The Political Personality Traits and Political Behavior in Management: A Malaysian Public School Case

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ABSTRACT: *Work environment is political in nature and organization is a political arena. Organizational politics should be an issue in management and leadership because of it impacts on career development in organizations. However there is inconclusive evidence in relation of leader political personality traits and leader political behaviour in organizational politics research. The primary purpose of this research is to examine the leader political personality characteristics and political behavior in the context of public secondary school organizations. Specifically, this research investigated the relationship of political personality traits and political behavior of school principals. This study involves a quantitative analysis of school principals' self-perception of their political personality traits and political behavior. The data was obtained through mail survey method from 600 school principals. The response rate for the sample was 53 percent, resulting in a usable sample size of 312 participants. The data were analysed by using PLS path analyses. Results of the study showed that there is significant relationship between leader political personality and leader political behavior. Overall, the findings were the evidence to support political theory of leadership. .This study finding has contributed to current knowledge and understanding of leadership from political perspective. The results thus serve to improve organizational leadership understanding from political perspective and can help individuals to understand leader personality and behavior. Finally, the thesis discusses the implications of the study to theory and recommendations for future research.*

Keywords: *Political personality traits, political skill, political behavior, Machiavellianism personality, Need for Power Personality, political theory of leadership*

I.   INTRODUCTION
The concept of organizational politics in organization has been much receives attentionin management literature. Issues of political skill, political behavior and political perception became favored area of study. From leadership perspective, Ammeter, Douglas, Gardner, Hochwarter, and Ferris[1]has developed a political theory of leadership. This theory proposes that leader outcomes were influence by leader political behavior, leader attributes and political target. To date, this theory not received much attention from researchers. Surprisingly, this aspect of political personality and political behaviorhas not been given much attention. Thus, personality from political perspective and its relevance to political behavior will be the focus on this study. This study purpose is to: First, examine political personality traits and political behavior of school principals as a leader. Second investigate the influence of political personality trait on political behavior of the school principals. On this basis, two research questions were formulated: 1. What is level of political personality traits of the school principals. 2. What is the frequency of political behavior, 3. Is political personality traits relate to political behavior? The finding of the study will support the theory of political leadership.

II.   REVIEW OF LITERATURE
Political theory of leadership
The political theory of leadership has three basic components: antecedents of leader political behavior, leader political behavior, and consequences of political behavior. The political theory of leadership could be used as a theoretical basis for studying leader career outcome from a political perspective. This theory specifies that leader antecedence (e.g. social capital, cognition, political will, and personality) affects the political behavior utilized by a leader. Leader antecedence and Political behavior will affect the important individual-level outcomes of the leader such as leader effectiveness, performance evaluation, promotion, and, reputation. Specifically, a leaders' political behavior will increase his or her organizational power, increase his or her interpersonal reputation, and earn him or her greater organizational rewards. Leader outcome also influences by political target outcome in terms of affective, cognitive, attitude and performance. Based on the theory, it is proposed that leader political personality traits will influence leader political behavior.

Political personality traits
Political personality traitsis defined as dispositions in which formal and informal power is used to control and/or to manipulate others [2]. Prior researchers have proven that personality traits influence

organizational behavior including job satisfaction, work attitudes, trust, job performance, and wages. Personality traits variables such as the "big five" or the Five Factor Model personality, Machiavellianism, the Need for power, locus of control, Self-esteem, leader member exchange (LMX), personality type and role ambiguity have been investigated intensely in organizational behavior research. The most relevant personality traits variables related to organizational politics were the Machiavellian personality trait, the Need for power personality trait, self-monitoring, and locus of control [3]. Indeed, Ferris, Russ, et al. [4] suggested that Machiavellianism personality trait and the Need for power personality trait affect organizational politics. These personality traits are associated with politics and power in an organization. Therefore, the political personality constructs that were investigated in this research were Machiavellianism and the Need for power personality traits. These two personalities will be considered as political personality traits dimensions, which are related to influence and power in organizations. Political personality traits refer to the dynamic and organized set of characteristics of a person that uniquely influences his/her cognitions, motivations, and behavior that are used to control and/or manipulate others [5]. For this research study, Machiavellianism and the Need for power personality trait were employed because these personalities are related significantly to organizational politics.

