

A Study of Male and Female Leadership in Laotian Secondary Schools

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Abstract: The issue of leadership between male and female leaders has long been a hot topic in global academic research. Against this backdrop, this study addresses two key questions: First, what are the comprehensive leadership characteristics of male and female leaders in public and private secondary schools in Laos? What are their respective leadership strengths? Second, what are the leadership characteristics of male and female leaders in public and private secondary schools in Laos? What are their respective leadership strengths? To address these key questions, this study conducted a survey of male and female leaders in fifteen public and fifteen private secondary schools in Laos.

1. Introduction

Educational leadership plays a critical role in school development, especially in complex and changing environments [1-3]. This study aims to address four key questions: First, what are the macro differences in male and female leadership in Laotian secondary schools? Second, what are the specific manifestations of male and female leadership differences in public and private secondary schools in Laos? Third, what are the specific manifestations of male and female leadership differences in private secondary schools in Laos? Fourth, what are the key factors influencing male and female leadership differences in Laotian secondary schools? After thoroughly exploring these important issues, the ultimate research goal is to delve into the causes and impacts of underrepresentation in leadership positions across genders, propose practical and effective solutions, and analyze optimization paths based on the current challenges and shortcomings faced by male and female leadership in Laotian secondary schools[4-6]. This will allow for the further development and strengthening of male and female leadership, ultimately mitigating the impact of gender disparity in educational leadership.

2. Public School Leadership Survey

2.1 Survey on Male and Female Leadership in Public Secondary Schools

2.1.1 Basic Information of Surveyors

This survey on male leadership in Laotian public secondary schools primarily collected data from surveys of teachers in 15 public secondary schools. Initially, basic information about the teachers was collected. Following the sample collection principles of this survey, 507 valid questionnaires will be used in subsequent research.

2.1.2 Questionnaire Reliability and Validity Analysis

This paper used SPSS 21.0 software to conduct correlation analysis and measure the reliability of the questionnaire scale. The table below presents the results of this scale reliability measurement. According to the measurement results (see Table 1), the reliability coefficient scores of this

questionnaire are all above 0.91. According to the reliability measurement standard, the reliability of this questionnaire is relatively high, which also proves that the subsequent research is reasonable and the research conclusions are credible, The reliability coefficients of the questionnaire are shown in Table 1.

Table 1 Survey Reliability Measurement Table

Cronbach's Alpha	Personal qualities	Credibility	Learning ability	Reflection and correction	Perseverance	Cultural Power
		0.912	0.927	0.915	0.914	0.931
	Job Competencies	Judgment and Decision-Making	Execution	Service Ability	Coordination and Collaboration	Educational Ability
		0.919	0.916	0.914	0.924	0.917
	Five Degrees of Leadership	Educational Leadership	Structural Leadership	Interpersonal Leadership	Political Leadership	Cultural Leadership
		0.926	0.934	0.920	0.918	0.924

This paper used SPSS 21.0 software to conduct KMO and Bartlett tests to determine the relevance of the questionnaire. The following table presents the validity test results (see Table 2). According to the test results, the Bartlett test of sphericity for this questionnaire showed a significance of less than 0.05, and the questionnaire's KMO index score was 0.9743. Based on the meaning of the corresponding coefficient for scale testing, a test result greater than 0.6 generally indicates that the scale passes the numerical test and can be used for subsequent correlation analysis. The results of the KMO and Bartlett tests are shown in Table 2.

Table 2 KMO and Bartlett Test Results for the Questionnaire

Kaiser-Meyer-Olin metric		0.9743
Bartlett's test of sphericity	Approximate Chi-Square	20451.039
	Cf	473
		0.000

2.2 Male Leadership in Public Secondary Schools

2.2.1 Survey of Leadership at the Personal Competency Level

Table 3 Survey of Personal Competencies of Male and Female Leaders in Public Secondary Schools

Survey Questions	Average (male)	Standard deviation	Average (female)	Standard deviation
1. Do you think the school leader (male/female) has strong credibility?	3.12	0.514	2.97	0.520
2. Do you think the school leader (male/female) has strong learning ability?	2.94	0.523	3.27	0.508
3. Do you think the school leader (male/female) has strong reflection and correction ability?	3.69	0.515	3.16	0.519
4. Do you think the school leader (male/female) has strong perseverance?	2.98	0.509	3.38	0.505
5. Do you think the school leader (male/female) has strong cultural influence?	2.37	0.532	3.42	0.517

The survey results on personal competencies of male and female leaders in public secondary schools are presented in Table 3.

