Is there a significant difference in the perceived leadership styles of school heads when grouped according to their gender of the school head?
5. Based on the findings, what implications can be drawn for developing gender-responsive leadership programs in public schools?

Literature Review

Educational leadership has been extensively examined through theoretical frameworks that explain how leadership behaviors emerge and how subordinates interpret them. Early leadership research was grounded in Trait Theory, which posits that a combination of inherent and acquired characteristics influences effective leadership. These include emergent traits such as intelligence and confidence, and effectiveness traits such as charisma and adaptability developed through experience (Zafar et al., 2018). Although trait theory has been criticized for overlooking contextual factors, contemporary scholarship recognizes its relevance when linked to leadership perception and gender-related evaluations (Maheshwari & Kha, 2023).

In the context of public elementary schools, where administrators' behaviors are constantly observed and evaluated by teachers, trait-based assumptions may influence how leadership competence is perceived. This connection is particularly relevant to the present study, which examines how teachers interpret leadership styles and whether these interpretations vary across gender-related factors.

Beyond individual traits, leadership effectiveness is more comprehensively explained by Bass and Avolio's Full Range Leadership Model, which categorizes leadership into transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire styles. Transformational leadership emphasizes vision, motivation, mentoring, and integrity, and is consistently associated with higher teacher motivation and organizational commitment (Burns, 1978). Transactional leadership focuses on contingent rewards, monitoring, and corrective feedback, supporting structure and accountability in school settings (Than & Quang, 2022). Laissez-faire leadership, characterized by minimal intervention and decision-making, may allow autonomy but often results in ambiguity and reduced instructional guidance when overused (Thanh & Quang, 2022). Leadership style has been identified as a central determinant of leadership quality and school outcomes (Gryazeva-Dobshinskaya & Dmitrieva, 2019).

These leadership styles provide the primary analytical framework for the present study, particularly in determining the level of teachers' perceptions across transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire dimensions. By grounding the research questions in the Full Range Leadership Model, the study ensures theoretical consistency between leadership constructs and their empirical measurement.

Leadership behavior is also influenced by internal beliefs, particularly self-efficacy, defined as an individual's belief in their capability to achieve desired outcomes (Olusegun et al., 2020). Leaders with high self-efficacy demonstrate persistence, initiative, and resilience, which positively shape leadership practices (Perets et al., 2023). From a gender perspective, self-efficacy intersects with social expectations, as female leaders may underestimate their competence due to stereotypes, while male leaders are often presumed confident by default (Gumah et al., 2021). These dynamics suggest that leadership perceptions are not solely behavior-driven but are also influenced by internal and socially constructed beliefs, reinforcing the importance of examining gender-related variables in leadership studies.

Socio-cognitive and gender-based theories further shape teachers' perceptions of leadership. Social Cognitive Theory explains that perceptions result from the interaction of observed behavior, personal beliefs, and sociocultural context (Sullivan et al., 2019). Social Role Theory and Gender Role Theory suggest that leadership is evaluated through socially prescribed expectations, with men associated with authority and assertiveness and women with nurturance and collaboration (Lindqvist et al., 2020; Samo et al., 2023). Extending



these perspectives, Role Congruity Theory posits that leaders are evaluated more favorably when their behavior aligns with gender-role expectations, leading to differential judgments of male and female leaders even when behaviors are similar (Hentschel et al., 2017; Dupree, 2024).

Taken together, these theoretical frameworks suggest that a complex interaction of behavioral styles, internal efficacy beliefs, and gender-based social expectations shapes leadership perceptions. While international research has extensively explored leadership styles and gender dynamics, limited empirical evidence exists within the context of Philippine public elementary schools, particularly regarding how teachers perceive leadership styles when grouped according to gender-related variables. This gap highlights the need for localized quantitative investigation. The present study addresses this gap by examining the level of teachers' perceptions of transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles and exploring whether these perceptions vary across gender-related groupings. By doing so, the study contributes context-specific evidence to the broader discourse on educational leadership and gender.

Methodology

Research Design

This study examined gender disparities among public elementary school heads in Barili District 1 using a quantitative descriptive correlational design. Teachers completed a structured survey assessing their perceptions of administrators' laissez-faire, transactional, and transformational leadership (Bass & Avolio, 1995). The descriptive component identified overall views without manipulating variables, while the comparative component tested whether perceptions differed by administrator gender, teacher gender, and years of teaching experience. Following Creswell's (2014) guidance, the approach emphasized objectivity, reproducibility, and generalizability. Data were analyzed with frequency distributions, weighted means, standard deviations, t tests, ANOVA, and Pearson correlations at $\alpha = 0.05$. The design provided an empirical, systematic framework to quantify teachers' leadership perceptions and determine the significance of gender related differences in school administration.

Respondents

The study surveyed approximately 146 public elementary teachers from Barili District 1, selected for their direct insight into school administrators' leadership. Sample size was calculated using Slovin's formula (0.05 margin of error, 95 % confidence) to ensure representation. Participation was voluntary with informed consent, and all responses were kept confidential and anonymous in compliance with RA 10173, using coded surveys.