The Machiavellianism Personality Trait

A Machiavellianism personality is referred to a stable, individual negative character that includes manipulating others for personal performance and success. This type of personality is correlated positively with perceptions of organizational politics and is often against other people's self-interest [6]. Machiavellianism is the term derived from Niccolo Machiavelli who wrote *The Prince* in 1532 where the methods for manipulation and gain of powers were detailed and explained. Machiavelli's perspectives are well known as "In the actions of men…from which there is no appeal, the end justifies the mean" and the belief that unethical behavior is acceptable, even necessary, if it helps attain goals or protects a job position. Modern scholars have adopted the perspective of Machiavelli to examine and understand the political dynamics in organizations [7]. Machiavellian type individuals are described as manipulative and as having little care for the feelings or wellbeing of others. They try to control others by using many influence tactics. The literature suggests that Machiavellian attributes are relatively stable and that they develop before adulthood [8]. Valle (1995) [3] found that the Machiavellianism personality was positively related to politics perceptions and political behavior. Researchers have studied the presence of the Machiavellian traits in various occupations such as bankers [9] and lawyers [10] but very few have examined the Machiavellianism personality trait among teachers.

The Need for Power Personality Trait

Power is viewed as an individual's ability (real or perceived) to influence others or to have power over others. The Need for power (Npow) personality is a stable individual's basic desire to influence and lead others to control an environment[1]. This personality trait is based on the need theory of motivation developed by McClelland's Trichotomy of Needs (achievement, affiliation, and power). The Need for power refers to "the desire to obtain scarce resources or control over activities within an organization"[11, p.35]. According to this theory, one way through which influence over others can be accomplished is by creating bases of power (e.g. referent, expert). Thus, it is expected that individuals with a high need for power will engage in self-focused ingratiation tactics in order to develop sufficient bases of power that will enable them to maximize control over their environments [12].

Research has demonstrated that employees high in the need of power tend to be high performers and rated as having good leadership abilities [13]. Research also suggests that an individual's need for power is positively associated with organizational politics. Kumar and Beyerlein[14] found a significant positive correlation between the need for power and political activity. Kirchmeyer[15] observed that the need for power was positively associated with self-reported levels of political activity among female managers. Individuals with a high need for power are control and influence oriented [16]. Individuals with high in need for power would spend more time thinking about how to obtain and exercise power and authority. Persons with a high need for power need to win arguments, persuade others, to prevail, and to obtain positions where they can exert influence.

Political Behavior

Organizational politics refers to behavior that are designed to foster self-interest and that are adoptedwithout regard to or the expense of organizational goals [17, 18]. Examples of this behavior in an organization include lobbying for promotions and better job assignments, bypassing the chain of command, going through improper channels, and joining cliques to promote one's own self-interest. In addition, political behavior, is a non-sanctioned behavior (deviate from norms) which may be harmful to the organizational goals or to the interests of others in the organization and which may be assumed self-serving in nature [4]. Furthermore, Valle and Perrewe[19, p. 361) suggested that political behavior is "the exercise of tactical

influence by individuals which is strategically goal directed, rational, conscious and intended to promote self-interest, either at the expense of or in support of others'" interests.

In sum, political behavior is basically assumed as influencing behavior that an individual, a group, or an organization uses to attempt to influence others' behavior or attitudes about a matter which is important and desired. Various typologies of political behavior have been proposed and they have received research support. For example, it was eight influence tactics: assertiveness, ingratiation, rationality, sanctions, exchange, upward appeals, blocking, and coalitions [20]. In the same way, other researchers noted that suggested influence tactics include rational persuasion, apprising, inspirational appeals, consultation, exchange, collaboration, personal appeals, ingratiation, legitimating tactics, pressure, and coalition tactics [21]. However, most of the researchers classified political behavior or influence tactics into two dimensions. For example, Melburg and Tedeschi[22] suggested two dimensions of influence tactics; defensive behavior (need to defend against threat) and assertive behavior (need to take advantage or opportunity). Similarly, Godfrey, Jones, and Lord [23] classified political behavior into ingratiation behavior and self-promotion behavior. Moreover, Zanzi and O'Neil [24] classified influence behavior into sanctioned political tactics (represented by the use of expertise, super-ordinate goals, networking, coalition building, persuasion, and image building), and non-sanctioned political tactics (represented by intimidation and innuendoes, manipulation, co-optation, control of information, using surrogates, organizational placement, and blaming or attacking others). In terms of a political tactic strategy, Wayne and Ferris [25] classified political tactics according to the influence behavior of supervisor-focused and job-focused influence tactics. In the same way, political behavior tactics can be classified either to proactive leader political behavior (proactively promote self-interest strategy) or to reactive leader political behavior (defensively protect self-interest strategy) [19]. Proactive leader political behavior consist of those actions the leader assertively undertakes in response to a perceived opportunity to influence a target and to secure desired outcomes for one or more collective bodies he/she represents. Proactive behavior include responses such as assertiveness, ingratiation, coalitions, rationality, sanctions, blocking, upward appeals, and exchanges of benefits.