To further understand the leadership status of male and female leaders in Laotian public secondary schools, this section first conducts a survey on the personal competencies of male leaders in public secondary schools. The survey results show significant differences in the personal competencies of male leaders in public secondary schools.

The overall survey results also show that cultural leadership scores are relatively evenly

distributed across the various components of female leadership in public middle schools, with relatively small differences across the various components. The highest average score was for cultural leadership, at 3.42 points. This indicates that female leaders possess a deeper cultural background than male leaders and, overall, lead the school's cultural development at a higher level. Secondly, female leaders scored significantly higher in perseverance, at 3.38 points, demonstrating a strong commitment to educational philosophy and principles and less susceptible to external influences. Furthermore, the average learning ability score for female leaders reached 3.27 points, also higher than that of male leaders overall, indicating that female leaders demonstrate more significant learning during the leadership process. In other words, female leaders exhibit less resolute inner struggles than male leaders and possess a significantly higher awareness of self-learning progress. This, in contrast, allows women to break free from stereotyped class dynamics and egocentric concepts.

2.2.2 Leadership Survey at the Job Competency Level

Table 4 Survey of Job Competencies of Male and Female Public Middle School Students

Survey Questions	Average (male)	Standard deviation	Average (female)	Standard deviation
1. Do you think the school leader (male/female) has strong credibility?	3.27	0.518	2.97	0.513
2. Do you think the school leader (male/female) has strong learning ability?	3.11	0.506	3.01	0.526
3. Do you think the school leader (male/female) has strong reflection and correction ability?	3.07	0.517	3.09	0.507
4. Do you think the school leader (male/female) has strong perseverance?	2.63	0.504	3.23	0.515
5. Do you think the school leader (male/female) has strong cultural influence?	3.77	0.521	3.17	0.516

The survey results of job competencies for male and female leaders in public secondary schools are shown in Table 4.

In the leadership competency survey, female leaders scored lowest in judgment and decision-making, with an average score of 2.97. This result clearly demonstrates the significant differences between women and men in judgment and decision-making. This suggests that, due to their superior communication and learning abilities, female leaders are often influenced by external factors in their decision-making and judgment. This influence can be both idealistic and emotional. Therefore, the perception of female leaders' decision-making and judgment abilities among faculty members in Laotian public secondary schools is not significant. Furthermore, compared to male leaders, female leaders' execution ability is relatively low, with an average score of 3.01. This is primarily related to women's ability to withstand external pressure. They tend to make numerous assessments of how things are progressing, and the interplay of these assessments can ultimately lead to poor execution. Finally, their educational ability is significantly lower than that of male leaders, with an average score of 3.17. This is because educational ability primarily focuses on educational philosophy and practice. For female leaders, educational practice is increasingly enriched and fulfilling as their learning abilities improve. Furthermore, the difference in educational ability between women and men lies more in their differing philosophies. In addition to the three aforementioned factors, female leaders' average scores on the remaining two factors were significantly higher than those of male leaders. The score for service ability was 3.09, indicating that compared to male leaders, women possess a stronger sense of service and can provide higher-quality service to teachers and students. Finally, compared to male leaders, female leaders demonstrate significantly greater coordination and collaboration, and their overall performance far surpasses that of male leaders. This is primarily due to the unique strengths of female leaders in communication. Their greater ability to listen to others' perspectives enables them to better manage relevant matters and coordinate effectively throughout the leadership process.

3. Private Secondary School Leadership Survey

3.1 Survey on Male Leadership in Private Secondary Schools

3.1.1 Participant Information Statistics

This survey on male leadership in Laotian private secondary schools primarily collected data from surveys of teachers at 15 private secondary schools. Initially, basic information about the teachers was collected. Following the sample collection principles of this survey, 487 valid questionnaires will be used in subsequent research.