Instrument

The study employed a standardized questionnaire, adapted from Bass and Avolio's (1995) Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire, to quantitatively assess teachers' views on leadership styles and gender inequality among public elementary school heads in Barili District 1. Section I gathered demographic data (gender, teaching role, experience, and head's gender) for profiling and subgroup comparison. Section II presented Likert scale statements (5 = Strongly Agree to 1 = Strongly Disagree) on three leadership styles: Transformational (inspiring, motivating, intellectually stimulating, supportive), Transactional (clear expectations, contingent rewards, management by exception), and Laissez-faire (passive, decision avoidant, limited feedback).

Procedure

The study collected quantitative descriptive correlational survey data from teachers in public elementary schools of Barili District 1, ensuring accuracy, reliability, and ethical compliance. After obtaining formal permission from the District Supervisor and consent from school principals. Participants were selected using a computer-generated random sampling technique after determining the sample size through Slovin's formula. Incomplete or improperly answered questionnaires were excluded from the final analysis. Each received a validated questionnaire with an informed consent form; they had one week (≈ 15 – 20 minutes) to complete it, with reminders sent to maximize participation. Completed surveys were retrieved, sealed, and stored securely; responses were coded for statistical analysis in SPSS, guided by a codebook. Data were kept confidential, retained for no more than five years per the Data Privacy Act (RA 10173), and handled in accordance with DepEd Order No. 49 (2006) and professional ethical standards.

Data Analysis

Survey data were encoded, processed, and analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences SPSS. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize respondents' demographic characteristics (teacher gender, administrator gender, position, and years of experience) through frequencies and percentages.

To address Research Question 3, which focused on determining the level of teachers' perceptions of leadership styles, descriptive statistics – specifically mean and standard deviation – were computed for transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership dimensions. These statistics were used to describe the overall perception levels of each leadership style.

Inferential statistics were employed to examine group differences and relationships in accordance with the corresponding research questions. Independent samples t-tests were conducted to compare perception scores based on teacher gender and administrator gender. One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), followed by Tukey HSD post hoc tests, was used to determine differences across teaching



experience categories (0-5, 6-10, 11-15, and 16+ years). Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients were computed to assess the relationship between years of teaching experience and leadership style perceptions, as well as the interrelationships among the leadership dimensions. All inferential tests were conducted at a significant level of $p < .05$.

Survey items utilized a five-point Likert scale. Responses were numerically coded and averaged to generate composite scores for each leadership dimension. Higher mean scores (approaching 5) indicated stronger agreement or higher perceived effectiveness, while lower scores (approaching 1) reflected weaker perceptions. An interpretative scale was applied to classify perception levels (Very Low to Very High) and was consistently used across all descriptive tables to aid interpretation.

Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to ethical principles of beneficence, fairness, and respect, obtaining approval from the DepEd District Supervisor and school principals. The proposal and survey underwent ethical review, and teachers received written informed consent outlining the study’s purpose, methods, risks, benefits, and voluntary nature, with the right to withdraw without penalty. Only participants who signed the consent form took part. Anonymity was ensured by assigning codes to surveys; no names were recorded, results were reported in aggregate, and data were securely stored and deleted after analysis, complying with Republic Act No. 10173 (Data Privacy Act of 2012). The survey posed minimal risk, asking teachers about professional perceptions of leadership styles, and respondents could skip any uncomfortable questions. Findings will be disseminated responsibly, acknowledging contributions while preserving anonymity in line with DepEd Order No. 49, s. 2006.

Results

This section presents, analyzes, and interprets data collected from 146 teacher respondents regarding their perceptions of school administrators’ leadership styles - laissez-faire, transactional, and transformational.

Data were analyzed with SPSS using descriptive (frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations) and inferential (independent-samples t-tests, one-way ANOVA with Tukey post-hoc tests, Pearson correlations) statistics. These analyses aimed to (1) describe the respondents’ demographic profile; (2) gauge administrators’ perceived leadership styles; (3) test for significant perception differences across selected demographic variables; and (4) analyze how teaching experience and leadership styles are related.

The sequence in which the findings are shown corresponds to the study questions. Tables and statistical outputs clearly illustrate the findings, and the accompanying interpretations highlight their significance and implications. This systematic analysis provides comprehensive insight into how teachers perceive leadership behaviors in their schools and how these perceptions differ by gender and professional characteristics.

Table 1. Demographic Profile of Respondents

		Teacher's Gender		
		Population (F)	Frequency (f)	Percentage %
Valid	Male	3	3	2.1
	Female	143	143	97.9
	Total	146	146	100.0
		Administrator's Gender		
		Population (F)	Frequency (f)	Percentage %
Valid	Male Principal	50	50	34.2
	Female Principal	96	96	65.8
	Total	146	146	100.0
		Years of Teaching Experience		
		Population (F)	Frequency (f)	Percentage %
Valid	0-5 yrs	13	13	8.9
	6-10 yrs	49	49	33.6
	11-15 yrs	46	46	31.5
	16 yrs and above	38	38	26.0
	Total	146	146	100.0
		Teaching Role		
		Population (F)	Frequency (f)	Percentage %
Valid	Teacher 1	49	49	33.6
	Teacher 2	20	20	13.7
	Teacher 3	65	65	44.5
	Master Teacher	12	12	8.2
	Total	146	146	100.0

Table 1 displays the demographic profile of the 146 teachers who responded to the study. Under “Teacher’s Gender”, 97.9% of participants were female, and only 2.1% were male, underscoring the persistent female predominance in the teaching profession, especially within basic education.