From the review of related literature and political theory of leadership, the following hypotheses have been proposed:

H1: Machiavellianism Personality Trait has a positive and significant towards proactive political behavior
H2: Machiavellianism Personality Trait has a positive and significant towards reactive political behavior
H3: Need for Power Personality Trait has a positive and significant towards proactive reactive political
H4: Need for Power Personality Trait has a positive and significant towardsreactive behavior political behavior
Based on political model of leadership and literature review, a research framework of school principal political personality and political behavior are proposed.
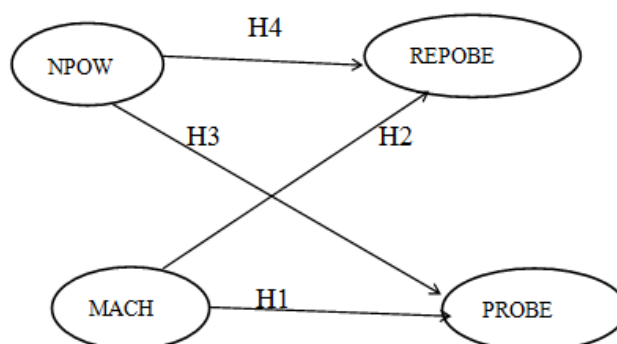
Figure 1: Research Framework of the study

III.   METHODOLOGY

Data Collection

The target population of this study consisted of school principals who serve in public secondary schools in Malaysia. The sampling frame comprised a list of all school principals in Malaysia Ministry of Education.The unit of analysis in individual principal.The sampling technique used was probability sampling in which every member of population has a chance to be selected. The sample involved in this study was selected by a proportionate stratified random sampling procedure. Stratified sampling ensures that the sample is selected according to location (state) in the population.

This research study used a descriptive and correlation design. In this study, leadership political behavior and leader political personality were measured from the principal's self-perspective. The study questionnaires were developed based on previous studies by adopting and modifying scales developed by other investigators in career literature.

The data were collected using a survey method by self-administered questionnaires.This study distributed 600 questionnaires, and the response rate for the sample was 53 percent, resulting in a usable sample size of 312 participants. This study involve 56.4 per cent male and 43.6 percent female.

Measurements

All instruments in this study were adapted and adopted from previous research. A five point with 1 for strongly disagree and 5 for strongly agree Likert scale were applied to personality constructs involved in the study. Respondents indicated the frequency they engaged in political behavior on a 5-point Likert scale with 1 for never and 5 for always.

Machiavellianism was measured using 15 items adapted from Mach IV developed by Cristie and Geis, 1970 [5] and these items have been used in a variety of studies.. This scale demonstrated adequate internal consistency. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.79 [8], 0.79 [26], 0.73 [19] and 0.65 [27].

Need for power was measured by five items adapted from Cook et al. [28]. The scale possess adequate internal consistency Cronbach's alpha; .74 [15]; .82 [19].

*Political Behavior*The self-reported use of political behavior was measured using proactive political behavior adapted from Kipnis et al.[29] andreactive political behavior adapted from an instrument developed by Ashforth and Lee [30]. It composed of 33 items.

IV.   RESULTS

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)

*Political Personality Traits.*Based on the literature review, this present study proposed that political personality traits constructs consist of the Need for power personality and the Machiavellianism personality. For the Need for power personality, the results of this study revealed that two factors emerged with eigenvalues greater than 1.0. The eigenvalues ranged from 1.01 to 2.01 and these two factors accounted 60.3% of the total variance explained. The factor explaining most of the variance was Factor I consisting of four items, with 40.20% of the variance explained. Factor II consisted of one item and explained 20.12%. Although this solution generated two factors, only Factor 1 was interpreted according to one-dimensional construct. Thus, the next factor analysis was specified as a one-factor solution. A reanalysis of five items with specified one-factor solutions to produce the most interpretable factors with eigenvalues of 2.01 explains a 40.2% of the variance. One item was removed from the instrument. The factor loadings ranged from 0.61 to 0.76, which suggests that all of the items contributed to this one factor significantly.