3.1.2 Questionnaire Reliability and Validity Analysis

This paper used SPSS 21.0 software to conduct correlation analysis and measure the reliability of the questionnaire scale. The following table presents the results of this scale reliability measurement. According to the measurement results, the reliability coefficient scores of this survey questionnaire were all above 0.91. According to the reliability measurement standard, the reliability of this questionnaire survey is relatively high, which also indicates that the subsequent research is reasonable and the research conclusions are credible. The reliability analysis results are presented in Table 5 and the validity test results are shown in Table 6.:

Table 5 Survey Reliability Measurement Table

Cronbach's Alpha	Personal qualities	Credibility	Learning ability	Reflection and correction	Perseverance	Cultural Power
		0.914	0.927	0.926	0.931	0.919
	Job Competencies	Judgment and Decision-Making	Execution	Service Ability	Coordination and Collaboration	Educational Ability
		0.928	0.917	0.933	0.917	0.938
	Five Degrees of Leadership	Educational Leadership	Structural Leadership	Interpersonal Leadership	Political Leadership	Cultural Leadership
		0.912	0.919	0.925	0.914	0.937

This paper used SPSS 21.0 software to conduct KMO and Bartlett tests to determine the relevance of the questionnaire. The following table presents the validity test results. According to the test results, the Bartlett test of sphericity for this questionnaire showed a significance of less than 0.05, and the questionnaire's KMO index score was 0.9643. Based on the meaning of the corresponding coefficient for scale testing, a test result greater than 0.6 generally indicates that the scale passes the numerical test and can be used for subsequent correlation analysis.

Table 6 KMO and Bartlett Test Results for the Questionnaire

Kaiser-Meyer-Olin metric		0.9643
Bartlett's test of sphericity	Approximate Chi-Square	19345.283
	Cf	487
		0.000

3.2 Male and Female Leadership in Private Secondary Schools

3.2.1 Survey on Leadership at the Personal Competency Level

To further understand the leadership status of male and female leaders in Laotian public secondary schools, this section first conducts a survey on the personal competencies of male leaders in public secondary schools. The survey results show significant differences in the personal competencies of male leaders in public secondary schools.

First, overall, the average score on personal qualities for female leaders in private middle schools is higher than that for male leaders. This result is consistent with the public middle school survey results, indicating that across the two levels of the ten leadership elements, female leaders demonstrate a slight advantage in personal qualities over male leaders. However, this gap is smaller within private middle schools. The survey results on personal competencies of male and female leaders in private secondary schools are presented in Table 7.

Table 7 Survey on the Personal Competencies of Male and Female Leaders in Private Secondary Schools

Survey Questions	Average (male)	Standard deviation	Average (female)	Standard deviation
1. Do you think the school leader (male/female) has strong credibility?	3.32	0.527	3.16	0.493
2. Do you think the school leader (male/female) has strong learning ability?	3.57	0.519	3.34	0.524
3. Do you think the school leader (male/female) has strong reflection and correction ability?	3.19	0.504	3.21	0.508
4. Do you think the school leader (male/female) has strong perseverance?	3.04	0.511	3.41	0.517
5. Do you think the school leader (male/female) has strong cultural influence?	3.24	0.503	3.32	0.511

Based on the averages, we can see that there is little difference in perseverance, learning, and cultural competence among female leaders in private middle schools. Unlike male leaders, where the difference in personal qualities reaches 0.5, female leaders in private middle schools possess higher overall personal qualities. This also highlights the balanced nature of female leaders. Even if they lack particular leadership elements, they can still lead schools to progress through balanced leadership development. This also demonstrates that female leaders in private middle schools possess the ability to continuously learn and adapt to changes in the educational environment, possess a deep cultural background and the ability to build school culture, while also adhering to educational principles and resisting external interference.