Regarding the Administrator’s Gender, most teachers reported working under a female principal (65.8%), while a male principal supervised 34.2%. This distribution suggests that female leadership in school administration is more prevalent in the study context.

In terms of Years of Teaching Experience, the greatest number of responders had 6–10 years (33.6%), closely followed by those with 11–15 years (31.5%). Teachers with 16 years or more accounted for 26.0%, while the smallest segment comprised those with 0–5 years of experience (8.9%). Thus, the sample is dominated by mid-career educators with substantial classroom experience.

For the Teaching Role, the largest share of respondents was Teacher III (44.5%), followed by Teacher I (33.6%), Teacher II (13.7%), and Master Teachers (8.2%). This distribution shows that the most participants are in career stages that require moderate to substantial professional experience and competence.

Table 2. Level of Teachers’ Perception of Leadership Styles

	<i>N</i>	<i>Maximum</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Deviation</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
Transformational Leadership Mean	146	5.00	4.4068	.63774	Very High
Transactional Leadership Mean	146	5.00	4.3356	.65892	Very High
Laissez-Faire Leadership Mean	146	5.00	2.9774	.98315	Moderate
Valid N (listwise)	146				

Interpretative Scale: 4.21–5.00 = Very High; 3.41–4.20 = High; 2.61–3.40 = Moderate; 1.81–2.60 = Low; 1.00–1.80 = Very Low.

Table 2 displays descriptive data for teachers’ perceptions of their administrators’ leadership styles - laissez-faire, transactional, and transformational. The results indicate that transformational leadership attained the highest mean ($M = 4.41$, $SD = 0.64$), suggesting that teachers generally “agree” to “strongly agree” that their administrators exhibit transformational leadership behaviors. These include inspiring shared goals, promoting innovation, and supporting professional growth. The relatively small standard deviation further suggests consistency among respondents’ ratings.

Transactional leadership scored a mean of 4.34 ($SD = 0.66$), indicating a high level of perceived leadership. This implies that teachers see their administrators evaluate performance, establish clear standards, and offer helpful criticism. The consistency of scores indicates that transactional practices are commonly recognized across the respondent group.

In contrast, laissez-faire leadership showed a markedly lower mean of 2.98 ($SD = 0.98$), reflecting a moderate perception of leadership. This suggests that teachers occasionally observe passive or avoidant behaviors, such as delayed decision-making, limited supervision, or lack of involvement. The larger standard deviation for this variable implies wider variability in teacher perceptions, meaning that some administrators may exhibit laissez-faire tendencies more than others.

Table 3. Teachers’ Perception of Transformational Leadership

	<i>N</i>		<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Deviation</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
	<i>Valid</i>	<i>Missing</i>			
My school head inspires teachers to pursue shared school goals.	146	0	4.4589	.65524	Very High
My school head provides a clear vision and direction for the school's future.	146	0	4.4247	.70305	Very High
My school head encourages continuous professional development.	146	0	4.3767	.77139	Very High
My school head promotes innovation and creative teaching practices.	146	0	4.3630	.70349	Very High
My school head recognizes and celebrates teachers' achievements.	146	0	4.3151	.73112	Very High
My school head listens attentively to teachers' concerns.	146	0	4.3767	.79776	Very High
My school head models ethical and professional conduct.	146	0	4.4932	.71676	Very High
My school head motivates teachers to go beyond their comfort zones.	146	0	4.3973	.75639	Very High
My school head fosters teamwork and collaboration among teachers.	146	0	4.4452	.74307	Very High
My school head instills pride and ownership in the school's accomplishments.	146	0	4.4178	.72165	Very High

Interpretative Scale: 4.21–5.00 = Very High; 3.41–4.20 = High; 2.61–3.40 = Moderate; 1.81–2.60 = Low; 1.00–1.80 = Very Low.

Table 3 shows teachers’ perceptions of the transformational leadership displayed by their school heads. The ratings show an extremely high degree of transformational leadership, with mean scores ranging from 4.31 to 4.49, suggesting that teachers generally “agree” to “strongly agree” that their administrators consistently demonstrate transformational behaviors.

The item with the highest rating was “My school head models ethical and professional conduct” ($M = 4.4932$, $SD = .71676$). This suggests that teachers strongly recognize their administrators’ integrity, professionalism, and moral leadership—key pillars of transformational leadership. Similarly, the item “My school head inspires teachers to pursue shared school goals” ($M = 4.4589$, $SD = .65524$) obtained an excellent grade as well, indicating that school administrators are perceived as effective motivators who foster a clear sense of purpose and direction.

Teachers also reported favorable perceptions of their school heads’ ability to foster teamwork and collaboration ($M = 4.4452$, $SD = .74307$) and provide a clear vision for the school’s future ($M = 4.4247$, $SD = .70305$). These findings highlight the administrators’ capacity to strengthen professional relationships and create a unified organizational vision—both essential attributes of transformational leadership.

Indicators related to professional development and teacher motivation also received high mean scores, including encouraging continuous professional development ($M = 4.3767$) and listening attentively to teachers’ concerns ($M = 4.3767$). These findings indicate



that teachers perceive their administrators as supportive, responsive, and dedicated to improving teaching practices, committed.