For the Machiavellianism dimension, a three-factor solution emerged that satisfied the eigenvalues exceeding 1.0. The eigenvalues ranged from 1.15 to 3.09 with 43.9% of the total variance explained. The factor explaining most of the variance was Factor I, which consisted of four items with 28.16% of the variance explained. Although this solution generated seven factors, in the literature it has been suggested that Machiavellianism is a single construct[8, 5]. Therefore, only Factor 1 was interpreted according to Christie&Geis . Thus, the next factor analysis with a forced one-factor solution was performed.

The results indicated that 15 items with specified one-factor solutions produced the most interpretable factors with an eigenvalue of 3.39 and explained 22.6% of the variance. Five items were dropped from further analysis because of factor loadings lower than or equal to 0.40.

The one factor derived for the selected nine items explained 32.5% of the variance. The factor loadings ranged from 0.45 to 0.70, which suggests that all of the items contributed to this one factor significantly In the literature, it has been suggested that Machiavellianism is a single construct. In line with these studies, the present study assumed that the Machiavellianism personality is a one-dimensional construct.

*Political Behaviors.*The literature review revealed that the political behavior construct consisted of the proactive political behavior dimension and the reactive political behavior dimension. First, reliability analyses were conducted on the original 33 political behavior items and it was found that Cronbach's alpha was 0.88. This result revealed that there was no problem regarding the Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients of the total scale.

To determine the factor structure of the each dimension, factor analysis was performed using the principal axis method and the varimax rotation. The result revealed that nine factors emerged with eigenvalues greater than 1.0. The eigenvalues ranged from 1.03 to 7.51 and these nine factors accounted for 61.0% of the total variance explained. The factor explaining most of the variance was Factor I with 22.7% of the variance explained while Factor II explained 10.8%. A further analysis of 33 items with a forced two-factor solution was used in an attempt to replicate the two dimensional factor solutions. The two factors model explains 33.5% of the total variance. However, four items were dropped from further analysis because of low factor loading. The two factors solution derived for the selected 29 items explained 36% of the variance with items loading between 0.41 to 0.78

In this present study, the factors were labeled as follows:
1. Factor I was labeled as reactive political behavior
2. Factor II was labeled as proactive political behavior.

In brief, this study classified political behavior into two dimensions, which was in line with the dimensions of political behavior proposed by Ashforth and Lee [30] and Valle and Perrewe[19].

Descriptive Analysis

The political personality traits for the school principals consisted of the Machiavellianism personality and the Need for power personality.

Machiavellianism Personality: The results showed that an overall mean score of the Machiavellianism personality was M=2.12 (SD=.39), a range extending from a low of 1.52 to a high of 2.91. This indicates that the level of Machiavellianism personality for school principal was moderately low and had low standard deviations.

Need for Power Personality: Overall, the mean score of Need for power personality was M=4.03 (SD=.16), a range extending from a low of 3.85 to a high of 4.23 and with low standard deviations. This indicates that the level of the Need for power personality was high. Thus, this study reveals that the mean score of the Need for power personality was higher than that of the Machiavellianism personality.

Reactive Political Behavior: reactive political behavior was (M=1.97, SD=.44), a range extending from 1.97 to 2.79.The results indicated that the respondents practiced moderately low reactive political behavior with low standard deviations. The overall mean

The overall mean for reactive political behavior was (M=1.97, SD=.44), a range extending from 1.97 to 2.79.The results indicated that the respondents practiced moderately low reactive political behavior with low standard deviations.

Proactive Political Behavior: The results indicated that the respondents practiced moderately high reactive political behavior (M=3.04, SD=.52), ranging from 1.88 to 3.86 with low standard deviations. In sum, principals used proactive political behavior more frequently than reactive political behavior.