3.2.2 Leadership Survey at the Position Competency Level

Table 8 Survey of Male and Female Position Competencies in Public Middle Schools

Survey Questions	Average (male)	Standard deviation	Average (female)	Standard deviation
1. Do you think the school leader (male/female) has strong credibility?	3.69	0.529	3.04	0.528
2. Do you think the school leader (male/female) has strong learning ability?	3.36	0.535	3.19	0.511
3. Do you think the school leader (male/female) has strong reflection and correction ability?	3.23	0.508	3.36	0.505
4. Do you think the school leader (male/female) has strong perseverance?	3.14	0.513	3.23	0.496
5. Do you think the school leader (male/female) has strong cultural influence?	3.42	0.524	3.12	0.514

The survey results of position competencies for male and female leaders in private secondary schools are shown in Table 8. Looking at the various leadership competencies of female private middle school leaders, the highest score was for service, at 3.36. This indicates that female leaders place a greater emphasis on service in their roles than male leaders, and overall, female leaders demonstrate higher levels of service than male leaders. Furthermore, female leaders also scored relatively higher than male leaders in coordination and collaboration, with an average score of 3.23, indicating that female leaders demonstrate greater coordination and collaboration throughout their leadership roles, which is consistent with the empathy inherent in female leaders. Furthermore, the results of the two-level, ten-factor leadership survey of female private middle school leaders in Laos also briefly demonstrate that there are fundamental differences between female leaders in public and private middle schools within different school environments. Because macro-educational development and innovative educational development are the foundations of many private middle schools, especially given their predominantly for-profit nature, leaders are required to possess more robust comprehensive leadership skills. Consequently, private middle school leaders perform better than their public middle school counterparts in all relevant aspects of the two-level, ten-factor leadership survey.

IV. Comparative Analysis of Leadership in Public and Private Secondary Schools in Laos

Based on the aforementioned survey results on leadership performance of public and private secondary school leaders in Laos, we first collated and compared the data from all survey results for the two types of schools. A comparative analysis of leadership performance in public and private secondary schools is shown in Table 9:

Table 9 Comparative Analysis of Comprehensive Leadership Performance in Public and Private Secondary Schools

Leadership Elements	Public High School Average	Private High School Average	Difference	Difference Rating
Personal Qualities	3.13	3.28	Private 0.15+	Slightly superior
Job Competencies	3.13	3.27	Private 0.14+	Slightly superior
Educational Leadership	3.12	3.23	Private 0.11+	Slightly superior
Structural Leadership	3.08	3.36	Private 0.28+	Excellent
Interpersonal Leadership	3.08	3.23	Private 0.15+	Slightly superior
Political Leadership	3.00	2.95	Public 0.05+	Slightly superior
Cultural Leadership	3.02	3.39	Private 0.37+	Slightly superior
Overall Leadership Average	3.08	3.25	Private 0.17+	Markedly superior

(Note: The individual averages for each secondary school are calculated by adding the individual leadership scores for male and female students and dividing by two, rounded to two decimal places.)

Private secondary schools have significant strengths in structural leadership and cultural leadership. The data shows that private schools scored significantly higher in "Instructional Resource Allocation" (3.65) and "Ability to Create Locally Distinctive Education" (3.43). This suggests that, compared to public schools, private schools in Laos enjoy greater financial autonomy, allowing them to flexibly invest in resource development (such as digital tools and internationalized curriculum) and leverage their financial resources to promote management innovation. Furthermore, this operational autonomy allows private schools to design distinctive curricula that integrate local culture, thereby strengthening their cultural leadership.

In terms of areas of slight advantage, private middle school leaders have certain slight advantages in job competence and educational leadership compared to public middle school leaders. According to specific data, private middle school leaders perform outstandingly in "judgment and decision-making ability" (3.69) and "teaching resource development" (3.52). The fundamental reason for this is that private middle schools place more emphasis on efficiency and results, and managers need to make quick decisions (such as crisis management) and execute efficiently.

Political leadership is an area where public middle schools excel slightly. Specific data shows that female leaders in public middle schools scored robustly in "ability to efficiently handle conflicts and problems" (3.18) and "ability to build values within the school" (3.26), indicating that public schools themselves have a prominent public service nature. Public schools need to coordinate the interests of multiple parties, including the government, the community, and parents, and female leaders are better at managing complex relationships.

4. Conclusion

These findings are consistent with previous studies on educational leadership and gender differences [7–9]. This paper investigated male and female leadership in Laotian secondary schools, further categorizing them by public and private schools. The findings indicate that male and female leadership in private secondary schools is significantly higher than that in public secondary schools. Furthermore, both private and public secondary schools exhibit specific strengths and weaknesses in male and female leadership, with differences in school nature and gender antagonism being key factors influencing leadership performance.

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