The item with the lowest mean, though still high, was “My school head recognizes and celebrates teachers’ achievements” (M = 4.3151, SD = .73112). While still interpreted positively, it suggests that recognition and celebration of achievements may not be as consistently observed as other transformational behaviors.

Table 4. *Teachers’ Perception of Transactional Leadership*

	N		Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
	Valid	Missing			
My school head sets clear expectations and performance standards.	146	0	4.4384	.71412	Very High
My school head provides incentives or recognition for excellent performance.	146	0	4.0890	.77834	High
My school head regularly monitors teacher performance.	146	0	4.3836	.75439	Very High
My school head gives timely and constructive feedback.	146	0	4.2808	.74965	Very High
My school head enforces school policies and rules consistently.	146	0	4.4315	.73257	Very High
My school head acknowledges teachers who exceed expectations.	146	0	4.3699	.73357	Very High
My school head provides appropriate consequences for underperformance.	146	0	4.1849	.83875	High
My school head expects teachers to meet deadlines and deliver quality work.	146	0	4.3973	.70934	Very High
My school head ensures accountability in all school operations.	146	0	4.4110	.71120	Very High
My school head focuses on maintaining efficiency and discipline.	146	0	4.3699	.73357	Very High

Interpretative Scale: 4.21–5.00 = Very High; 3.41–4.20 = High; 2.61–3.40 = Moderate; 1.81–2.60 = Low; 1.00–1.80 = Very Low.

Table 4 shows teachers’ perceptions of the transactional leadership behaviors demonstrated by their school heads. Overall, the results indicate a strong presence of transactional leadership, with mean scores between 4.09 and 4.44. This suggests that teachers generally “agree” or “strongly agree” that their administrators consistently carry out key transactional functions, such as setting standards, monitoring performance, enforcing policies, and providing incentives or corrective feedback.

The highest-rated indicator was “My school head sets clear expectations and performance standards” (M = 4.4384, SD = .71412), suggesting that teachers strongly recognize their administrators’ ability to communicate expectations clearly—one of the core elements of transactional leadership. Similarly, high ratings were given to “My school head enforces school policies and rules consistently” (M = 4.4315, SD = .73257) and “My school head ensures accountability in all school operations” (M = 4.4110, SD = .71120). These findings highlight that teachers perceive their school heads as firm, systematic, and consistent in ensuring compliance with institutional standards.

The item “My school head acknowledges teachers who exceed expectations” obtained a comparatively high rating (M = 4.3699, SD = .73357), indicating that teachers feel their efforts and exemplary performance are recognized. Additionally, school heads’ focus on maintaining efficiency and discipline was also perceived positively (M = 4.3699, SD = .73357), underscoring the administrators’ emphasis on order and productivity.

Indicators related to monitoring and feedback, such as “My school head regularly monitors teacher performance” (M = 4.3836) and “My school head gives timely and constructive feedback” (M = 4.2808), also received high ratings, though slightly lower compared to expectation-setting and accountability. This suggests that, although feedback practices exist and are viewed positively, they may not be implemented as consistently as other transactional behaviors.

The lowest-rated item, though still high, was “My school head provides incentives or recognition for excellent performance” (M = 4.0890, SD = .77834). This indicates that while incentives and recognition are practiced, they may not be as frequent or as visible to teachers compared to other transactional actions.

Table 5. *Teachers’ Perception for Laissez-Faire Leadership*

	N		Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
	Valid	Missing			
My school head allows teachers to make decisions independently.	146	0	3.6712	1.15734	High
My school head delegates responsibilities with minimal supervision.	146	0	3.4315	1.17390	High
My school head avoids making decisions on pressing school issues.	146	0	3.1781	1.23000	Moderate
My school head is often unavailable when immediate guidance is needed.	146	0	2.7466	1.25292	Moderate
My school head rarely intervenes in conflicts among teachers.	146	0	2.8699	1.12810	Moderate
My school head expects teachers to resolve challenges independently.	146	0	3.1370	1.20705	Moderate
My school head provides limited feedback on teachers’ work performance.	146	0	2.8151	1.19772	Moderate
My school head seldom gets involved in classroom-related concerns.	146	0	2.7466	1.22509	Moderate
My school head delegates authority without adequate follow-up.	146	0	2.6027	1.19470	Low
My school head shows little initiative in implementing improvement plans.	146	0	2.5753	1.19098	Low

Interpretative Scale: 4.21–5.00 = Very High; 3.41–4.20 = High; 2.61–3.40 = Moderate; 1.81–2.60 = Low; 1.00–1.80 = Very Low.

Table 5 displays teachers’ perceptions of the laissez-faire leadership behaviors displayed by their school heads. Overall, the range of mean scores is 2.57 to 3.67, showing a modest amount of laissez-faire leadership. This result implies that although passive or non-interventionist behaviors are evident, they are not predominant. Variations across specific indicators further imply differences in



teachers’ experiences and perceptions.

The item with the highest rating was “My school head allows teachers to make decisions independently” (M = 3.6712, SD = 1.15734). This result indicates that teachers perceive their administrators as frequently granting autonomy in decision-making. While such autonomy can be beneficial, the relatively high variability suggests differing interpretations among teachers, with some viewing it as a professional freedom and others perceiving it as a lack of instructional guidance. A similar pattern appears in “My school head delegates responsibilities with minimal supervision” (M = 3.4315), indicating that delegation often happens, but follow-up and oversight may be inconsistent.