Measurement Model: Confirmatory factor analysis

Convergent validity: Factor loading, CR and AVE were used to examine the convergent validity of model (Hair et al., 2010. The loading for the items of Machiavellianism personality traits were between 0.509 to 0.751and within an acceptable range. The loading for the Need for power personality, were between 0.608 to 0.746 which was sufficient and within an acceptable range The loading for the items of reactive political behaviorwere between 0.532 to 0.764 and within an acceptable range. The loading for the proactive political behavior, were between 0.498 to 0.781 which was sufficient and within an acceptable range.Item-to-total correlations were greater than 0.50 and were considered satisfactory and acceptable for further analysis.

The CR constructs range from 0.790 to 0.905 which exceeded the recommended value 0f 0.7 (Hair at al., 2014). However the value of AVE range between 0.409 to 0.485, which below the recommended value of 0.5 [31]. Therefore the convergent validity requirement was fulfilled in this study.

Table 1: Result of Measurement model

Construct	Item	Loading	AVE	CR
Machiavellianism	MC1	0.664	**0.433**	**0.790**
	MC2	0.619		
	MC4	0.509		
	MC6	0.751		
	MC9	0.721		
Need for power	NP1	0.608	**0.485**	0.789
	NP2	0.685		
	NP3	0.737		
	NP4	0.746		
reactive political behavior	PB1	0.532	**0.414**	0.905
	PB2	0.609		
	PB3	0.623		
	PB6	0.604		
	PB7	0.763		
	PB8	0.764		
	PB9	0.570		
proactive political behavior	POB1	0.525	**0.409**	0.829
	POB10	0.781		
	POB11	0.667		
	POB12	0.653		
	POB13	0.632		
	POB14	0.728		
	POB15	0.667		

	POB16	0.658		
	POB3	0.538		
	POB5	0.566		
	POB6	0.546		
	POB7	0.498		
	POB8	0.682		
	POB9	0.734		

Discriminant validity

The correlations for each construct were less than the square root of AVE for indicators for measuring the constructs (Table 2). This indicates adequate for discriminant validity the construct of the study.

Table 2: Discriminant validity

|	MACH	NPOW	PROPOB	REPOB
MACH	**0.658**			
NPOW	0.040	**0.696**		
PROPOB	0.334	0.319	**0.643**	
REPOB	0.619	0.085	0.406	**0.639**

Structural model

In this study, leader political personality traits were hypothesized to predict leader political behavior. Partial least square structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) was used to test the hypotheses. Bootstrapping method was used to determine the significant levels for path coefficients (Table 3).

Table 3: Summary of structural model

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation	T Statistics
MACH -> PROPOB	0.321	0.325	0.049	6.619*
MACH -> REPOB	0.617	0.620	0.042	14.749*
NPOW -> PROPOB	0.307	0.313	0.048	6.392*
NPOW -> REPOB	0.061	0.053	0.053	1.152

R^2 value suggesrs that 38.7 percent of the variance in reactive political behavior and 20.5 of the variance in proactive behavior is explained by Machiavellianism personality and Need for power personality (Figure 1). Further analysis shows that Machiavellianism personality significantly realated to reactive political behavior (β=0.617) and proactive political behavior (β=0.321). Need for power personality significantly related to proactive political behavior (β=0.307) and not significantly reactive political behavior (β=0.061). Thus, H1, H2 and H3 were supported but H4 not supported.
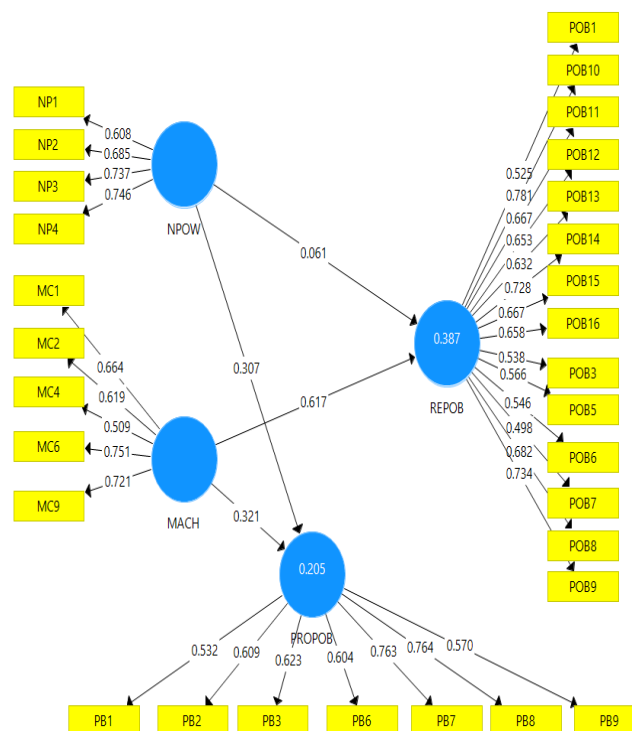
Figure 2: structural model of the study