Items related to avoidance of decision-making also received moderate ratings, such as “My school head avoids making decisions on pressing school issues” (M = 3.1781). This indicates that some teachers perceive their administrators as hesitant or slow in responding to urgent matters, which may contribute to feelings of uncertainty within the school.

Indicators reflecting more passive and withdrawn leadership behaviors received comparatively lower mean scores but remain within the moderate range. These include: “My school head is often unavailable when immediate guidance is needed” (M = 2.7466), “My school head seldom gets involved in classroom-related concerns” (M = 2.7466), and “My school head shows little initiative in implementing improvement plans” (M = 2.5753).

These findings suggest that while not widespread, teachers do observe instances of administrative absence or limited initiative, which may hamper instructional support and school improvement.

The lowest-rated item, “My school head delegates authority without adequate follow-up” (M = 2.6027, SD = 1.19470), indicates that complete disengagement or lack of oversight is not commonly observed. However, the relatively high standard deviation means some teachers encounter this problem more frequently than others.

Table 6. Group Statistics Based on Administrator’s Gender

	Administrator’s Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
Transformational Leadership Mean	Male Principal	50	3.8680	.66038	High
	Female Principal	96	4.6875	.40425	Very High
Transactional Leadership Mean	Male Principal	50	3.8140	.70131	High
	Female Principal	96	4.6073	.43728	Very High
Laissez-Faire Leadership Mean	Male Principal	50	3.3960	.77722	High
	Female Principal	96	2.7594	1.01168	Moderate

Interpretative Scale: 4.21–5.00 = Very High; 3.41–4.20 = High; 2.61–3.40 = Moderate; 1.81–2.60 = Low; 1.00–1.80 = Very Low.

Table 6 displays the mean scores for laissez-faire, transactional, and transformational leadership styles as perceived by teachers, grouped according to the gender of the school administrator. The results reveal clear and notable differences in leadership perceptions between male and female principals.

With regard to transformational leadership, female principals received substantially higher ratings (M = 4.69, SD = 0.40) than male principals (M = 3.87, SD = 0.66). This suggests that teachers perceive female administrators as demonstrating stronger transformational behaviors, including inspiring a shared vision, motivating teachers, and fostering collaboration. Similarly, female principals also received higher ratings in transactional leadership (M = 4.61, SD = 0.44) compared to male principals (M = 3.81, SD = 0.70). This indicates that teachers perceive female administrators as more consistently engaging in transactional practices, such as establishing precise standards, keeping an eye on performance, and giving prompt feedback and acknowledgement.

In contrast, the pattern reverses for laissez-faire leadership. Male principals received higher ratings (M = 3.40, SD = 0.78) than female principals (M = 2.76, SD = 1.01), indicating that male administrators are more frequently perceived as exhibiting passive or avoidant leadership behaviors, such as limited availability, reduced involvement in decision-making, and minimal instructional guidance.

Table 7. Independent Samples T-Test Based on Administrator’s Gender

		Levene’s Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means			Interpretation	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)		Mean Difference
		Transformational Leadership Mean	Equal variances assumed	12.047	.001	-9.283		144
	Equal variances not assumed.			-8.027	68.645	.000	-.81950	
Transactional Leadership Mean	Equal variances assumed	11.905	.001	-8.396	144	.000	-.79329	Significant
	Equal variances not assumed.			-7.294	69.385	.000	-.79329	
Laissez-Faire Leadership Mean	Equal variances assumed	5.325	.022	3.890	144	.000	.63663	Significant
	Equal variances not assumed.			4.221	123.881	.000	.63663	

Significance Rule: $p < .05$ = Significant
 $p > .05$ = Not Significant



Table 7 presents the findings of the independent samples t-test used to assess whether male and female school administrators' judgments of leadership styles varied substantially. Statistically significant differences were found across all three leadership styles. For transformational leadership, the t-test showed a notable difference between male and female administrators, $t(144) = -9.28, p < .001$. This result remained significant when equal variances were not assumed. The negative t-value indicates that female principals obtained significantly higher mean scores than their male counterparts. Furthermore, the mean difference of -0.82 (95% CI: -0.99 to -0.65) confirms that teachers perceive female administrators as considerably more transformational in their leadership approach.

Similarly, a significant difference was found for transactional leadership, $t(144) = -8.40, p < .001$, indicating that teachers rated female administrators significantly higher in transactional behaviors, such as monitoring performance and giving feedback, than male administrators. The mean difference of -0.79 (95% CI: -0.98 to -0.61) further demonstrates that female administrators consistently exhibit stronger transactional leadership practices.

In contrast, the pattern reverses for laissez-faire leadership. The results revealed a significant difference, $t(144) = 3.89, p < .001$, with male administrators receiving significantly higher laissez-faire ratings. The positive mean difference of 0.64 (95% CI: 0.31 to 0.96) suggests that male administrators are more frequently perceived as passive, less involved, and less responsive compared to their female counterparts.

Table 8. Group Statistics Based on Teachers' Gender

	Teacher's Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
Transformational Leadership Mean	Male	3	4.8333	.28868	Very High
	Female	143	4.3979	.64047	Very High
Transactional Leadership Mean	Male	3	4.6667	.57735	Very High
	Female	143	4.3287	.66052	Very High
Laissez-Faire Leadership Mean	Male	3	2.7000	1.38924	Moderate
	Female	143	2.9832	.97886	Moderate

Interpretative Scale: 4.21-5.00 = Very High; 3.41-4.20 = High; 2.61-3.40 = Moderate; 1.81-2.60 = Low; 1.00-1.80 = Very Low.

Table 8 shows the mean scores for laissez-faire, transactional, and transformational leadership styles as perceived by teachers, grouped according to the respondent's gender. Although differences in mean scores are evident between male and female teachers, these results should be regarded cautiously due to the very small number of male respondents ($n = 3$) compared to the substantially larger number of female respondents ($n = 143$).

With respect to transformational leadership, male teachers reported a somewhat greater mean score ($M = 4.83, SD = 0.29$) than female teachers ($M = 4.40, SD = 0.64$). A similar pattern was observed for transactional leadership, with male teachers again providing higher ratings ($M = 4.67, SD = 0.58$) compared to female teachers ($M = 4.33, SD = 0.66$). While these results suggest a more favorable perception of administrative leadership among male teachers, the extremely small number of male respondents limits the reliability and generalizability of these findings.

In terms of laissez-faire leadership, male teachers reported a lower mean score ($M = 2.70, SD = 1.39$) than female teachers ($M = 2.98, SD = 0.98$), indicating that male teachers perceive administrators as slightly less passive or avoidant. However, this outcome should also be interpreted cautiously because of the extremely small number of male cases.

Table 9. Independent Samples T-Test Based on Teachers' Gender

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means			Interpretation
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	
Transformational Leadership Mean	Equal variances assumed	2.615	.108	1.172	144	.243	Not Significant
	Equal variances not assumed.			2.487	2.434	.108	
Transactional Leadership Mean	Equal variances assumed	.136	.713	.879	144	.381	Not Significant
	Equal variances not assumed.			1.000	2.111	.418	
Laissez-Faire Leadership Mean	Equal variances assumed	.686	.409	-.493	144	.623	Not Significant
	Equal variances not assumed.			-.351	2.042	.758	

Significance Rule: $p < .05 = Significant$
 $p > .05 = Not Significant$

Table 9 shows the outcomes of the independent samples t-test comparing teachers' perceptions of their administrators' leadership styles according to the gender of the teacher-respondents. Although descriptive statistics show that male teachers tended to provide slightly higher mean ratings than female teachers, the inferential analyses indicate that these differences don't meet statistical significance.

For transformational leadership, the t-test yielded $t(144) = 1.17, p = .243$, which exceeds the .05 level of significance. This result indicates no significant difference between male and female teachers in their perceptions of administrators' transformational behaviors.

Similarly, for transactional leadership, the obtained value of $t(144) = 0.88, p = .381$, also indicates no statistically significant difference



between the two groups. Although male teachers reported a slightly higher mean score, this difference is not sufficient to be considered statistically meaningful.

For laissez-faire leadership, the computed value of $t(144) = -0.49$, $p = .623$ likewise exceeds the .05 threshold, indicating that male and female teachers perceive laissez-faire leadership at comparable levels. It is important to observe that the very small number of male respondents ($n = 3$) limits the reliability of these comparisons. Nevertheless, the consistent pattern of non-significant results provides evidence that perceptions of leadership styles are not much impacted by the gender of teachers.

Table 10. ANOVA Results Based on Years of Teaching Experience

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Interpretation
Transformational Leadership Mean	Between Groups	3.779	3	1.260	3.240	.024	Significant
	Within Groups	55.195	142	.389			
	Total	58.973	145				
Transactional Leadership Mean	Between Groups	2.177	3	.726	1.695	.171	Not Significant
	Within Groups	60.778	142	.428			
	Total	62.955	145				
Laissez-Faire Leadership Mean	Between Groups	7.365	3	2.455	2.625	.053	Not Significant
	Within Groups	132.791	142	.935			
	Total	140.155	145				

Significance Rule: $p < .05 = \text{Significant}$
 $p > .05 = \text{Not Significant}$

Table 10 displays the findings of the one-way ANOVA used to determine that teachers’ perceptions of the three leadership styles vary greatly amongst groups according to the number of years spent teaching. The findings indicate a significant difference for transformational leadership, whereas no significant differences were observed for transactional and laissez-faire leadership styles.

Regarding transformational leadership, the one-way ANOVA produced a result that was statistically significant, $F(3, 142) = 3.24$, $p = .024$. This indicates that at least one experience group differed significantly from the others in their perception of transformational leadership. Specifically, these findings suggest that teachers’ perceptions of their administrators’ transformational behaviors vary based on their total years in the teaching profession. To determine the nature of these differences, a Tukey HSD post hoc analysis is presented in the following section.

Conversely, for transactional leadership, the ANOVA did not reach statistical significance, $F(3, 142) = 1.70$, $p = .171$. Because the p-value exceeds the .05 threshold, the data suggest that teachers across all experience levels perceive transactional leadership in a statistically similar manner. As a result, years of teaching don’t seem to have a big impact on opinions of transactional leadership behaviors.