V. DISCUSSION

Summary of findings

The aim of this study is to examine level of political personality traits, political behavior and the impact of political personality traits on political behavior of the school principals. This study was focused on leader personality traits from political perspectives. Therefore, only the Machiavellianism trait personality and Need for power personality trait were examined in this study.

The results of this study indicated that the score for the Machiavellianism personality was moderately low but the score for the Need for power personality was moderately high among the school principals. In general, school principals participating in this study had relatively low Machiavellianism traits. Therefore, they are not Machiavellian-type individuals who manipulative and care little for the feelings or wellbeing of others, and who try to control using lots of influence tactics. However, since they scored high in the Need for Power (Npow) personality, this study shows that they have a strong desire to influence and lead others and could control a person's own environment by creating bases of power (e.g. referent, expert). Thus, this study revealed that the school principals have strong desire to influence but that they are not manipulative in their personality.

The results shows that the respondents practiced moderately low reactive political behavior and practiced moderately high reactive political behavior. Thus, principals used proactive political behavior more frequently than reactive political behavior. Therefore, school principals viewed their political environment more as an opportunity rather than as a threat. This study revealed that the school principals only practiced moderately low political behavior overall. It may be that the school organization is not a highly political environment organization and that political behavior may be more frequent at higher levels of the education organization. At lower levels of the education organization like in a school, formalization is high, individuals do not have access to all of information used by upper-management to make organization decisions, and thus political behavior is practiced less. This finding is in line with Mintzberg[18] who reported that political activities are the weakest in much formalized organizations.

Political behavior is non-sanctioned behavior (deviate from norms) which may be harmful to organizational goals or to the interests of others in the organization [4]. This behavior is strategically goal directed, rational, conscious, and intended to promote self- interest either at the expense of or in support of others [19]. The goal of political behavior is to change the attitudes, beliefs, and behavior of another individual. This study classified political behavior either to proactive leader political behavior (proactively promote self-interest strategy) or to reactive leader political behavior (defensively protect self-interest strategy).

Proactive leader political behavior consist of those actions the leader assertively undertakes in response to a perceived opportunity to influence a target and to secure desired outcomes for one or more collective bodies he/she represents. Proactive behavior include responses such as assertiveness, ingratiation, coalitions, rationality, sanctions, blocking, upward appeals, and exchanges of benefits.

The research showed that Machiavellianism and the Need for power personality traits relate to leader political behavior. The research supports the previous research showed that Machiavellianism and the Need for power personality traits are related to organizational politics [3, 15].

Managerial implications

This study showed that political personality traits significantly influence and predict leader political behavior. This finding is in line with the political theory of leadership suggested that leader antecedence (e.g. social capital, cognition, political will, and personality) affects the political behavior utilized by a leader. An individual's personality is a primary factor in his or her vocational choice. In other words, it is necessary to choose an occupation that is congruent with one's personality. This study supports the argument that personality and behavior are related.

Limitations and Recommendations for future research

Some limitation might be related to this study. First, this study only focuses on two constructs i.e. leader political personality and leader political behavior. More construct should be focused in future study. Second, the study conducted in a single context, school institutions. It is interesting if the study included others government institutions. Third, some instrument scales used in this study have low internal reliability (e.g. < 0.7) and should be improved in future research. Future study should study the impact of leader political personality and leader political behavior on leader outcomes. Study leadership from political perspective should be fruitful avenue to future research.

VI. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that Machiavellianism personality for school principal was moderately low and the Need for power personality was high. The results indicated that the respondents practiced moderately low reactive political behavior andpracticed moderately high reactive political behavior. In sum, principals used proactive political behavior more frequently than reactive political behavior.

The leader political personality traits (i.e. Machiavellianism, Need for power) have a predictive potential on leader political behavior.

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