For laissez-faire leadership, results revealed $F(3, 142) = 2.63$ with a p-value of .053. Although this value approaches significance, it does not meet the conventional threshold of .05. While perceptions of laissez-faire leadership vary across experience groups, these differences lack statistical significance.

Collectively, the ANOVA results reveal that only transformational leadership varies significantly across experience groups. This suggests that a teacher’s years of experience may influence their evaluation of transformational leadership behaviors, whereas no significant differences were observed for transactional or laissez-faire styles.

Given the significant ANOVA result for transformational leadership, a Tukey HSD post-hoc test was performed to identify the particular teaching experience groups between which these differences lie. The post hoc comparisons revealed one significant pair for transformational leadership and one significant pair for laissez-faire leadership, while no significant differences emerged for transactional leadership.

For transformational leadership, there was a notable distinction between teachers with 6–10 years of experience and those with 16 or more years ($p = .042$). Specifically, the more experienced cohort reported significantly higher scores, suggesting that veteran teachers may perceive their administrators as more transformational. This trend could stem from their extended exposure to leadership behaviors or a more nuanced understanding of instructional leadership practices. No other pairwise differences were statistically significant for transformational leadership, indicating that the perceptions of the 0–5 year and 11–15 year groups are statistically comparable to the other categories.

The Tukey HSD test revealed no significant pairwise differences among experience groups for transactional leadership, thereby corroborating the initial ANOVA results. This lack of variance suggests that teacher perceptions of transactional leadership remain consistent across all stages of their professional careers.

Post-hoc analysis revealed a significant difference between teachers with 0–5 years of experience and those with 11–15 years ($p =$



.047). Specifically, the 0–5 year cohort perceived their administrators as exhibiting higher levels of laissez-faire leadership than the 11–15 year group. This finding suggests that early-career teachers may be more sensitive to, or more acutely affected by, passive or avoidant leadership behaviors.

Notably, the comparison between the 0–5 year group and the 16+ years cohort approached significance ($p = .052$), though it didn't fall below the conventional .05 threshold. All other pairwise comparisons yielded no statistically significant differences.

Table 11. *Tukey HSD Post Hoc Results*

Dependent Variable	Multiple Comparisons					
	Tukey HSD					
	(I) Years of Teaching Experience	(J) Years of Teaching Experience	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval Lower Bound Upper Bound
Transformational Leadership Mean	0-5 yrs	6-10 yrs	-.00911	.19450	1.000	-.5148 .4966
		11-15 yrs	-.29331	.19583	.442	-.8024 .2158
		16 yrs and above	-.36883	.20032	.259	-.8896 .1520
	6-10 yrs	0-5 yrs	.00911	.19450	1.000	-.4966 .5148
		11-15 yrs	-.28421	.12799	.123	-.6170 .0485
		16 yrs and above	-.35972*	.13476	.042	-.7101 -.0094
	11-15 yrs	0-5 yrs	.29331	.19583	.442	-.2158 .8024
		6-10 yrs	.28421	.12799	.123	-.0485 .6170
		16 yrs and above	-.07551	.13667	.946	-.4308 .2798
	16 yrs and above	0-5 yrs	.36883	.20032	.259	-.1520 .8896
		6-10 yrs	.35972*	.13476	.042	.0094 .7101
		11-15 yrs	.07551	.13667	.946	-.2798 .4308
Transactional Leadership Mean	0-5 yrs	6-10 yrs	-.21868	.20411	.707	-.7493 .3119
		11-15 yrs	-.40284	.20550	.208	-.9371 .1314
		16 yrs and above	-.37206	.21021	.292	-.9185 .1744
	6-10 yrs	0-5 yrs	.21868	.20411	.707	-.3119 .7493
		11-15 yrs	-.18416	.13431	.519	-.5333 .1650
		16 yrs and above	-.15338	.14142	.699	-.5210 .2143
	11-15 yrs	0-5 yrs	.40284	.20550	.208	-.1314 .9371
		6-10 yrs	.18416	.13431	.519	-.1650 .5333
		16 yrs and above	.03078	.14342	.996	-.3421 .4036
	16 yrs and above	0-5 yrs	.37206	.21021	.292	-.1744 .9185
		6-10 yrs	.15338	.14142	.699	-.2143 .5210
		11-15 yrs	-.03078	.14342	.996	-.4036 .3421
Laissez-Faire Leadership Mean	0-5 yrs	6-10 yrs	.62166	.30169	.171	-.1627 1.4060
		11-15 yrs	.79615*	.30375	.047	.0065 1.5858
		16 yrs and above	.80405	.31071	.052	-.0037 1.6118
	6-10 yrs	0-5 yrs	-.62166	.30169	.171	-1.4060 .1627
		11-15 yrs	.17449	.19853	.816	-.3416 .6906
		16 yrs and above	.18238	.20903	.819	-.3610 .7258
	11-15 yrs	0-5 yrs	-.79615*	.30375	.047	-1.5858 .0065
		6-10 yrs	-.17449	.19853	.816	-.6906 .3416
		16 yrs and above	.00789	.21199	1.000	-.5432 .5590
	16 yrs and above	0-5 yrs	-.80405	.31071	.052	-1.6118 .0037
		6-10 yrs	-.18238	.20903	.819	-.7258 .3610
		11-15 yrs	-.00789	.21199	1.000	-.5590 .5432

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 12 presents the Pearson correlation coefficients, which look at the connections between years of teaching experience and the three leadership styles: transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire. The analysis identified several statistically significant relationships.

A statistically significant and positive correlation was observed between years of teaching experience and transformational leadership ($r = .236, p = .004$). This finding indicates that as teaching experience increases, so too does the tendency to perceive administrators as exhibiting transformational behaviors. Veteran educators may be better equipped to recognize visionary, motivational, and supportive leadership characteristics, likely due to their extensive exposure to diverse administrative practices over time.

The correlation between teaching experience and transactional leadership was positive but not statistically significant ($r = .160, p = .054$). Although the trend suggests that more experienced teachers may perceive slightly higher levels of transactional leadership, the result does not reach the .05 threshold, indicating that this relationship should be interpreted cautiously.



In contrast, a significant negative correlation emerged between teaching experience and laissez-faire leadership ($r = -.184, p = .026$). This suggests that early-career teachers are more likely to perceive their administrators as exhibiting passive or avoidant leadership behaviors, whereas more experienced teachers report such behaviors less frequently. This aligns with earlier post hoc findings that newer teachers (0–5 years) rated laissez-faire leadership significantly higher than mid-career and veteran teachers.

The intercorrelations among the three leadership styles also revealed meaningful patterns. Transformational and transactional leadership styles showed a significant positive association ($r = .874, p < .001$), indicating that administrators perceived as transformational are also highly likely to be viewed as transactional. This suggests that teachers view both as complementary facets of active and engaged leadership. Conversely, laissez-faire leadership showed substantial inverse relationships with both transformational ($r = -.330, p < .001$) and transactional leadership ($r = -.321, p < .001$). These results suggest that administrators who frequently employ more proactive leadership styles tend to exhibit fewer passive or avoidant behaviors.

Table 12. Correlation Between Leadership Styles and Teaching Experience

		Years of Teaching Experience	Transformational Leadership Mean	Transactional Leadership Mean	Laissez-Faire Leadership Mean
Years of Teaching Experience	Pearson Correlation	1	.236**	.160	-.184*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.004	.054	.026
	N	146	146	146	146
Transformational Leadership Mean	Pearson Correlation	.236**	1	.874**	-.330**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004		.000	.000
	N	146	146	146	146
Transactional Leadership Mean	Pearson Correlation	.160	.874**	1	-.321**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.054	.000		.000
	N	146	146	146	146
Laissez-Faire Leadership Mean	Pearson Correlation	-.184*	-.330**	-.321**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.026	.000	.000	
	N	146	146	146	146

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Discussion

The primary objective of this study is to examine teachers’ perceptions of leadership styles in relation to gender differences among public elementary schools in Barili District 1. Specifically, it sought to determine how transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles are perceived by teachers and administrators and whether these perceptions vary according to teacher and administrator gender, teaching experience, and teaching role. Using a quantitative descriptive–comparative approach, the study established that transformational and transactional leadership styles are highly prevalent among school administrators, while laissez-faire leadership is less evident. The findings further revealed that administrator gender significantly influences leadership perceptions, with female administrators being perceived as more transformational and transactional. In contrast, male administrators were more associated with laissez-faire leadership behaviors. These results underscore the relevance of gender and professional context in shaping leadership perceptions and highlight the need for gender-responsive leadership development in public elementary schools.

Conclusions

The findings of the study lead to several important conclusions regarding teachers’ perceptions of school leadership. Overall, teachers regard their administrators as effective leaders, as shown by the high ratings for transformational and transactional leadership, which reflect administrators’ active engagement, motivational influence, and commitment to performance management. Although laissez-faire behaviors were observed, these were only moderately present, indicating that passive leadership is not a dominant characteristic.

The gender of administrators was found to shape leadership perceptions significantly: female administrators were consistently viewed as more transformational and transactional—demonstrating stronger vision, motivation, monitoring, and feedback—while male administrators were more often associated with laissez-faire tendencies, suggesting reduced involvement or slower responsiveness. However, teacher gender did not significantly affect leadership perceptions, indicating that teachers evaluate leadership behaviors based on observed practices rather than their own gender identity.

Teaching experience emerged as a significant factor in shaping these perceptions; veteran educators showed increased transformative leadership levels and fewer laissez-faire behaviors, whereas less experienced teachers—particularly novices—were more likely to perceive passive leadership. Furthermore, the research concludes that transformational and transactional leadership are deeply interconnected, with administrators who exhibit one style typically demonstrating the other. Both represent complementary dimensions of active and effective leadership. Conversely, laissez-faire leadership is inversely related to these styles, reinforcing the premise that

passive or avoidant behaviors directly contradict the engaged practices associated with effective school administration.

These findings have important implications for educational leadership practice and policy. School districts may strengthen leadership development initiatives by emphasizing transformational competencies, structured performance management strategies, and responsive administrative practices. Leadership training programs may also benefit from integrating gender-responsive approaches that promote equitable and inclusive leadership behaviors. By addressing leadership style patterns and experience-related differences, policymakers and school administrators can enhance leadership effectiveness and foster more positive teacher perceptions within public elementary schools.

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